

Reading Our Way is an innovative reading program that has been designed to teach early reading and word recognition to both children and adults. The all-inclusive program teaches sight words through fun, interactive and engaging activities, with everything that is needed to implement the program included in the kit.

So why is a visual approach to reading so important? Well studies have shown that approximately 65% of the world's population are visual learners, compared to the 30% who are auditory. 1Traditionally in schools, teachers use a range of auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning when teaching the curriculum; however visual learners often fall through the cracks, as short-term memory recalls visual cues much better than auditory cues.

Who are visual learners? Visual learners can be a large number of the population, not necessarily anyone who has an impairment or disability, although the program has been designed for such learners. Visual learners who would benefit from the program may include: Students with Down syndrome, Indigenous students, 3 intellectually impaired students, students with limited memory retention, hearing impaired students and students with limited auditory processing capacity and those whom a phonetic approach to reading is not working. Students who are not getting their learning needs met, may not only learn less but may suffer motivational problems and enjoy the school experience less than their peers.

Does the 'Reading Our Way' program use phonics? Phonics are a necessity when teaching to read, however the 'Reading Our Way' program uses a 'whole word' approach to learning to read. Visual learners are taught to recognise the whole word, which as studies suggest is a way children learn to read more quickly.

This is not to say that phonics are not encouraged, as research suggests that when visual students have the reading skills of a typically developing 7 or 8 year old, they will begin to use their phonic skills independently to read and to spell, like other children. Therefore; we need to teach whole word reading AND phonetics to students who are visual learners.