

# Handy Handouts®

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## Sight Words

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### What Are Sight Words?

*Sight Words* are written words that children know just by seeing them. Children do not have to spend time or energy decoding (sounding out) a sight word. Sight words tend to be common words that a child sees over and over, often in children's books. Some examples are "the," "and," "please," and "cat." A list of sight words called Dolch Sight Words (<http://www.dolchword.net/dolch-flash-cards.html>) contains over 200 high-frequency words: these words do not generally follow typical patterns for decoding (Introduction to Sight Words, 2006, ¶ 1 and 2).

### Why Are Sight Words Important for Reading?

Sight words are crucial in helping a child develop beginning reading skills. Not only do sight words help build a vocabulary base, but they help build reading fluency skills. Reading fluency is the "child's ability to read text quickly and accurately" (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001, p.22). Fluency skills help improve comprehension because the child is not spending time trying to figure out many words. Instead, he/she is reading for content.



### What Are Some Ways I Can Help a Child Learn Sight Words?

#### AT HOME:



- Label common objects around the home with sticky notes.
- Write sight words on a chalkboard or on the driveway or sidewalk outside.
- Put magnets with sight words on the refrigerator.
- Read storybooks with words that repeat over and over (Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? or Goodnight Moon).
- Make grocery lists with common items and read these with your child.

#### AT SCHOOL:



- Create a word wall for sight words, adding new words each week.
- Have students practice reading sight words at the beginning and/or end of language arts time.
- Send home weekly lists of sight words for practice.
- Have students write sight words in a journal/log and review them on a regular basis.
- Have students look at newspapers, magazines, instruction manuals, comic books, etc. and use a highlighter to highlight as many of their (word wall) sight words as they can find.

#### Resources:

Armbruster, B. B., Lehr, F., & Osborn, J. (2001). *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read*. Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy at ED Pubs.

*Introduction to sight words and E.W. Dolch*. Retrieved January 15, 2009, from <http://www.dolchlearning.com>

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