

Slide Sounds to Teach Reading

Learning to read is incredibly exciting, but it's like a complex puzzle—for it to happen, all of the pieces need to be in place. One of those pieces is something called phonemic awareness, which in plain English, means that a child knows the sounds that the letters of the alphabet make. And once they know those individual sounds, they need to learn how to blend them and how to break them apart. This activity will help them practice. Readers, ho!

What You Need:

- A list of three-letter words that follow the consonant-vowel-consonant pattern, such as cat, pan, bit, hop, had, did, bet, wig, dot, and jug.



What to Do:

1. Choose a word from the list, for example, “cat”.
2. Tell your child it's time for her to make a human slide! Have her hold out her left arm, palm side up, at a diagonal. Then tell her that her arm is a “sound slide”, with three parts. Point to her shoulder, inner elbow, and wrist.
3. Ready to start? There's no time like the present! Put your child in the driver's seat and tell her she's going to use her right hand to slide sounds down her arm. Using “cat” as your first attempt, ask her to point to her shoulder and say the first sound: “/c/”
4. Slide her right hand down to her inner elbow and say the short vowel sound: “/a/”
5. Swish to the bottom by sliding her hand down to her wrist. Then say the last sound: “/t/”
6. Once you've got the hang of it, go back to her shoulder and repeat the sound slide several times, speeding up each time until she is able to slide down her arm in one sweep and say the blended word, “cat.”
7. Repeat the blending activity on her “sound slide” for other words on the word list.
8. Got the blend down? The flip side of the coin is segmenting, breaking the individual sounds in words apart, rather than blending them together. To practice segmenting words, have her break out her trusty slide again, but this time, when you say the selected word aloud, have her point to the three points on her sound slide as she says each separate sound.

Blending and segmenting words takes practice, but it's well worth it. These skills will serve your child well on the road to reading. And in no time, she'll be slip sliding away!