

Children Struggling with Phonics - Phonics Songs by Donny and Marie Osmond Can Help

Phonics lacks prosody, the melody of language, important for struggling readers. The author found a way to add it to phonics - with songs

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Neuroscientists who have been studying sound, the auditory processing system, tell something extraordinary - listening to and singing music can benefit a child's development including reading."

Matthew Glavach

The author's search for interventions for children who had not responded to phonics led to the role of prosody, the melody of language, and its importance to phonics and reading. The author found a way to include prosody to improve phonics instruction. It was through songs. While prosody in songs helps with fluency, meaning, and interest, the addition of songs includes even greater advantages: Children, especially children from challenged learning 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. The rhythm in songs is slower than in 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 meaning, interest, and fluent reading skills, and the words in songs help in the development of language.

Music is in 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. The brain processes words differently when they are sung and can bring many to read. Learning to read requires attention, engagement, and repetition, all a part of songs.

The author has a published article available at his website listed below "They Sing Their Way to Reading" which describes how teachers can use favorite songs to improve phonics instruction. The article can be printed.

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.

The author's program PHONICS SONGS plus for 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 appropriate for grades one and two. The thirty-three songs cover major phonics skills for grades one and two. The program is based on a first-grade study using only songs and chanting that showed significant improvement in reading and attitude over traditional phonics instruction.

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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 can be used as a phonics program or to supplement a phonics program, and for those of us who go back a few years, Donny and Marie bring fond memories. The program is available at the author's website: StrugglingReaders.com. and Amazon for 7.95 for the Songs and Instruction Book and 14.95 for the CD of Songs for each grade level.

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