WHAT IS NONSENSE WORD FLUENCY?

A nonsense word is a word in which the letters make their most common sounds but the word has no commonly recognized meaning. (ex. tist, lof)

Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) assesses knowledge of basic letter-sound correspondences and the ability to blend letter sounds into consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) and vowel-consonant (VC) words.

One reason that nonsense words are considered to be a good indicator of the alphabetic principle is that make believe words (or pseudo words) have no meaning and reading them demonstrates the student’s ability to apply letter sound (grapheme-phoneme) knowledge in decoding. (Rathvon, 2004, p. 138). The student cannot guess the word.

There are two scores for NWF. The Correct Letter Sounds (CLS) is the number of letter sounds produced correctly in 1 minute. For example, if the nonsense word was *dif* and the student read /d/ /i/ /f/ the score for correct letter sound would be 3. If the student read /di/ /f/ or “dif”, the score would also be 3. If the student read /b/ /i/ /f/, the score would be 2 since the student misread the /d/ for /b/.

Whole Words Read (WWR) is the number of make-believe words read correctly as a whole word without first being sounded out. If the student reads the correct sounds in the make-believe word all blended together without first being sounded out, they get an extra point for the whole word read.

The goal is for students to read whole words on NWF. This measure is generally used from the middle of kindergarten through the beginning of second grade.

*Research is very clear that NWF is a primary skill that must be mastered to enable students to become proficient in reading comprehension.*

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Blending Activities

* **Touch and Say** – Spell a word with letter tiles. Have the child touch each letter and say the sound. After correctly matching each letter with the sound it represents, the child blends the sound together without stopping. The child then says the whole word. As he/she becomes more confident, encourage the child to blend the sounds together without saying the sounds individually. This will skill improves with practice.

* **3-Sound Word Deck** – Sort letter cards into 3 decks. Decks 1 and 3 have consonant cards. Deck 2 has vowel cards. The parent deals 3 cards to for a random CVC nonsense word. The child sounds out and reads the word. The parent deals one new card from any deck, thereby changing the word. The child reads the new word. The parent continues to deal letter cards and create new words for the child to read. The parent should select letter sounds that the child struggles with, to get extra practice on those letter sounds.

* **Word Chains** – Using movable letters or letter tiles start with a simple CVC word. Change one letter-sound at a time to create new words. Same format as 3-Sound Word Deck, except you are using movable letters or letter tiles.

*This information is from the DIBELS.org website.*