Frequently Asked Questions re: Beginning Readers (K-1)

Should I cover the pictures so I can find out if they *really* know the words?

No, because very beginning readers need to use picture clues to help them read. If I have a child read a book that goes: [I can see the elephant. I can see the tiger.] I want them to learn to recognize "I" "can" "see" & "the" as sight words. The skills they will need to decode or figure out words like "elephant" will come much later.

These books are so simple, aren't they just memorizing?

Yes, in some ways they are. It's good to see if the child can hold onto a pattern. Also, sight words seem to stick better when they're in books. A student my think, hey, I've seen that word, "can" before! It's in my book about the zoo. The important thing is to make sure that they ARE looking at the print as they read. Eyes should not be looking around the room or staring off somewhere else while reading. (See also next question)

Should they point, should they not?

 In the beginning they *should* be pointing under (not on top of) each word, crisply, not dragging their finger. This way they learn that the number of words on the page needs to match the number of words they say. It also will tell you where their eyes are looking. Sometimes they need to be reminded to *look where they're pointing*. If they have trouble with a long word, like "elephant" (Some kids want to move their finger to the next word when they have a new syllable, el/e/phant) or compound words- just remind that them on long words, they need to hold their finger there until they're finished saying the word. Ask the teacher when we're finished with the finger. When that happens, they will bring their finger in only at select times. Then it MUST stay out, unless there is a specific purpose.

The most important thing is that you sit down & really watch the words with them as they read. Don't worry that you'll do something wrong. If you have questions PLEASE don't hesitate to ask!!