

A young girl with blonde hair is standing in a library, reaching up to a bookshelf. She is wearing a light blue top. The background is filled with colorful books on shelves.

# Reading for Life

Volunteers working  
to help children  
with learning  
difficulties

Samantha Hornery

2009 Consult &  
Collaborate  
Conference,  
Brisbane.



Unilever



learning links



University of  
Western Sydney

Bringing knowledge to life





*“I went from watching  
TV to reading books.”*

Over 2,000 primary school children  
helped by  
Reading for Life.

*“Thank you for  
helping me and  
other people do the  
work. I hope she  
still remembers me.*

*I will always  
remember her.”*



# Process of Reading for Life

Participating school and volunteers identified

Participating children assessed for entry

Participating volunteers trained

Volunteers and children matched

Children receive program for 15 weeks

End of program celebration

Re-testing of children



# Participating Children

- Years 1 to 4 (3 to 5 in QLD, WA, NT, SA, NZ);
- Identified as struggling to acquire literacy skills by teacher and Learning Links assessment;
- No significant cognitive, behavioural or mental health issues;
- Have an adequate grasp of English;
- Written parental consent to participate.



# Destination: Children with Reading Difficulties

## Intrapersonal

- Anxiety
- Poor self-concept
- Depression
- Dependency
- Poor health
- Learned helplessness
- Limited schooling

## Interpersonal

- Weak social skills
- Poor relationships
- Inappropriate behaviour

## Societal

- Delinquency
- Crime
- Unemployment
- Reliance on welfare
- Demands on health system
- Inability to compete in world markets

(Chapman, Tunmer, & Prochnow, 2000; deLemos, 2002; Durrant, Cunningham, & Voelker, 1990; Elkins, 2002; Maugbon, 2003; Rohl & Milton, 2002; Stanovich, 1986)

# Packing for the Journey: The Reading for Life Kit





# National Reading Panel

- Phonological Awareness has the greatest effect on phonemic awareness, reading, and spelling;
- Guided oral repeated reading is the most effective method of reading instruction;
- Comprehension needs to be taught by skilled teachers with a focus on strategy instruction.

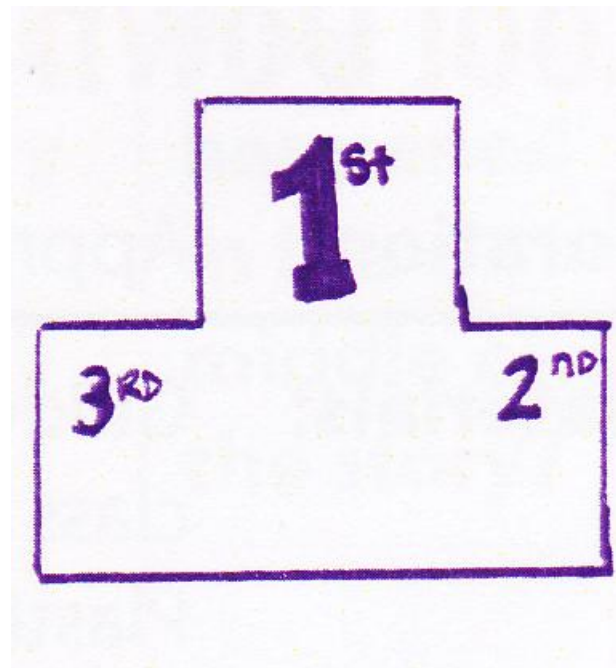
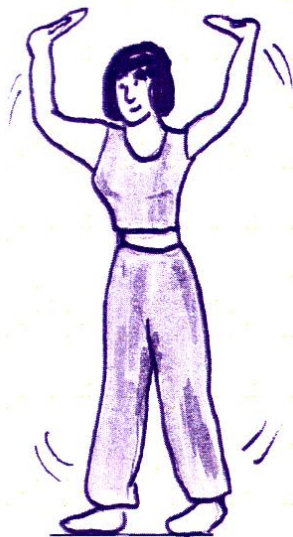
(NICHD, 2000)

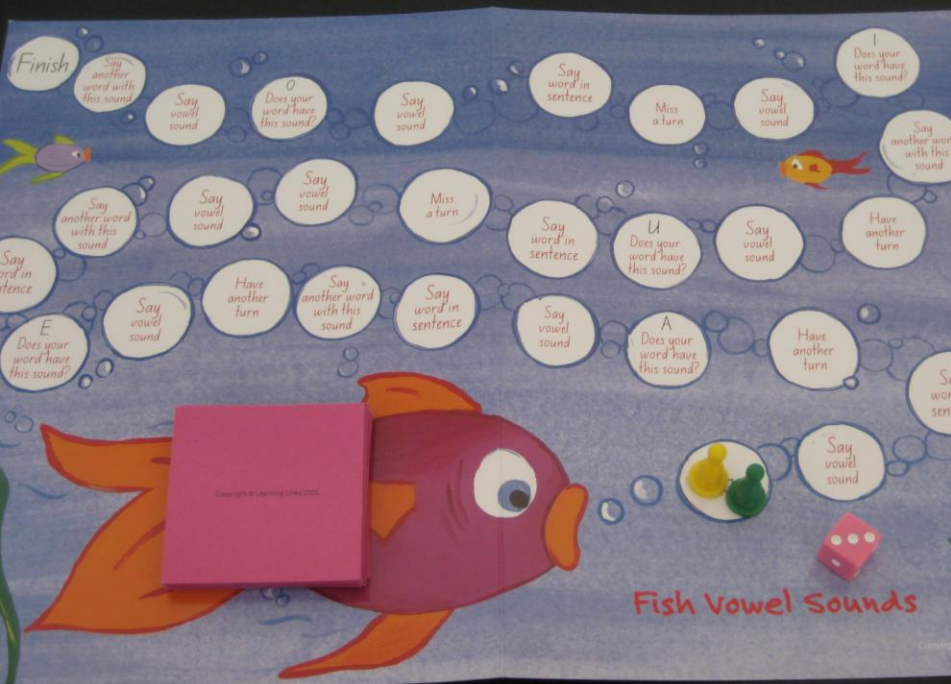
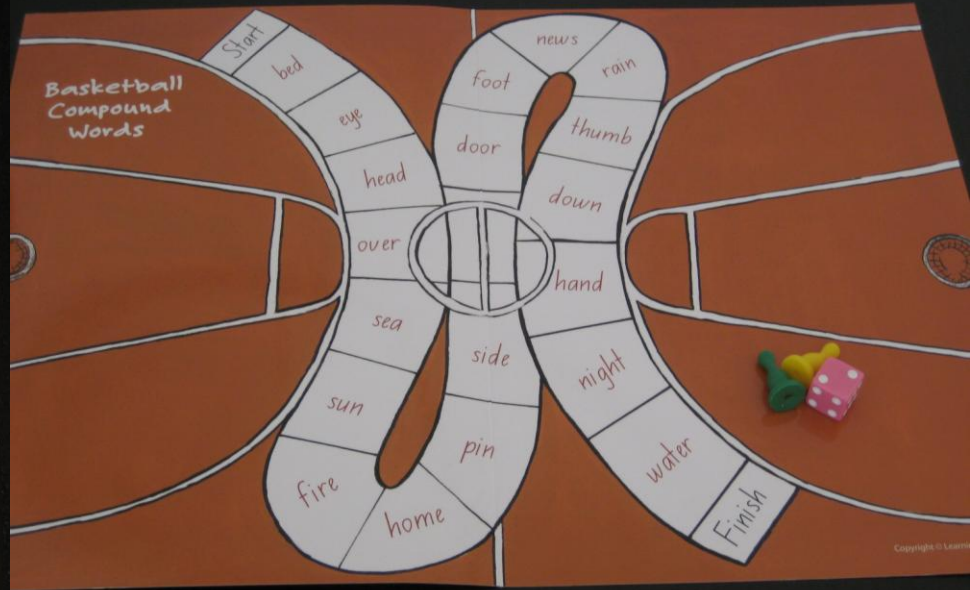


- Phonological Awareness is the greatest predictor of reading success (Juel & Meier, 1999; Torgesen, Wagner, & Rashotte, 1997);
- Children need a bank of sight words they can read automatically (Adams, 1990; Gaskins, Ehri, Cress, O'Hara, & Donnelly, 1996);
- Children benefit from reading with an adult model (Dowhower, 1987; Hoffman, 1997);
- Children require extensive practice to learn new skills (Beck, Perfitti, & McKeown, 1982);
- Direct instruction is the most effective teaching method (Hempenstall, 1997; Swanson, Carson, & Sachse-Lee, 1996).



- Tutors need strong training (Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, & Moody, 2006);
- Tutors need to be consistent and reliable (Elbaum et. al., 2006);
- Tutors need to follow a structured program (Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982);
- Programs should focus on lower level skills (Cohen et. al.,1982).





# Reading for Life Communication Book

This book belongs to

of Class

My Reading Buddy is

Inside you will find information for both parents and classroom teachers about the Reading for Life sessions. Please make sure the child takes this book to their Reading for Life session each week.

## READING HELPER

*As I reach a word I am unsure of I can ask myself:*

Do the pictures help me?

Have I seen this word before?

Does it look like a word I already know?

Can I find a smaller word hidden inside this word that I already know?

What are the vowel sounds?

Are there any sounds in the word I already know?

Can I sound it out?

Can I read ahead and then go back to that word?

Can I try a word I think might make sense?

I will ask for help if I can't read this word.

Then I'll go back and re-read it to remember it.



## Encourage self-recognition.

*You have read that story well (**identify competence**).*

*You're doing very well in reading (**generalise to subject area**).*

*You must feel good about your abilities in reading (**encourage internalisation**).*

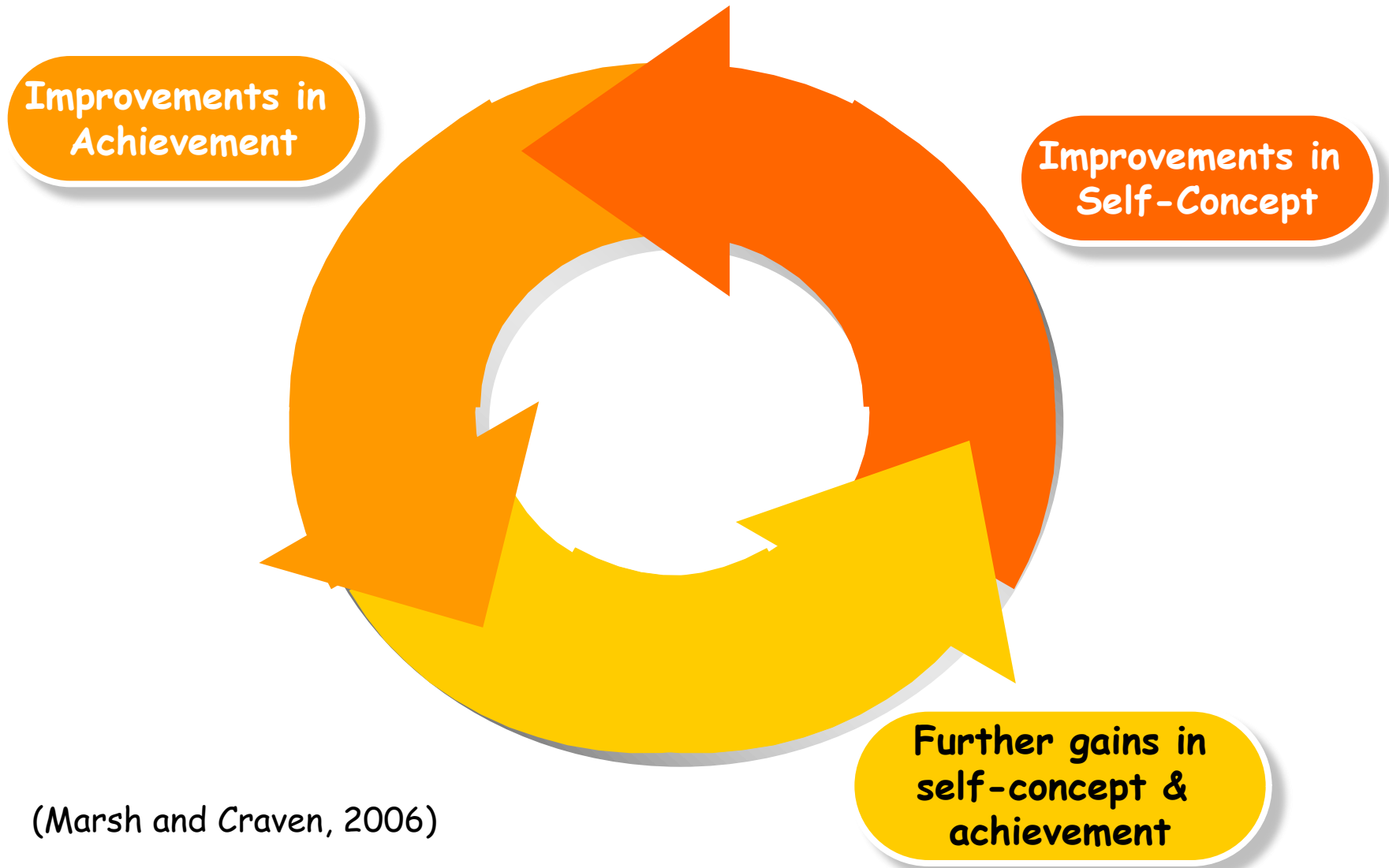
*I do too (**model internalisation now and then**).*

## Here are some full examples:

If you compare this page of work with what you did back here, it must make you feel good to see how much you've improved.

That's two weeks running all your reading work has been done really well. You must feel good about the way you're keeping on doing things so well in reading.

# Reciprocal Effects Model



(Marsh and Craven, 2006)

"I want to do it the rest of my life. Even if I'm in Year 6 I'll still do it."

"It's fun, the best thing in the world at school. Oh no, second best, sports better."

"When I go out of school I'd like to be a reading buddy."

"I feel different and I feel good because I can read a lot faster and I can also read long words. He helped me and you know how you get a long word and can break them up into things"

[www.readingforlife.net.au](http://www.readingforlife.net.au)

[www.learninglinks.org.au](http://www.learninglinks.org.au)





**Samantha Hornery**  
**samhornery@me.com**  
**0412 601 972**