



## *Things You Can Do to Help Your Child*

At the Children's Dyslexia Center, we use the Orton-Gillingham method to help your child learn strategies to enable them to read better. These strategies use auditory, visual and kinesthetic processes that are easily learned and can help your child — IF they use them. When we are teaching our lessons, we expect our students to use these strategies. When they are home and reading with you or doing homework, they can use the strategies as well. So what can you do to help? In the following paragraphs I'll explain what the strategies are so that you can learn them and know when to use them.

Your child should have (or will soon have) a “deck” that they take home with them containing rules, red words, and phonetic sounds with example words. Each tutor will add words, rules and sounds on a regular basis so practice is a must. You should take time to review these cards on a regular basis with your child with the following in mind:

**RED WORDS:** Red words are words that you cannot sound out or spell phonetically – they don't “spell” the way they sound. When reviewing them, if your child is right-handed they should write each red word on their left arm while they say the letters in the word aloud then “underline” the completed word with their finger while saying the whole word. For example: T/h/e, the. (switch arms if your child is left-handed) Repeat this twice for each word.

**RULES:** Ask your child if they know what the \_\_\_\_\_ rule is. (Each card is labeled) Read the definition of the rule aloud with them. You can read part, have them echo what you read, read the next part, echo — etc.

**SOUND CARDS:** Most sound cards have the phoneme at the top (the letter or blend or phonetic sound) and a word using that phoneme underneath it or on the back of the card. Have your child say the sound and then read the word that contains the sound.

Just doing these things will help your child immensely. In Part 2 of this post I'll go into the tracing and fingerspelling strategies and what they entail. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to ask below or talk to your child's tutor when they come in for a session.

Two of the strategies that we use to help students decode a word (break it apart into knowable sounds and figure it out) are Tracing and Fingerspelling. I'll explain both of these below starting with Tracing. Remember that for both of these we use auditory (A), visual (V) and kinesthetic (movement) (K) parts.

**TRACING** – A student will trace if he or she can see the word but is struggling to decode to phonetically. For example, during a lesson if your child is reading a word, passage or book and they come to a word they should know but they can't figure out we ask them to trace it. We have students use the hand that they write with and actually trace the letters of the word they see(V) with a finger(K) on a desk or textured surface while saying the sounds of the letters aloud(A) – not the name of the letters but the sounds they make. Then we ask them to underline the word they have traced and blend the sounds they have said into the word. They are seeing the word, while tracing it and sounding out the phonemes and blending them together. Note: If your child is reading, there may be words that they have not yet learned to decode or can't remember the sounds for. If they seem to be stalled in the process, you can help them by giving them the word so that they can move on.

**FINGERSPELLING**- Fingerspelling is used when a student is trying to figure how a word is spelled when they hear it pronounced(A). They don't see anything at this point, but they've heard the word pronounced aloud – like they would in a spelling test or during the spelling words section of our lesson – and need to figure out its spelling. We have students use the hand that they do NOT write with to fingerspell. If your child is right-handed they will use their left hand and, with their hand raised to the left side of their face where they can see it (V), the student will lift a finger(K) for each SOUND in the word as they say it aloud(A). For example: CAT – /C/(thumb), /A/ (pointer), /T/ (middle). For a word like broth a student can fingerspell and sound it out as /b/ /r/ /o/ /th/ or use the blend as one sound – /br/ /o/ /th/ – either is correct. The reason we have students use the hand that they do not write with is so that they can write the sounds (K) on the paper as they are sounding them out. We always have our students read back the word that they have spelled when they are finished.

As always, please feel free to leave any questions or comments below or ask your child's tutor or contact the Center's Director Linda Martin at [lmartin@cnyclc.org](mailto:lmartin@cnyclc.org).