

This booklet showed me a joyful, elegant method requiring a simple amount of materials on the shelf.

I studied the booklet and found the first and most important step was to bring myself back to a simplistic idea of 40 “key” sounds in the English language and 40 representations of those sounds. I needed to do lots of work to internalize these.

The next step was **THE “I SPY” GAME** stage.

All the “I Spy” game steps provided a firm, aural developmental base **before** the 40 sound symbols were introduced. I realized the importance of “I Spy” and knew this was where to start with the children. It wasn’t easy. I practiced all steps, building my confidence by following the guidelines given. When I first started with the game I used small objects reflecting the 40 “key” sounds. It made it more difficult than it needed to be. I decided to start using what I saw in the environment inside and outside and to not use the objects. The first stages of “I Spy” dealing with the beginning sound were very clear. The stage with the ending and middle sound was more challenging for me. I used a script card to help me gain confidence. The next steps came easily.

After mastering **ALL** of the “I Spy” stages came the **SANDPAPER LETTERS**.

It was so exciting to see the children naturally being attracted to the graphic symbols of the sounds. They had an inner desire to connect the sounds to a symbol. Individual presentations, small group work, and games happened on a daily basis.

“Treasure Hunt” and “Bring Me” were two of the games we played.

The children took more interest in learning the sound symbols when they were asked to pick some of the symbols themselves.

MOVABLE ALPHABET

The child now had the skills to try and express his own thoughts and feelings. He had increased his vocabulary, had fun with hearing sounds in all parts of a word, and now knew the symbols for these sounds. This step helped the child discover he had the ability to produce a thought in a written form. Initially the child could not read what he wrote nor was he or anyone else expected to read the word. However, it was a step towards reading. I kept following each child and saw skills and confidence continue to grow until the child made the discovery, “I can read!!”

Object Box 1 & Object Box 2 “Doorway to Reading” kept the joy of “I can read” alive. This work helped children discover that written thought has meaning, whether of their own or another’s thoughts.

The next stages of Muriel Dwyer’s booklet followed easily and helped me to approach the English Language in the same joyful way Maria Montessori approached Italian. After a firm aural developmental base and lots and lots of creative self expression with the movable alphabet, other learning just happened.

To receive the full testimonial (8 pages) free, send an email to furstsup@gmail.com