

Expand Your Child's Ability to Read
Help your child overcome learning problems &
become a confident, successful learner
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What Do You Visualize When You Read?

When you read the word “car” in a newspaper, a book or a magazine article, do you see your car? No! No one sees their own car. Since you have no confusion about what the word looks like (c-a-r), what it sounds like (kär), and what it means (a vehicle that moves on wheels), you keep reading until the sentence or paragraph fills in the details of what the car looks like in the story.

How do you recognize words you hear? How do you visualize them?

The following exercise will give you an experience of how you and your friends visualize words.

Imagination Exercise: Ask your spouse or some other adult to:

“Picture pencil” ...

“What do you see?”

“Picture beach ball” ...

“What do you see?” ...

“Make it spin ... Now make it stop.”

“Picture house” ...

“What did you see?”

Four out five people will see their own house.

(If the person has not pictured their house, ask them to “picture spouse.”)

Now ask your spouse or adult to:

“Picture ‘the.’” ...

the answer you get over 99% of the time is: (the letter symbols)

“t -h-e or “blank... I see nothing.”

Notice that when I said to you, “picture pencil,” you did not go to picturing the letters of the word pencil. Instead, you pictured the 3-dimensional object. The same occurred when you pictured beach ball and pictured house. These are concrete objects that are easy to visualize. However, you cannot picture words like “the” that have no 3-dimensional object or representation. Moreover, confusion can build for a child or individual while reading when they encounter an abstract word or symbol like “the.” This type of confusion continues for this child or individual until they three-dimensionally master all three parts each abstract word.¹

Concrete words can be pictured or internally experienced by any of the senses, so there is no confusion in learning their meaning and how to recognize and read them. The opposite is true for all abstract words. They cannot be pictured or sensed, and yet, they make up more than 50% of the words in books read by children in grades K-5. So, how can we expect the young reader to know how to think upon encountering abstract words – the, in, on, there, me, his, I, etc. -- in a reading assignment?

¹ Common Labels used for Abstract Words: Abstract words, Stumble Words, Dolch Words, Outlaw Words, Trigger Words, Interrupter Words, Most Commonly Read Words.

The Creation of Thought is a Product of Imagination²

A child aged 4-7 years is primarily a multi-sensory learner. The imagination is actively developed during these years. Magically, so it seems to anyone watching, the child puts together light patterns, sounds, smells, tastes, pressure on the skin, the rhythm of movements within their body, and other sensation patterns, and gradually creates an impression of their own self living in an external world. As the child's imagination grows, they see clouds in the form of animals and play with imaginary friends and animals in the yard. They invite you to a pretend tea party or they dig trenches with their trucks -- which can be simple blocks of wood -- around a castle to protect it from a dragon.

A child sees all possibilities with their *Mind's Eye*, an internal ability to imagine and make imagery. When they play, they project their imagination into their physical world and work with the projections of their imagery in 3-dimensions. In turn, their play provokes more inner experiences and imagination. Slowly, as they learn to work with their imagination, they learn to interact with their external world. As a result of their playing and their imagination, their understanding of the world and their preferences grow. They slowly learn who they are and what is beyond their physical being.

Play Develops the Thinking of a Child

Movement is essential for thinking to occur, and young children play and move to stimulate development within their brain and body. The thinking dynamics of the brain begin to develop in the womb through the sensory and movement feedback that the fetus senses. The muscular movements and sounds used in speech also develop while in the womb in response to hearing mother's and others' voices. Sensory-motor input drives the learning system of the child in the womb, and it is just as essential for the learning dimensions of the young child to expand.

Children learn through play, storytelling, and imaging "what if we pretend that..." Play is repetitive and this provides the child's brain with the sensory-motor input they need to develop their imagination. Through their play, the child learns to learn and to think.

The learning dimensions of a child 4-7 years old expand when their multi-sensory nature is given a "playing field" within which to explore and discover. Although the traditional early learner may seem precocious and capable of learning concepts and skills that older children are being taught, they also need lots of time for play, movement, and imagination so that they can develop a healthy integration of all parts of their brain. It is unwise to sit this child behind a desk, tell them to be still, and expect them to develop abstract, logical thinking skills suited for the brain of an 11-year-old. Such emphasis on logical development and stillness will restrict the dimensions of their learning and their preparation for successfully meeting the rigors of their future development. The imagination that develops in the first 7 years of a child's life becomes the

² The information for this paper was gathered from Joseph Chilton Pearce's, **Magical Child Matures**; and Charles T Krebs, PhD, **L.E.A.P. Program**, 2001 – 2005... A program about how the brain learns.

resource that will later enable the rich functioning of the logical areas of the left hemisphere of their brain.

During the child's first year, the corpus callosum, which connects the neurons and information of the two cerebral hemispheres of the brain, slowly begins to develop. Until the corpus callosum is fully developed and functioning, there can be little sharing and exchange of information between the 2 cerebral (thinking) hemispheres. As a result, in the 1 to 4-year-old child brain, most "thinking" occurs in the brainstem, the midbrain, and then the right cerebral hemisphere (the realm of intuition and imagination) of the child. This is why we call these thinkers "3-D thinkers." They picture, hear, taste, smell, touch, feel, move, and then imagine their world in terms of 3-D sensory input.

Around age 4, the corpus callosum begins to function more fully. Now, all the information and processes occurring in both the left and right hemispheres of the cortex, as well as in the rest of the brain, can begin to be connected and integrated. From 4-7 years of age, the child creates an integrated balance between their sense of their body, their emotions, and their developing mind.

From ages 7 to 11, the balance of a child's awareness and thinking moves into the left hemisphere: The brain is now ready to begin developing its functions of logical thinking, deduction and abstraction. During these years, a child gradually develops the ability to think abstractly and to know that they are other than what they think. The rich internal creativity and stimulating energy of their intuition (the creativity of their right hemisphere) is shared with their left hemisphere's ability to linearly systematize, organize, analyze and express planned action in the physical world. Ultimately, as the left and right hemispheres of the brain work together, through the bridging of the corpus callosum, the rich mind of the teen, and later the adult, can develop.

A child is usually around 11 years old before their brain and mind are ready to think objectively — to be able to see self as standing outside of what they are thinking and to operate on what they are thinking (e.g., to see that they can direct what they dream and send away images they do not want to experience, as in nightmares.). By age 15, the individual's mind is no longer localized in any part of the brain and seems to exist vaguely somewhere in their head. The brain and mind are no longer viewed as one unit but rather as counterparts of the other's function and development. Conceptualization develops as the outer world provides models and opportunities for discovering, experiencing and developing an internal awareness and world-model that is no longer identified with the physical world itself.

Expand Your Child's Learning Dimensions

Help your child to become a successful and confident learner. Understand your child's need for multiple-sensory input to easily learn, recognize, and comprehend the letters of the alphabet, and the 300 abstract words and punctuation marks that have no inherent meaning (they do not represent concrete objects or motions). They are all symbols that your child must learn to relate to and to give meaning so they can learn to read and expand their learning horizon.

Whether your child is a traditional early learner, who is ready to work with written symbols and words, or your child is in school and struggling to learn to read (often labeled dyslexic), the

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solution is the same. Your child needs an approach to learning that fits the way their brain is primarily functioning and developing at this time. They need a multi-sensory approach to learning to read to give them the chance to learn successfully, which most importantly, includes the mastery of **ALL** three parts of the 300 abstract words and symbols – specifically, 1) what the word **Looks** like, 2) **Sounds** like, and 3) **Means** 3-dimensionally.

Learn to Read, so you can Read to Learn.™