

# Reading Tips for Teaching the Student with Down Syndrome



## BE PATIENT

Students with Down syndrome are bright and can learn to read, but may not develop reading skills along a traditional timeline. Reading readiness may occur later than it does with their peers, and literacy skills will continue to develop over the years. The best advice is to keep teaching and do not become frustrated with yourself or your student!



## BEGIN WITH SIGHT WORDS.

Students with Down syndrome are visual learners, so begin reading instruction with high interest sight words ex: *family names, pets, places they like to go, etc.* This is a great motivator! Add in high frequency sight words ex: *the, and, to, etc.* later and begin to use this vocabulary to read sentences.



## TEACH PHONICS AS A SUPPLEMENTAL SKILL

When phonics is taught there should be a link between the auditory and visual information. This allows students to access their strong visual learning strength to support the sounds to which they are introduced. ex: start with letters to which the student may have a greater connection like the letters of their name

## STRUCTURE IS KEY!

Whatever program or strategy you use for sight words or phonics the student with Down syndrome will benefit from an instructional routine and knowing what step comes next.



## USE VISUAL TEACHING TOOLS

Visual schedules, videos, books with pictures, anchor charts, and computer programs are all great ways to capitalize on the student's visual learning style.



## BUILD CONFIDENCE

Support Instruction with literacy games. There are many games and ideas available online. An extra dose of praise goes a long way to building confidence too!



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