

I See Me

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**A Reading Program for Children that Prevents
Dyslexia**

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Introduction

I See Me is the result of more than 30 years of research in the field of reading instruction. During that time I made a remarkable discovery, that the cause of dyslexia had nothing to do with a faulty brain. It was due to the fact that the child had acquired a holistic reflex by memorizing a sight vocabulary, or looking at children's books and recognizing words by their shapes as if they were Chinese characters.

Many children, when read the Dr. Seuss books by their parents, will memorize the words by sight. In other words, they have not been taught the letter sounds nor drilled in the vowel-consonant syllable units, and therefore do not and cannot see the phonetic structure of the word.

The problem is that when a child develops a holistic reflex—that is, an automatic habit or tendency to look at printed words as whole configurations—they automatically also acquire an obstacle to learning to read phonetically. This obstacle is what causes dyslexia.

The only way to prevent this from happening is to start teaching the child to read phonetically as early as possible and to avoid having the child memorize words by their configurations only. In this way, dyslexia can be prevented and the child can go on to develop a phonetic reflex, which will enable the child to become a fluent phonetic reader.

Our writing system is a phonetic one, that is, the alphabet is a set of graphic symbols, called letters, that stand for the irreducible sounds of the language. Once the child develops the essential phonetic reflex, reading becomes easy and enjoyable.

I See Me will enable the child to develop the needed phonetic reflex in an easy and pleasant way. Doing so will spare the child the frustration and often life-long suffering that comes with dyslexia.

Teaching the Alphabet and Letter Sounds

I See Me works very simply. First we teach the child the alphabet. This is easily done by use of the alphabet song. We teach both upper and lower case forms. While children quickly learn the alphabet in its proper sequence, they usually have more difficulty recognizing the letters at random. Have the child draw the letters on blank sheets of paper and have him or her cut out letters from magazine and newspaper ads. Use flash cards if you like. Don't be alarmed if the child after a while still does not recognize all the letters at random. The child will learn to recognize the letters more efficiently when you start teaching the letter sounds.

In the **Lesson One** we teach is the letter "I" in its capital form, since it is also a word. In this case, the name of the letter and the letter sound are identical. We explain that letters stand for sounds. Then we introduce the letter "s" and teach its sound: ssss. We then teach the sound of the letter "e". Here again the letter name and sound are identical. We then join the "s" with the double "ee" and get the word "see." We put I and see together to get the child's first sentence: I see.

In **Lesson Two** we teach the sounds of the following consonants: b, m, w. And then we join them to either double ee or single e: bee, me, we. We make sure that the child understands the alphabetic principle by isolating the sounds in each word and then joining them together. We also teach the word "a" which can be pronounced as its letter name.

Using what the child has already learned we can teach the following sentences:

I see me.

I see a bee.

We see a bee.

No pictures are necessary. In fact, pictures should be avoided to prevent the child from guessing the words by looking at pictures. However, the child can use his own imagination to visualize what the sentences mean. When a child looks into a mirror, he can say: "I see me."

In reading "I see a bee" and "We see a bee," the child can discuss what a bee is, how it buzzes, how it stings, how it produces honey, etc. The word "bee" suggests all sorts of ideas and images. If a child has never seen a bee, you can get a picture of one and show him what a bee looks like.

At this time it is also a good idea start teaching the child to write these words in cursive. Teach the cursive letters in isolation and then show how they can be joined to produce words and sentences.

The reason why we advocate teaching cursive first is because a child who learns to write cursive can learn to print later on quite well. However, if the child is taught to print first, he or she may never develop a decent cursive script, for the simple reason that after a year or two of printing the child will develop writing habits that become obstacles to the development of a good cursive script. Thus, many children will go on printing for the rest of their lives, others will develop a hybrid of part print and part cursive, and a small number will have mastered cursive writing and developed a fine penmanship.