Teaching Students with Intellectual Disability to Read using *Friends on the Block*, a Comprehensive Text-Centered Curriculum

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Southern Methodist University

We disclose a financial interest in *Friends on the Block*.
IES Funded Project Intensity: Our Team

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- Ashley Moorshead
- Miriam Ortiz
- Carlin Conner
- Kristi Baker
DADD Presentation OBJECTIVES

• Participants will implement basic evidence-based strategies for teaching foundational literacy skills for students with disabilities.

• Participants will identify common challenges and solutions for teaching foundational literacy skills to students with disabilities.

• Participants will become familiar with curriculum features that are consistent with evidence-based recommendations for teaching foundational literacy skills.
Organization of Presentation

• Brief summary of research on teaching reading to students with IDD, including a summary of our pilot study findings
• Brief overview of FOTB features – why we created it
• Evidence-based strategies
  • Book Reading procedures
  • Skill-focused procedures (with FOTB sample activities)
• Questions and Contact Information

Try it out
Literature Review:
Research on Reading and Intellectual Disability

• Students with intellectual disability (ID) demonstrate lower levels of reading achievement than students with other disabilities (Caffrey & Fuchs, 2007; Wei, Blackorby, & Schiller, 2011).

• **Limited research** on effective teaching of reading to students with ID (Polloway, et al., 2010)

• Some research on **isolated phonics skills**; emphasis on **sight word instruction** (reviews by Browder, et al., 2006; Browder & Xin, 1998; Joseph & Seery, 2004)
Literature Review:
Recent research on comprehensive programs

• More recently research has shown students with ID respond favorably to comprehensive programs of reading instruction (e.g., Allor, et al., 2014; Allor, et al., 2013; Browder, Mims, Spooner, Ahlgrim-Delzell, & Lee 2008; Connor, Alberto, Compton, & O’Connor, 2014; Lemons, et al., 2015).

• Two of our studies that led directly to Intensity (FOTB) curriculum


Research with *Friends on the Block*


- Allor, J. H., Yovanoff, P., Al Otaiba, S., Ortiz, M. B., & Conner, C. (in review). Literacy intervention for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. [analysis of all 18 students from development grant studies]
Summary of FOTB pilot studies

• Purpose: Statistically analyze and summarize the effects of the Friends on the Block literacy intervention on word recognition across 18 cases (students)

• Research Question: Within and across the 18 cases, what is the overall effect of the Friends on the Block literacy intervention across single case design studies on:
  
  (a) sight word reading
  
  (b) decodable word reading
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Case (student)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>IQ</th>
<th>Starting Level</th>
<th>Ending Level</th>
<th>PPVT Age Eq</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Total Dosage (hours)</th>
<th>Total Dosage (weeks)</th>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Down Syndrome</td>
<td>30.46</td>
<td>27 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>CH</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>12 weeks/21 weeks</td>
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<td>CS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3:04</td>
<td>Autism/Speech Impairment</td>
<td>20.50</td>
<td>21 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>EM</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2:04</td>
<td>Smith-Lemli Opitz</td>
<td>31.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>JG</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2:03</td>
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<td>27 weeks</td>
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<td>SS</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4:09</td>
<td>Down Syndrome</td>
<td>43.88</td>
<td>27 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4:07</td>
<td>Down Syndrome</td>
<td>54.55</td>
<td>27 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Level 1

Level 2

Level 3

Level 4

Level 5

CH Sight Words

© Friends on the Block
CH Decodable Words
Sample Level 6 Text

*Ants are Fun!* (non-fiction)

- Ants are very little, but ants can go very fast. Ants do not like to be in the sun. The ant is little, but he can be very fast.

- It is so little, but it can go fast. Look at it go. It is fun to see the ant run fast. The ant ran very fast.
Conclusions

• Consistent moderate-to-strong positive effects for each case (i.e., student) and across all cases for both sight words and decodable words.
  • Mean effect sizes of 18 sight word cases ranged from 0.44 to 0.86, with an overall mean of 0.73.
  • Mean effect sizes of 8 decodable word cases ranged from 0.47 to 0.90, with an overall mean of 0.74.

• Demonstrated functional relationship between the intervention and increases in the numbers of sight words and decodable words read correctly.

• The average dose was 3.03 Instructional Lessons (SD = .45) and 1.83 Reinforcement lessons (SD = 1.02) per week.

• All students progressed through at least two and up to six levels of the curriculum within a school year.
4 What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Recommendations

*Foundational skills to support reading for understanding in kindergarten through 3rd grade.*


1. Teach students academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative *language*, and vocabulary knowledge.

2. Develop awareness of the segments of *sounds in speech* and *how they link to letters*.

3. Teach students to *decode words*, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.

4. Ensure that each student reads *connected text* every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.
Why did we decide to create a new curriculum? Just a few reasons...

• need for more books
  • especially ones that we be more meaningful to students with ID
  • needed more practice – more books and more practice of high-frequency words within books

• challenge of transfer of skills – developed lessons that match books more directly

• wanted levels so you could practice at one level for a while and rotate books, rather than repeating individual lessons or books
A very quick overview...
The **books** are the **heart** of the curriculum.

Scavenger Hunt: Find each of these in the student books.

What do you think is the purpose of each of these features?

1. Helper Text
2. Read It Words
3. Sound It Out Words (Level 4 and higher)
4. Picture Words
5. Story Starter

How are they different from other early readers you have seen?
Friends on the Block Books: How are they different?

• Some books focus on **high-frequency**, or common, words
  • Dick and Jane

Come down, Dick.
Come and see.
See the big, big mother.
See the funny little baby.
Puff is my baby.
Puff is my funny little baby.

come
down
see
funny
little
is
Some books focus on decodable words
Some books focus on predictability and meaning.
Research on Early Text: Multiple Criteria

- Critical Word Factor (measure of decodability and taught irregular words; Hiebert & Fisher, 2007)

- Look for readers with multiple criteria and scaffolds (Hiebert, 1999; Hiebert & Fisher, 2007; Cheatham & Allor, 2014)
  - Decodability
  - Word repetition
  - High-frequency words
  - Meaningfulness
How are Friends on the Block books different?
...based on multiple criteria

Soon Sam was feeling better, and it was time to go home. They all walked together to Will and Dan’s apartment building.
Books... based on **multiple criteria**

- Varied Sentence Structure
- Language similar to spoken language
- Repetition

Decodability

High-Frequency (sight words)

Pam asked, “Dan, did you get a big cut? If it is a big cut, we would help you take care of it.”

Dan said, “No, I did not get a big cut. Look at it. It is just a little scratch.”
Sample Pages from Level 1 Book

Helper Text
Teacher or tutor reads “helper text” and child reads text in conversation bubbles

Story Starter
This is a story about when Sam forgot to take his lunch to school.

It was time for lunch. Sam looked, but he didn’t have a lunch. He forgot his lunch at home!
Tom said, “I will share my lunch with you.”
“Me, too,” said Will. “Do you want a banana?”

Will said, “I can share my ham sandwich. Do you like ham?”

I like ham.

I do not want a banana.

Read it
a do I like not want

Picture Words
apples banana cake
cookies ham muffin

Picture Words (add to meaning)
Sample Pages from Level 4 Book

Includes Some Decodable Words

Teacher/tutor/parent reads “helper text” in gray boxes and student reads text in white bubbles/boxes

8 Page Books

© Friends on the Block
Pam asked, “Dan, did you get a big cut? If it is a big cut, we would help you take care of it.”
Dan said, “No, I did not get a big cut. Look at it. It is just a little scratch.”

Explicit practice within Warm-Ups

Say the Letter-Sound:

| i | m | wh | s | o |

Sound It Out:

- block
- did
- got
- him
- just

Read It:

- first
- of
- how
- next
- said

Sample Pages from Level 7B Book & Warm-Up

Repetition

Decodability

High-Frequency (sight words)

Varied Sentence Structure

Language similar to spoken language
Sample Pages from Level 9 Book & Presentation Book

Sound-spelling patterns & common word parts

Presentation Book

Lesson practice directly linked to books

Book

Picture support for key content words

Presentation Book

Story Starter
This is a story about Sam and his dad having fun one day when it snowed.

© Friends on the Block
## Scope and Sequence Overview (FOTB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels 1-3</th>
<th>Levels 4-5</th>
<th>Levels 6-8</th>
<th>Levels 9-12</th>
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<td>letter sounds</td>
<td>letter sounds short vowel a</td>
<td>letter sounds all short vowels</td>
<td>advanced vowel patterns</td>
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<td>phonological awareness</td>
<td>link to print (alphabetic principle)</td>
<td></td>
<td>spelling/sounding out</td>
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<td></td>
<td>fluency with skills and passages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unique Feature: Target Sight Words and Decodable Words (see list)
WWC Recs #1 and #4: Book Reading Techniques


1. Teach students academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge.

2. Develop awareness of the segments of sounds in speech and how they link to letters.

3. Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.

4. Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.
At a Glance

Typical Lesson
- Warm Up (Direct Instruction style; very brief)
- Book Reading (read/discuss/review)
- Learning Game (target specific skills based on data/needs)

Book Reading
- Day 1: Predict and Read
- Days 2 and 3: Read and Discuss
- Day 4: Read and Review
- Day 5: Optional/Review
General Correction Procedure

If students make an error, follow the I, We, You feedback procedure.

I: Listen. (The teacher models.)
We: Say it with me. (Teacher and students practice together.)
You: Your turn. (The students practice independently.)

Repeat the row or or sentence.
Book Reading Strategies
Book Reading Options: Echo Reading

- For students with minimal skills or with a new level
- Typically used for students in early levels
- Highly scaffolded, so use only as long as needed

1. Teacher reads a sentence, pointing to each word
2. Student “echoes” by reading the same sentence, pointing to each word

Error Correction:

I: Listen. (The teacher repeats the sentence, pointing to each word.)
We: Say it with me. (Teacher and students practice together.)
You: Your turn. (The students practice independently.)

Repeat the row or sentence.
Book Reading Options (cont.)

1:1 or Taking Turns
- Works well with very small groups; disadvantage is wait time
- Increases independence

Choral reading (unison)
- Highly scaffolded, so be careful not to overuse

Whisper reading
- Students read very quietly to themselves
- Teacher listens, rotating among students as needed
- Provides more practice; works well as students skills progress

Reminder: Only the teacher (or tutor/helper) reads the Helper Text in the gray boxes.
If student(s) miss a word (say wrong word or take longer than 2-4 seconds to say a word):

**I:** Listen. That word is ____________.
**We:** Say it with me.  (Teacher and student(s) say word.)
**You:** Your turn. What word?  (Student(s) repeat the word.)

**Read the sentence again.**  (The student(s) reads from the beginning of the sentence.)

Notes:
- If students become frustrated, use echo reading for a while.
- May want to skip “we” step or shorten directions to:
  - That word is ________.
  - What word?  (Student(s) repeats word.)
  - Read the sentence again.  (Student(s) reads from beginning of the sentence)
Book Reading Options: Paired Reading

Details
• Increases practice time and independence; strong research support
• Students need to be taught procedures
• Teacher role is the same (monitor closely; provide feedback)

Procedures
• Students take turns reading text with a partner
• When student is not reading, he/she is the “coach”
• Encourage students to use same correction procedure as teacher

That word is _______.
What word? (Student repeats word.)
Read the sentence again. (Student reads from the beginning of the sentence.)
More details...

Recommendation 4: Read connected text daily.

1. As students read orally, model strategies, scaffold, and provide feedback to support accurate and efficient word recognition.

2. Teach students to self-monitor their understanding of the text and to self-correct word-reading errors.

3. Provide opportunities for oral reading practice with feedback to develop fluent and accurate reading with expression.
WWC Panel Advice to Challenge

**Obstacle 4.2.** My beginning readers can only decode a few letter sounds, so they rely on illustrations to identify words rather than applying other word-identification strategies.

- Panel’s Advice for responding to student errors
  - If word is decodable, model sounding out
  - If word is too difficult to decode (irregular or unfamiliar spelling patterns), provide the word and have student repeat the word and the sentence
At a Glance

Typical Lesson
• Warm Up (Direct Instruction style; very brief)
• Book Reading (read/discuss/review)
• Learning Game (target specific skills based on data/needs)

Book Reading
• Day 1: Predict and Read
• Days 2 and 3: Read and Discuss
• Day 4: Read and Review
• Day 5: Optional/Review
Teacher Prep:

- Choose a book reading option
- Select 1-2 Dialogic Reading Questions to ask per page based on student ability.
- Addresses language development, including listening comprehension
Use dialogic reading techniques

Developing Children’s Oral Language Skills Through Dialogic Reading
Guidelines for Implementation

Kylie S. Flynn

TEACHING Exceptional Children, Vol. 44, No. 2, pp. 8-16. Copyright 2011 CEC.
Make your own “helper” and “student” text

• Choose a favorite read-aloud book (“helper text”)
• Write sentences for the student to read made up of words the student is working on
• You can add your own picture words, too
• Example
  • Words working on: a, do, I, like, not, want
  • Read-Aloud: Green Eggs and Ham
  • Write the following sentence on a large post-it: I do not like eggs.
WWC Recommendation #2: Phonological Awareness/Letter Knowledge/Alphabetic Principle


1. Teach students academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge.

2. Develop awareness of the segments of sounds in speech and how they link to letters.

3. Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.

4. Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.
WWC Recommendation 2: PA, Letter Knowledge, Alphabetic Principle

1. Teach students to recognize and manipulate segments of sound in speech (phonological awareness)

2. Teach students letter-sound relations

3. Use word-building and other activities to link letter-sound relationships with phonemic awareness
**Progression of Skills from Phonological Awareness to the Alphabetic Principle**

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<th><strong>Segmenting</strong></th>
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<td>Blend first sound and rime</td>
<td>Isolate the first sound</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Teacher: mat</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student: mat</td>
<td>Student: /mmmm/</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phoneme by Phoneme</strong></td>
<td>Blend all phonemes</td>
<td>Segment phonemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher: /mmmm/ /aaa/ /t/</td>
<td>Teacher: mat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student: mat</td>
<td>Student: /mmmm/ /aaa/ /t/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Link to Letters</strong></td>
<td>Decode CVC words (consonant-vowel-consonant)</td>
<td>Spell CVC words (consonant-vowel-consonant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student: sounds out and reads “mat”</td>
<td>Student: spells “mat”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Blending Bingo: Demonstration

First Sound and Rime

Teacher: c - a - ke

Teacher: M - o - m

Phoneme by Phoneme

Teacher: c - a - ke

Teacher: M - o - m
I Got It Game: Demonstration

You and I can play.

Jazz and I had fun.
Recommendation 3: Decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.

1. Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound-spelling patterns from left to right (decode)
2. Instruct students in common sound-spelling patterns
3. Teach students to recognize common word parts
Recommendation 3: Decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.

4. Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.

5. Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.

6. Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.
Common Challenge

• difficulty blending (and segmenting)

• Tips:
  • stretch and connect
  • be sure you are pronouncing sounds correctly
  • include practice of words that begin with continuous sounds (e.g., fan, sat)
Resource: Background Teacher Knowledge

• Pronouncing sounds in isolation
• Recognizing spelling patterns
• Modeling blending and segmenting words into phonemes
Resources for Evidence Based Literacy Practices

• FriendsOnTheBlock.com


Questions/Contact information

- jallor@smu.edu
- jill@friendsontheblock.com
- www.FriendsOnTheBlock.com
  - if you go to “Contact Us” and let me know you were at DADD 2019, I’ll give you access to some free electronic samples you can print and a few e-books
  - you’ll need to set up a login on the website