



WELCOME TO YOUR HOMESCHOOL BLENDING TOOLKIT

A parent's quick-start guide to clutter-free, science-backed reading mechanics.

Dear Parent,

If your child is hitting a wall with reading, crying at the kitchen table, or looking at a word they knew yesterday and blanking on it today – take a deep breath. It is not a reflection of their intelligence, and it is not a reflection of your teaching.

Most early childhood worksheets are designed for the adult buyer's eye, not the child's brain. They are packed with loud colors, heavy borders, and distracting cartoons that exhaust your child's limited working memory. Worse, they often teach children to look at pictures and "guess" words rather than actually read them.

At Bare Roots Learning, I build minimalist, distraction-free tools based strictly on the Science of Reading. I've stripped away the visual noise so 100% of your child's focus goes exactly where it belongs: on the letters and sounds.

Here is how to use your new 7-page daily learning system:



👉 PAGE 1: THE ROADMAP CHECKLIST

Use this gentle observation tool during regular storytime or breakfast to spot exactly where your child's decoding circuits are thriving or still forming.



👉 PAGE 2: THE 2-MINUTE DIAGNOSTIC GRID

The ultimate test. By having your child read real words next to "nonsense" words, you will instantly see if they are truly decoding or just guessing words from sight memory.



👉 PAGE 3: THE "READ, MAP, WRITE" CAT SHEET

This page walks your child through the exact neural sequence the brain uses to lock a word into long-term memory: Read the text, map the isolated sounds, and write it freehand on developmentally scaled guidelines.



👉 PAGE 4: THE REUSABLE MASTER MAT (Your Daily Tool)

Slip this page into a plastic dry-erase sleeve or laminate it! This turns your toolkit into an "open-and-go" daily routine you can use for weeks.



👉 PAGES 5 & 6: THE WORD BANK & CUT-OUT LETTER TILES

Don't stress about inventing words on the fly. Use the 50-word systematic bank to feed the master mat, and cut out the clean letter tiles to give your child a hands-on, tactile way to build words before they even pick up a pencil.



THE BARE ROOTS GOLDEN RULE:

You'll notice these pages are incredibly clean and clutter-free, utilizing soft tones and wide spacing to prevent visual crowding. The cute illustration on Page 3 is intentionally placed at the very bottom. Teach your child the rule:

"Read and write first, color second!"

The illustration is their reward for completing the hard cognitive work.





THE HOMESCHOOL PHONICS ROADMAP: 5 CORE LITERACY ANCHORS

A gentle, observation-based diagnostic checklist for parents of ages 4-7.



Take a deep breath, parent. You don't need a formal testing environment. Observe your child naturally over the next 48 hours during conversation, storytime, or breakfast. Check the box if they demonstrate the milestone.



ANCHOR 1: FIRST-SOUND ISOLATION

Can your child hear and pull out the first sound of a spoken word?
Example: If you say "sun," can they isolate and say the sound /s/?



ANCHOR 2: AUDITORY BLENDING

Can your child piece together isolated speech sounds spoken aloud?
Example: If you say /b/ /u/ /g/, can they blend them into "bug"?



ANCHOR 3: RHYME RECOGNITION

Can your child naturally identify matching ending-sound buckets?
Example: Do they recognize that "cat" and "hat" rhyme, but "cat" and "pig" do not?



ANCHOR 4: DIRECTIONAL PRINT TRACKING

Do your child's eyes track systematically left-to-right across a line of text?
Example: Do they point and read left-to-right without skipping or dropping lines?



ANCHOR 5: LETTER-SOUND RECALL

Can your child look at a lowercase printed letter and instantly say its sound?
Example: Looking at "m" and instantly making the sound /m/, not the name "em."



PARENT SUMMARY: If your child missed any boxes, their decoding circuits are still forming.
Keep practice brief, screen-free, and distraction-free.





THE 2-MINUTE DECODING DIAGNOSTIC GRID

Verify if your child is actually reading, or just guessing words from sight memory.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PARENT: Fold or cover the bottom half of this page back so the “Nonsense Words” are hidden while your child reads the “Real Words.” Have your child point to each word below and read it left-to-right. Do not rush them.



SECTION 1: REAL CVC WORDS

(Measures familiar letter-sound processing)

cat pin bug wet
mop sit



SECTION 2: NONSENSE CVC WORDS

(Measures decoding & phonetic blending)

lut baf gop
rit kem yog



THE DECODING FLIP: If your child flew through the real words but completely stumbled or guessed on the nonsense words, they are caught in the sight-word memorization trap. They need explicit speech-to-print mapping, not flashcards!



🌿 SPEECH-TO-PRINT MASTER WORKFLOW

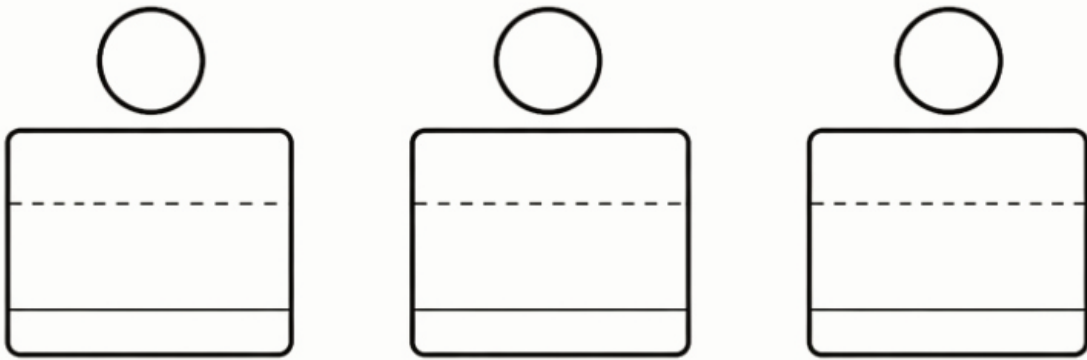
STEP 1: READ IT 👁️

Look at the word below. Trace your finger under it left-to-right and read it aloud.

cat

STEP 2: MAP IT 🗺️

Say the word slowly. Tap each circle as you hear the sounds. Then write one letter inside each box as you stretch the sounds: /c/ /a/ /t/.



STEP 3: WRITE IT

Use your writing muscles to write the complete word freehand on the guidelines.



THE REWARD ZONE: Did you finish reading and writing? Brilliant! You have unlocked the page. Pick up your crayons and color in the kitten!



 **MY DAILY OPEN-and-GO PHONICS MAT**




Slip this page into a plastic sheet protector or laminate it for a reusable routine!

STEP 1: WRITE & READ IT 

Parent: Write a 3-letter word from the Word Bank in the wide box below using a dry-erase marker. **Child:** Trace your finger under it and read it aloud.

STEP 2: MAP IT & WRITE IT  

Say the word slowly. Tap each circle as you say the isolated sounds. Then, use your marker to write one letter inside each box, using the dotted midlines to practice your neatest letter sizing!

		
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 **THE REWARD ZONE:**

Did you map and write your words today? Brilliant!
Draw a tiny star, a happy face, or your favorite animal in the box below to celebrate your kitchen-table win!



CVC WORD BANK

50 pure, decodable short-vowel words to feed your Reusable Master Mat.



HOW TO USE THIS WORD BANK: Pick 3 words each morning from a single vowel row below. Write them into Step 1 of your Blank Master Mat using a dry-erase marker. Master one vowel sound fully before moving down to the next row!

a



[**SHORT A**] • Focuses on the open vowel sound /a/ as in “apple”

cat mat tap pan rag bag hat map sad van

e



[**SHORT E**] • Focuses on the mid-vowel sound /e/ as in “egg”

wet net leg bed men pen red ten fed peg

i



[**SHORT I**] • Focuses on the front vowel sound /i/ as in “igloo”

pin sit pit dig win lip fin wig bin hid

o



[**SHORT O**] • Focuses on the open vowel sound /o/ as in “octopus”

mop fox pot log hop sun box dot cob top

u



[**SHORT U**] • Focuses on the central vowel sound /u/ as in “umbrella”

bug bun rug sun mud cup nut tub bus hug



PARENT SEATWORK TIP: For an extra challenge, dictate these words aloud WITHOUT writing them down first. See if your child can segment the individual speech sounds by ear and place the correct physical letter tiles onto the mat!





BARE ROOTS

LEARNING

THE TACTILE LETTER TILE SHEET

Cut along the dashed lines to create your hands-on letter manipulation toolkit!



HOW TO USE: Carefully cut out the letter squares below. Store them in a small envelope or jar. Before your child writes, have them physically slide these tiles into the sound boxes on their Master Mat to build words.

PRINT-AND-CUT ALPHABET TILES

a	a	b	b	c	d
e	e	f	g	g	h
i	i	j	k	l	m
n	n	o	o	p	p
r	s	s	t	t	u
u	v	w	x	y	z



DESIGNER PRO-TIP: Print this specific page on a thick piece of cardstock paper if you have it! It makes the tiles incredibly durable and tactile for tiny fingers.

