



## **A linguistic awareness intervention program for older children struggling with reading and spelling:**

### **Reference:**

Kirk, C., & Gillon, G. (2009). Integrated morphological awareness intervention as a tool for improving literacy. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 40: 341–351.

### **1. Picture sort: Identification of long and short vowels**

To encourage the identification of long and short vowels, pictures of monosyllabic words are sorted according to the length of the vowel. Sorting pictures allows the child to focus on the sound of the vowel without being distracted by the orthography. The accurate discrimination of vowel length is essential for learning many of the orthographic patterns included in the intervention program.

### **2. Word sort: Long vowels with silent 'e' versus short vowels**

|     |      |
|-----|------|
| cut | cute |
| win | wine |
| rip | ripe |
| mat | mate |
| rob | robe |
| cub | cube |
| din | dine |
| pip | pipe |
| hat | hate |
| hop | hope |

### **3. Word sort: Monosyllabic words ending in [k] (long vowels versus short vowels)**

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| lick  | like  |
| clock | cloak |
| sack  | sake  |
| tack  | take  |
| trick | trike |
| sock  | soak  |
| stock | stoke |
| lack  | lake  |
| rack  | rack  |
| spick | spike |

#### 4. Word sort: Base words and suffixes with orthographically and semantically transparent words

To introduce the idea that some words are morphologically complex, base words and suffixes that are orthographically and semantically transparent are used. For example, the word *leader* is semantically transparent as it is the sum of the meaning of its two component morphemes. The agentive *-er* suffix means “someone who Xs” (where ‘X’ stands for the baseword). Thus, *leader* means someone who leads. The word *leader* is also orthographically transparent; there is no change to the spelling of the base word when the suffix is added. In addition, comparison of the agentive *-er* suffix and the comparative *-er* suffix (e.g., *helper* vs. *smaller*) helps to make the point that suffixes are more than just a collection of graphemes, and that they alter the meaning of the base word in predictable ways.

The purpose of this word sort is to allow participants to recognise the smaller word inside the larger word



example,

|          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| boyish   | kittenish |
| devilish | hawkish   |

**12. Word sort: -en (means 'to make something X')**

|          |            |
|----------|------------|
| freshen  | thicken    |
| dampen   | fatten     |
| sadden   | madden     |
| tighten  | lighten    |
| brighten | frighten   |
| deepen   | sweeten    |
| lengthen | strengthen |

When the child reaches 80-90% accuracy any word list, you should make the task more difficult by mixing words from different lists.

In each session, you should aim to include the following:

1. Identification of long and short vowels
2. Sorting of one monomorphemic word list, e.g., words ending in –ke vs. –ck
3. Sorting of one multi-morphemic word list, e.g., words ending –ing. Be sure to talk about meaning of the word, including how the suffix changes the meaning of the base word.
4. Prompted spelling of the monomorphemic words and multi-morphemic used in the word sorts.
5. As the child gets more proficient at the tasks you can include more than one monomorphemic word list and more than one multi-morphemic word list in each session.







