

Learning to Read While Grocery Shopping

— *A Kids Write To Read Activity* —
(Ages 3 & Up)



Look, there's the
ice cream!

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New.KidsWriteToRead.com

I'm Janet Kierstead — here to show you how you can help your child **learn to read and write at the same time** — in much the same way you helped them learn to speak. It's easy and children enjoy doing it.

Try this Write/Read While Grocery Shopping activity, and you'll see what I mean.

The activity is based on the child's own **Key Words**. These are the 1, 2, or sometimes 3 words a child uses to represent something they're especially **interested in**. You can use Key Words in various ways — and the following activity is a good way to get started. To expand on it, see the **Write/Read section** of the website. It shows how to guide your child's **skill development**, using **The Steps** — a series of follow-up activities for Key Words.

Using Key Words with Grocery Shopping

1. Shortly before you leave for your next shopping trip, tell your child what's on your list. Have them choose **ONE** item they want the most — something they **really like**. (**Interest** is very important here.)

Make sure they are **envisioning** it. For instance, say it's ice cream. Have them tell you what flavor they like best and the last time they had a cone. See if they remember where it is in the grocery store, and so on. Help them decide what Key Word(s) represent the item they want.



2. With the felt-tip pen, print the child's Key Word, **saying the name and/or sound** of each letter as you write it on a heavy paper. (A recipe card will do.)

Most letter names make the most common sound that letter makes — for one that doesn't, just casually make the sound that letter is making. So, for instance, with Ice Cream —

I — Say the **name of the letter, dragging out the iiiii sound**.

C — Drag out the **ssss sound, don't say any letter name**.

E — Stay **silent** as you write the **e**.

C — Make the **hard "K" sound, don't say any name**.

R — Say the **name R, dragging out the rrrrrr**,

EA — Say only the **name eeee** as you write **ea**,

M — Say the **name M, dragging out mmmm**.

3. After writing the entire word, trace over each letter with your finger. Invite the child to do it with the index finger of their writing hand. A very young child will just swipe over the entire word. (If so, just accept that for now — it will come later.)

4. Hold the word card about 2 or 3 ft. away and say the word. Have them to say it, too. Punch a hole in the corner of the card and help them place it on the metal ring. (A shower curtain ring will do. But a round ring is easier to handle.)



Then while shopping, help them match the card to the words written on different cartons of ice cream. See how many places they can find the word on labels under the shelf or written close by. **At the check stand**, let them put the item on the conveyor belt, with the word card on top. Let them explain to the checker what they're doing. In short, do whatever you can think of to tie the word card to the item. **After returning home**, see if they want to draw about the experience. If so, write their Key Word on regular paper, to glue under the drawing. Or have them **copy** the word, if they're **easily able to do it**.

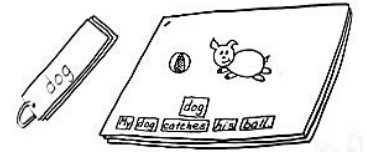
Next time you go shopping (hopefully in the next 2 or 3 days), show them the word and wait. **Don't say the word, don't give hints, just wait** to see if they recognize it. (It's not yet reading, more like remembering the entire experience.) If yes, then keep it on the word ring. If not, casually take it off and set it aside. Then talk to determine another item they want this time and repeat the process.

It is extremely important that only words they instantly recognize stay on the ring. This will build confidence with print. Leaving it on has the opposite effect. (In helping older children still struggling to read, I've found that most just lost confidence somewhere along the way and became "reluctant readers" or completely gave up. Starting them at Step 3, they would recover and quickly gain ground.)

Use The Steps to Guide Skill Development

You can use this same basic strategy in daily sessions at home, as described on the website. If you also use **The Steps** described there — a series of increasingly complex follow-up activities for Key Words — they'll easily learn to write. For writing skills are **integrated** into The Steps.

For instance, as the child grows, you would also have them dictate a complete sentence about their Key Word. So, gradually working through **The 6 Steps — at their own pace** — they will gain more skills. For instance, a child operating at Step 3, will dictate a sentence about their word, cut it up, then reassemble it. This causes them to work on more skills specific to reading.



Child's Writing Book at Step 3

Pages in the website in the section **Writing & Reading**, show you how to **model** the use of **punctuation, capitalization, spelling, etc.**, how to determine a young child's **readiness for print**, ways you can **modify Key Words for a very young child**, and more. You'll also find in that section **a video** showing how to introduce a child at Step 5 or 6 to reading simple, professionally written, story books.

So, working with Key Words and The Steps, a child is eventually able to write independently. And the skills they've acquired readily transfer to reading books. For by filling up one 5–page writing book after another, they have, in effect, created their own series of pre-primers. And they have been enjoying reading and re-reading these books to themselves and to others.

So with these experiences, the child will be learning to both **read and write — at the same time**. And they'll accomplish both in **about the same amount of time** it usually takes **just to learn to read**. But even more important, with The Steps to guide them, you've **ensured their** skill development. So, they've been through no struggle and had no chance to fail.

Instead of a hurdle they must pass, they will be **confident they can use both reading and writing** as a means of **communication**. And they will have done it with the same **pleasure** and **ease** as they learned to speak.

Summary and Looking Forward

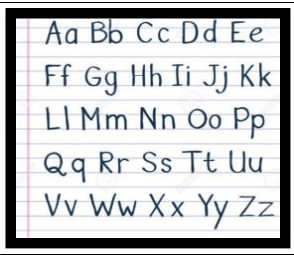
You don't need to buy and require your child to use separate teaching materials, like work sheets, lists of sight words, materials for memorizing phonics, spelling tests, etc. These can actually be harmful, for they can be confusing for some children. However, some children's workbooks are cleverly done and appealing. So, if a child **truly enjoys** them as a **choice activity supplementing Key Words**, it does no harm and might be **good practice**. But not as a primary method **for learning** these things.

For bottom line, a child learns best **through experience** — by **using skills** for a "real life" purpose. So, the best and easiest way to help a child is to follow the same basic strategy you used to help them learn to speak: **Carefully model** and give them time to **absorb** and **practice** what they see you doing. Just be a little more **intentional about guiding them** than we are with speech.

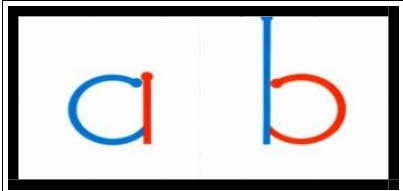
Also see on the website what you can be doing with **Phonics**, even when a child is very young — and what an older child can do to develop higher-level thinking skills, through **Projects**. Continue to read your child often, play with sounds in nursery rhymes other books, talk **with** them, and occasionally let them see you writing on your phone and other devices.

Finally, I've created the website as an all-volunteer project with the hope of making things easier for children, parents, and teachers. So, I'm happy to discuss any of this and answer questions. You can reach me through the Facebook Group, **Helping ALL Kids Write To Read**, which is dedicated to the ideas in the website.

Alphabet Formation Guides



Your printing does not have to be perfect, but the style you use should be clear and consistent. Here's a chart to use as a guide, in case you feel you need it.



Begin with the blue, and start at the top..