

Phonics Songs plus with Songs by Donny and Marie Osmond for Children Having Reading Difficulty

The author explains why teaching phonics with songs has advantages over traditional phonics instruction, especially for children with reading difficulty.

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Matthew Glavach

study using songs and chanting showed significant improvement in reading and attitude scores over traditional phonics. The Study: "The Effects of Singing and Chanting on the Reading Achievement and Attitudes of First Graders" was a doctoral dissertation completed at Clemson University.

https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/all_dissertations/280/

The author of this article Matthew Glavach, Ph.D. describes how using songs for teaching phonics benefits reading programs and describes how his program helps children with reading, especially children with reading difficulty, and the power that music and songs can have for learning.

The author's program PHONICS SONGS plus grades one and two are based on original instructional song lyrics written by the author with the music and songs by Donny and Marie Osmond. PHONICS SONGS plus has important phonics skills embedded in each song and hundreds of high-frequency reading words (sight words) appropriate for grades one and two. Songs have advantages over traditional phonics, and most importantly, it is fun and works.

A difficulty with using songs for reading is that children often memorize the songs, and the words are in sequential memory. The author uses a finger-point reading activity with each song that has students identify words quickly putting the words into long-term memory and available for reading. A difficulty with songs on a computer screen is that many children cannot follow the bouncing ball. Children need to point to each word.

A reason why reading scores are so low is that we are missing a fundamental step in the teaching of reading, and it is not phonics. The science of reading is pointing in the direction of phonics, and it works well for many, but not all.

Traditional phonics relies mainly on one learning style, one that many children may not be ready for or respond to. Children, especially children from challenged or disadvantaged environments, have been found to have underdeveloped or delayed language development and poor auditory discrimination for sounds. Distinguishing sounds is fundamental to learning to read.

Music with lyrics helps develop reading skills. The rhythm in songs is slower than speech and there is more separation of sounds This helps children develop the sounds for letters and improves auditory discrimination for sounds. The melody of songs can help with developing fluent reading skills. And the words in songs help in the development of language.

Listening to, playing, reading, and creating music, involves almost every part of the brain. If one pathway is weak, music can help open others. With practice, songs build stronger connections between the right and left sides of the brain and can bring many to read.

Learning to read requires attention, engagement, and repetition, all a part of singing. PHONICS SONGS plus is for all students, including students with reading difficulty and English as a Second Language. The program is easy to use by parents and teachers and brings fun and joy to reading. For those of us who go back a few years, Donny and Marie bring fond memories. The thirty-three songs include major phonics skills for grades one and two and hundreds of sight words. The program is available on the author's website for only 14.95 for the songbook and finger-point reading activities, and 14.95 for the CD with the songs for each grade at StrugglingReaders.com. and Amazon.

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