7.   An Overview

The program functions around three organizational features: the learning tree and tree house metaphor, the integrated literacy system, and the features and functions of the lessons.

The Learning Tree of Sounds and Tree House of Words Metaphors

The learning Tree of Sounds and Tree House of Words metaphors are the entry point for each lesson for the students. These set the environment for fun and adventure for the students. The students enter the park, see the tree, and enter the tree house. As students learn new sounds, the sounds hang from the learning tree.

Letters and New Sounds Hang from the Learning Tree

As the student starts the program, the learning tree is empty. As the student learns the association of sounds (phonemes) with letters (graphemes), the sounds, represented by English alphabet letters, hang from the tree. When the student points and says or as you point and say these letters and sounds, the student hears each of 51 general American sounds. The result is an interactive learning tree that makes the 51 sounds using single or combination letters. The first page shows an empty tree. By the time the student gets to *sing*, *sang*, *sung*, *song* in the last lesson, the tree is full of the 51 sound/letter combinations. The letters, with their sounds, remain on the tree until the end of the program and are excellent for review and practice.

New Words—Written and Pronounced—Build the Word Wall

As the student progresses and masters each lesson, the word in that lesson with the embedded sound is used to build the Word Wall. The words remain in the wall until the end of the program and make an excellent review and practice site. Again you and the student will share pointing and saying the words. You both may also point and sound the words on the Tree of Sounds.

The adding of the letters and their sounds to the Tree of Sounds, and words and their sounds to the Word Wall increases the sense of suspense, reward, and accomplishment. As the program progresses, the student finds that the Learning Tree and the Word Wall are active summaries of what has been learned, each growing larger as lessons are completed.   In this way the tree and the Word Wall add the new sounds and the new words just learned in the previous lesson. Each new lesson starts with a review of the previous lesson's word and sound.

The Tree House Teaches Three Lessons

Once the student is inside the tree house, you will teach principles and lessons about the new word and review the words already learned in previous lessons. The tree house is the primary teaching page of the book. You will point and say the letters of the new word. For example, you will point and say *cat—c a t—cat*. You will have your student point and say *cat—c a t—cat*. The student should repeat this until *cat* is mastered. Next, point to *cat* at the top of the blackboard and say *cat*. Have your

student point to *cat* at the top of the blackboard and say *cat*. You will repeat this process for each of the lesson words when they are introduced. As you and your student proceed through the book, you will be instructed to teach specific principles such as, long and short vowels, silent *e*'s at the end of words, and sight words which use the sounds of the lesson word.