Welcome back to Read2Succeed! I am so excited that you are returning to continue the important work with our students and I am looking forward to a great school year.

In this video I will be taking a few minutes to go over some key points, answer some common questions, and share a few tips and tricks to help you improve your sessions in the first grade vocabulary program.

As you may know, vocabulary plays a key role in the reading process and is critical to reading comprehension. Students learn the meanings of most words indirectly, through everyday experiences with oral and written language. Other words are learned through carefully designed instruction such as the Read2Succeed vocabulary enhancement program.

Educators often consider four types of vocabulary; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary plays an important part in learning to read. Beginning readers must use the words they hear orally to make sense of the words they see in print. Students who hear more words spoken at home learn more words and enter school with better vocabularies. In contrast, it’s much harder for a beginning reader to figure out printed words that are not already part of their speaking or oral vocabulary.

Research shows most vocabulary is learned indirectly through everyday experiences with oral and written language. Examples include back-and-forth conversation with an adult, listening to adults read aloud and reading independently. Direct vocabulary instruction helps students learn difficult words that represent complex vocabulary relevant to a given text and leads to better reading comprehension. The Read2Succeed program uses both indirect and direct instruction.

Let’s quickly review some of the steps of the vocabulary program:

* The assessment is a valuable tool for our program. It takes an inventory of what the student knows prior to the program beginning and then evaluates their learning afterwards. This tool assists with the annual program evaluation and ultimately impacts future funding.
* Helping the student to understand what vocabulary means and how it’s helpful to them is a valuable step. Please take a few minutes at the beginning of each session to review these important concepts inside the student’s composition journal.
* It’s important to follow the steps as closely as possible inside the volunteer guide. It’s okay if occasionally a student does not want to draw a picture in their journal or write their sentence. If the student refuses regularly or is not enjoying the program, please contact the Read2Succeed staff to discuss possible solutions.
* If time allows, please review the high-frequency words with your student at the end of each session. An instruction sheet is provided in the kit.

Here’s a few tips to help improve your tutoring sessions:

* The assessment should be done quickly (10 minutes or less.) Reassure your student that you are trying to find out what they already know about the words you will be learning together during the program. It’s okay that they don’t know what the words mean as you will be learning the meanings of the words together.
* Check ONLY one box that best describes the student’s response to each word. A response can only be an accurate definition or example, not both. Be sure each word has a mark, otherwise it’s assumed the student did not know or answer for that word. The max score is 144 for the pre- and the post-test assessments.
* Keep the assessment simple, it should not become stressful for you or the student.
* The majority of the books in the program are above the student’s reading level. Remember the goal is to increase the student’s vocabulary, therefore it’s important that YOU read the story to the student. Students do acquire bigger vocabularies by listening to you read the stories aloud.
* Emerging readers may want to read to you, in this case we suggest telling the student to whisper read along with you. Encourage them to read the story independently at home.

Here’s what’s new for the 20-21 school year:

* The first session does not include a book. This will allow more time for you to connect with your new student and get to know them. Three key vocabulary words relating to books and the concepts of print will be taught instead along with administering the pre-test assessment.
* Vocabulary “flash cards” are not included this year. The picture graphics for the vocabulary words are now included on the journal sheets instead. If you prefer a set of vocabulary flash cards, we can send last year’s set upon request.
* Four new books are included: Dive, Dolphin, Bee-Bim Bop, Alma and How She Got Her Name, and My Name is Yoon - 14 books in total for a 24 week program. Dive, Dolphin replaces Koalas since the publisher has this book on backorder indefinitely. The Snowy Day and I Know a Wee Piggy are now one-session books. Both the first and second set of books include stories that celebrate a diverse culture.
* A slight tweaking was made to the meaning of vocabulary and some of the vocabulary word definitions.
* Sessions may be schedule twice a week instead of once a week. This is pending school and teacher approval.

I hope this information has been helpful to you. A transcript of this video may be found on the Foundation website, volunteers tab and then resource page.

Remember, you are a vital part of helping your students to become strong readers. Staying consistent by tutoring weekly is key to their success. Thank you for your commitment and all that you do for our students and the Read2Succeed program.