

# Pops Resources

by Marie Dunleavy, [www.popsresources.ie](http://www.popsresources.ie)

**P**ops (*Plenty of Potential Resources*) is a fully integrated reading programme, supported by word cards, phonic sets and educational games, which is printed in Ireland. Marie Dunleavy, a former Mayo-woman who now lives in Scotland, had difficulty finding suitable materials to help her son, who has Down Syndrome, to read. She noticed that he had difficulty with word decoding. She also realised that having fun prolonged the time he was prepared to apply himself. That was the inspiration for this delightful series, which has been written in consultation with speech therapists and learning support teachers. The stories are based on the everyday life of the Pops family. Children with learning difficulties or specific language impairment will identify with the central character, Kal, who has Down Syndrome. He is presented as engaging in the everyday family experiences that any child can relate to, while enjoying a little mischief with his brothers, sister

and his cat. A key feature of the programme is progress through small easy steps with plenty of consolidation through games and activities. The use of humour is also a strong feature which will help to make the learning fun. The programme promotes language development by using the strong connection between learning to read and the



development of language skills. This is achieved by:

- Focusing on everyday vocabulary.
- Using this vocabulary in short complete sentences.
- Use of direct speech to model the spoken word.

There is a speech therapist's guide to language development in every book. The colourful illustrations, by Dubliner Stella Kearns, are attractive and uncluttered. The characters'

facial expressions are designed to help children understand the emotions portrayed. High frequency and functional words are revisited frequently in the readers. The phonics activities include a clever 'slider' which is an elephant shaped frame with inserts covering the 16 word families. The child learns to make different words by sliding the initial letter strip through the frame. The cd rom contains the complete set of word cards, work sheets and games, characters for use with 'Clicker' software and the teacher manual. This programme would be an invaluable asset in every special needs provision situation, as well as in learning support and in language classes. It is suitable for use with children aged 3 to 12.

**Reviewed by Julie Rying,  
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