

English

7: Assistance for the underachiever

Main ideas

- Children may fall behind the required level for a variety of reasons, including social, emotional and physical
- Children in this category are termed children with 'additional needs'.
- Dyslexia is a term given to those who are not achieving the required level in literacy.
- Teachers need to provide special assistance for those with 'additional needs'.

Outcomes

On completion of this session teachers will:

- be aware of the practical steps they can take in assisting children with additional needs
- be able to involve the home and school community in providing assistance
- understand that God can bring about great changes

Content

How do we help children who are underachieving?

Discussion

Read '**a teacher's testimonial**' on the *Beacon Media* website:
www.beaconmedia.com.au - Teaching and Administration tools
(Also in recorded the appendix)

What are some of the causes of failure to thrive in the classroom in the area of literacy?

What can teachers do?

How can we use our Christian faith to encourage these children?

Tips for helping the underachiever:

1. Within the classroom:

- give work at their level; break down or simplify the tasks; make sure that written material is at their reading level
- Group work – use mentors / student support.
- Parents or assistants to sit by them and offer assistance – but not to DO the work for them

2. Out of the classroom

- withdraw for 20 minutes at a time for one-on-one work. Parents or assistants can follow a set program / routine. (See example - Bridges)
- withdraw a small group of same ability level, if there is an extra teacher available, or a pre-service teacher.

3. Homework

Guide parents in how they can help at home –

- Not harsh or condemning but always encouraging
- Reading together; reading to the child
- writing stories and letters together

One-on-one assistance sessions for lower primary

Parents or assistants can be given a set routine for working with students one-on-one. A session should be for half an hour per day, for 3 or more days per week.

Session content:

Vocabulary – 5 minutes

Child reads 5 and 10 high frequency words on cards.

Each time the word is said correctly, the helper places a tick on the back of the card.

When there are 5 ticks on the back, then word is replaced.

Familiar Reading – 5 minutes

The child reads aloud a familiar short story or rhyme at the independent level. The aim is for fluency and enjoyment.

Reading Together – 5 minutes

This is a book at instructional level. It should be read *by* child *to* the assistant but if the child is finding difficulty, then assistant may read with the child. It is not necessary to read the whole book – just a few pages. Use sticky notes to mark the place.

Writing a response – 5 minutes

This is an opportunity for the child to enjoy a story read by an adult. The story must be short. Instead, you could use a picture for discussion. "Hats" will encourage discussion after the story. Teacher chooses one question only from the following:

Red (Emotions) - How did you feel when...? or How do you think X felt when...

Blue (Thinking) - What did you learn from...? What would you like to know about?

Green (Creativity) - What else could have been done? What would you have done?

White (Information) - What was ...? Who was...? How many? Where?

Yellow (Good Points)- What is something good that happened? What was fun?

Black (Bad Points) - What was wrong with? What went wrong? What could have gone wrong if?

Gold – What would Jesus have done?

*Now the child writes in a sentence the answer to the question that the reading helper has asked. The reading helper and the child have a pen each and they both work together in writing the sentence. The child fills in the letters or words that he knows. The reading helper writes the rest. The sentences the child has written can be kept in a folder for future reading.

Game – 5 minutes

Word Bingo

Tic Tac Toe

Flashcard game - jump on ...

Boggle - Make words from cut up letters - who can make the most in 1 minute?

Scrabble

Board game

Sentence maker - Make sentences from cut up words -Who can use the most words in sentences in 1 minute?

Cut-up sentences

I spy

spinning wheel

word shapes

word stairs

snap

concentration

Preparation for one-on-one assistance sessions

Each child must have their own names plastic document wallet. The teacher supplies the following:

1. a set of 5 high frequency words in an envelope
2. a well known reading book or rhyme.
3. a reading book at the instructional level
4. a set of coloured cardboard ' thinking hats' (2D)

Ideas for small group assistance

Phonics

Follow up the phonics group being taught in class, e.g. 'ay' words – day, pray etc.

Use games and rhymes.

Have the rhyme printed and read it together. Ask the children to highlight the words on the rhyme with that particular phonetic family.

e.g. Twinkle twinkle little **star**, how I wonder what you **are**.

Reading fluency

Use flashcard sentences for 'speed reading'.

Picture chats

Thinking hats

Story sequencing

Big Books

Action rhymes and activities for crossing the midline (see appendix)

Writing a story together

Assessment

Make a study of the beacon media articles on additional needs.

See www.beaconmedia.com.au - Teaching and administration tools.

Write a 500 word summary on the types of three additional needs, some of the causes if known, and some of the ways of helping these children in the classroom.

Appendix

Action rhymes and activities for crossing the midline

Activities

Drawing figure eights sideways (infinity sign) – in the air

Cross-crawl – marching on the spot with right hand slapping left knee and left hand slapping right knee alternatively

Mirror image drawing – use a crayon in each hand, starting from a vertical centre line in the middle of the page. Draw the same image on each side of the paper using left and right hands.

Musical rhythm activities

Bouncing a ball with left hand and right hand alternatively

Action Rhymes

1. Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

All the king's horses and all the king's men

Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Actions:

1. Sit on a chair or on the floor cross-legged.
2. Palms slap knees. (Left palm – left knee; right palm – right knee)
3. Palms slap knees. (Right palm – left knee; left palm – right knee)
4. Repeat step 2.
5. Repeat step 2, but cross hand the opposite way.

2. Ishy Wishy

Ishy Wishy was a fishy, swish, swish, swish.

Actions:

1. Draw a figure 8 on its side, (or an infinity sign), with your finger in the air.
2. Repeat the rhyme, drawing with the other hand.
3. Repeat steps 2 and 3.

3. Over, Under

Over, under, round and through
What a tricky thing to do.

Actions:

1. Take a small object, like a rubber or eraser.
2. Stand.
3. Take the rubber in your right hand and pass it under your left knee.
4. With your left hand take the rubber and pass it under your right knee.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4.

4. I can draw a circle

I can draw a circle. I can draw a square,
I can draw a diamond in the air.
I can draw a flower, I can draw a tower.
Up, up, up,
Down, down, down.
Spiral, spiral, round and round.
Now sit down.

Actions:

1. Draw a circle and a square, using pointer fingers of both hands, from the middle line, starting at the top.
2. Do the same for the diamond, flower (daisy head) and tower (long rectangle).
3. Up, up, up - draw 3 bubbles joined together, from bottom up, (using pointer fingers of both hands)
4. Down, down, down – come back down, tracing over the bubbles, top to bottom.
5. Each pointer finger draws a spiral from the centre out, simultaneously.
6. Sit down

5. Peas Porridge

Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold,
Peas porridge in the pot, nine days old.
Some like it hot, some like it cold.
Some like it in the pot, nine days old.

Actions:

1. Stand facing a partner.
2. Slap knees with hands.
3. Clap
4. Pat your partner's hands, open palms.

5. Clap
6. Repeat steps 2-5 seven times.

6. Ipsy Wipsy Spider

Ipsy Wipsy Spider, climbed the water spout.
Down came the rain and washed poor Ipsy out.
Out came the sunshine and dried up all the rain.
So Ipsy Wipsy Spider climbed the spout again.

Actions:

1. Middle finger right hand on left hand thumb.
2. Climb upwards twisting middle finger left hand on right hand thumb.
3. Repeat, gradually climbing upwards for the first line.
4. Make fingers come down like rain.
5. Make arms come out from the centre line in a circular movement.
6. Repeat steps 1 and 2.

7. The Grand Old Duke of York

The Grand Old Duke of York
He had ten thousand men.
He marched them up to the top of the hill
And he marched them down again.
And when they were up they were up.
And when they were down they were down.
And when they were only half way up
They were neither up nor down

Actions:

1. Stand
2. On "Grand", lift left knee and slap with right palm.
3. On "Duke", place left foot on ground.
4. On "York", lift right knee and slap with left palm.
5. Then place right foot on ground.
6. Continue with this rhythm pattern for the whole rhyme.

8. Pat-a-cake

Pat-a-cake, pat-a cake baker's man
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.
Pat it and prick it and mark it with "B"
And put it in the oven for baby and me.

Actions:

1. For the first 2 lines, use the same actions as "Humpty Dumpty".
2. Pat and prick it: 2 knee slaps and 2 pricks on knees with pointer fingers.
3. Mark it with "B": Make a capital B lying on its side, using pointer fingers from centre line.

4. Put it in the oven: Palms side by side facing up. Pretend to slide tray into oven.
5. "Baby: – point out. "Me" – point to self.

A Teacher's testimonial

by Margaret McIntyre

Terry was in the last year of primary school. Like most children of that age he was "a big fish in a little pond", and acted up quite a lot. He was obviously capable of a good academic standard, but he seldom made the effort to achieve it. During the first few months of that year we had a number of confrontations, which result in Terry's father being called to the school. We explained to him what was going on and encouraged him to actively support us in trying to get Terry to settle down and do the standard of work he was capable of. But even after several sessions with his father there was little change in Terry's attitude.

The root of the problem, we eventually learned, was that Terry's grandfather had been a hard disciplinarian, and his father had determined, "I'm not going to treat my kids the way I was treated." As a result he had gone to the opposite extreme and virtually opted out of the responsibility of training his children, leaving it all to his wife.

The day came when we felt we must come to grips with the situation, so we arranged a meeting of parents, Terry and myself. After we had discussed the problem in general terms, it came to mind to ask Terry, "Have you ever asked Jesus to come into your life?"
"Yes, I did when I was little."

His parents affirmed this, but it was clear that he needed to make a more mature commitment. Terry expressed his willingness to open his life to Jesus. Then God reminded me, "It's the father's duty and privilege to lead his son in this. Encourage him to do it."

Terry's father ministered to him beautifully, asking forgiveness for neglecting to discipline him when he needed it, and praying with him in a new commitment to living for God. From that time on there was a complete transformation in his attitude and behaviour and Terry completed his final year of primary school with a very good report, achieving a high standard in both academic studies and general attitudes. The following year Terry went on to a state high school. His parents came to see me one day with a problem, "Terry is doing really well in high school in every subject except English. We don't understand why this should be. Would you please pray with us about this?"

Once again Terry, his parents and I met together to pray, asking God to show us where Terry's problem lay. As we prayed the understanding came: English is all about communication. Because Terry's father had not communicated with him through his earlier years, Terry had difficulty with the subject of communication, English. There had been a good degree of healing

the previous year after Terry recommitted his life to God, but there was need of further healing now.

Once again his father asked forgiveness, both of God and of Terry, for his negative attitudes which were initiated by a lack of relationship with his son. Then we prayed that God would heal the communication channels between Terry and his father and others, and that his ability in English at school would also improve.

The following week Terry's class sat an English test. When the results came out, much to his joy and amazement, Terry had gained the highest marks in the class. He had no further difficulties with English. The ability had been there all along, but it had been necessary for God to clear the emotional and spiritual block that affected his ability to communicate before Terry could achieve his full potential at school.

POINTS TO PONDER

Are there changes I could make in my approach to teaching that would make 'knowing God' the primary aim of every lesson?

Can I do more to involve parents in the training of their children, keeping in mind that it is God's plan that fathers should train their children? Eph. 6:4

How important are emotional issues to the learning process?