

Dictated Sentences for Word Concept Development

What is “Dictated Sentences” and why is it important?

“Dictated Sentences” (Bear et al., 1996) is a strategy that helps your child develop the concept of a word. Your child must "know what a word is" before he can read words.

How can I use “Dictated Sentences” with my child?

Encourage your child to tell you a sentence. You might ask him to respond to a text that you read together or to describe a personal event he wishes to share. As your child tells you the sentence, draw a line on the paper for each word dictated. For example, if your child says, “I went to the zoo yesterday,” you would draw six lines. Then write each word in the sentence in sequence on the lines. Your child can then illustrate the sentence and "read" it back. Perhaps he might make a book containing several sentences describing a trip to the zoo. By using this strategy, your child clearly sees the relationship between the spoken and written words. The words can subsequently be used for “Rebuilding Sentences” (Cunningham, 1991) activities.

