

Next, begin at the top of the ladder and help your child to blend each two-letter combination as he proceeds down the blend string. (NOTE: Remember to use the same consonant at the beginning of each combination.

For example:

DO use: ba, be, bi, bo, bu.

DO NOT use ba, ce, di, po, mu.

By placing the same consonant at the beginning of each combination, your child will learn a left-right reading sequence.

Teaching Tip: If you do decide to present two-letter combinations that begin with differing letters, **ONLY** use beginning letters that your child has already mastered on a previous blend ladder. *The Candy 4WAY Phonics Program* does this automatically throughout its sequenced *Candy Daily 4WAY Phonics Lessons*.

It is important that you exercise extreme patience when teaching the ladder blend strings. Some children take weeks and even months to catch on to these blends. Every child has his own “timer” inside. So respect that timer, because God put that timer inside your child for a reason.

When you help your child through a blend combination, always use a pointer (the end of a pencil) and point, first, to the vowel by placing the tip of the pencil point under the vowel. The pointer enables your child’s eyes to focus where YOU want those eyes focused. Have your child say the vowel aloud. If he cannot pronounce the vowel, say it for him. Then have him repeat it. Repeat the vowel as often as

necessary. Once again, always have the tone of your voice pronounce the vowel as if you've NEVER PRONOUNCED IT BEFORE. Your patient tone of voice will convince your child that he/she is "smart." Always repeat any sound your child needs repeated as if you've NEVER SAID THAT SOUND BEFORE – even if it's the thousandth time you've repeated that same sound.

After your child has pronounced the vowel, place your pointer back to the beginning of the blend combination, pointing to the beginning consonant, and sweeping your pencil under both the consonant and the vowel as you read through the blend combination (reading from left to right).

What you have done here is to begin your child's reading adventure by teaching him that the vowels in words are the most important letters. You've taught your child that the first thing to focus on in the word is the vowel, but you've also taught your child that you have to go back to the beginning of the word and blend into the vowel and on through the vowel, thus establishing a solid left/right reading sequence.

This is why it's so very important to use a pointer to help your child's eyes to focus where you want them to focus. Practicing in this way will enable your child to develop a pattern establishing the vowel sound inside of a word BEFORE reading through the word.