

Pre-Reading Skills



EARLY LITERACY

Family Handbook

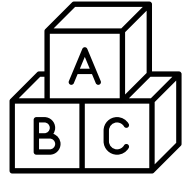


Buiding Early Literacy Skills at Home

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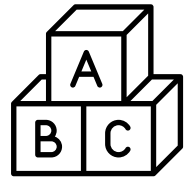


INTRODUCTION

Dear parents and families, I created this booklet because, as an educator and parent, I wanted to provide you with practical ways to support your children beginning in infancy, with essential early literacy skills that will serve as a solid foundation in the years before they enter formal schooling and reading instruction. The activities in this booklet are to be incorporated into your daily routines to build foundational early literacy skills that research shows positively impacts future reading achievement. Your child's oral language skills, knowledge of the sounds of spoken language, familiarity with the letters of the alphabet, and the development of background knowledge that will support their vocabulary and comprehension skills are all critical aspects of developing readers.

I firmly believe that prevention is the best intervention and that every child deserves to learn to read. As an avid reader, I know the importance of literacy's connection to personal growth, opportunity, equity, and success in school and life. I hope you find this resource helpful and have fun helping your child develop the skills that will support them on their journey to becoming readers.

Buiding Early Literacy Skills at Home



"When a parent fills their child's early years with rich talk and interaction, the child gets lots of practice understanding and using words and their vocabulary grows. As their vocabulary grows, so do their abilities to communicate, pay attention, control their behavior, and learn. This practice builds a strong, efficient brain."



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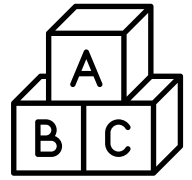
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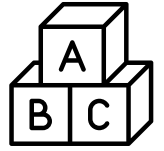


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Important Early Literacy Terms:

- **Alphabetic Principle**- The idea that letters and letter patterns represent the sounds of spoken language
- **Comprehension**-The understanding and interpretation of what is read.
- **Concepts About Print**- The understanding that print carries meaning, and that books contain letters and words.
- **Environmental Print**- The name given to the print that appears in signs, labels, and logos. Street signs, candy wrappers, labels on peanut butter and the T in Target are other examples of environmental print.
- **Invented/Inventive Spelling**- The practice of spelling unfamiliar words with an educated guess based on phonetic knowledge.
- **Oral Language Development**- Oral language is the system through which we use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings.
- **Phonics**- A method for teaching people to read and write an alphabetic language by demonstrating the relationship between sounds of the spoken language (phonemes), and the letters or groups of letters (graphemes) of the written language.
- **Phonemic Awareness**-The ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.
- **Phonological Awareness**-The ability to recognize and manipulate the spoken parts of words: syllables, onset-rime, phonemes.
- **Vocabulary**- the knowledge of words, including their structure (morphology), use (grammar), meanings (semantics), and links to other words (word/semantic relationships).



Four Domains of Literacy

Reading: The interaction of a reader and the text to create meaning. A reader must be able to decode the text and make meaning from what they are reading.

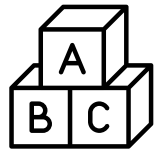
Writing: The ability to effectively express one's ideas using written symbols.

Speaking: Ability to effectively communicate in order to express ideas.

Listening: The ability to understand what is heard.



Click on an image above to learn more



Oral Language Development

What is oral language?

Oral language is the foundation of literacy and involves the system through which we use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas and feelings.

Why is oral language important?

It is important for young children to develop their speaking and listening skills to build a foundation for their later literacy achievement in both reading and writing.

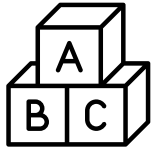
How does developing oral language skills help with future reading achievement?

Research shows that children who develop strong oral language skills prior to entering formal schooling, experience a strong and positive impact on reading achievement as they progress through school.



[Click on the image to learn more](#)

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Oral Language Development

Activities that build oral language skills in young children:

Have conversations:

Tell your child about your day using descriptive language.

Narrate what you are doing throughout the day.

Ex. "The clothes are dirty. I am going to do the laundry. I am putting the clothes into the washing machine to clean them."

Model and encourage the use of complete sentences.

Read Aloud:

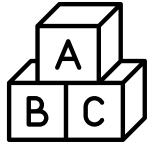
Read stories together and discuss what you are reading. Talk about the characters, where the story takes place, and the action of the story. Make predictions about what might happen in the story. Share what you notice in the pictures. Ask children what they notice.

Storytelling:

Take turns telling each other stories. Model for children using descriptive language.

Songs and Poems:

Sing songs and read poems that use fun words and expose children to rhyming.



Concepts About Print

What is concepts about print?

Print awareness helps children understand that words they see, hear and speak are connected and carry meaning.

What is environmental print?

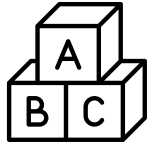
The letters and words that are in our environment in the form of street, restaurant, and store signs, posters, food labels, books etc.

How does developing concepts about print/print awareness help with future reading achievement?

When children begin to make the connection between printed language and spoken language, a strong foundation for learning to read and write is formed.



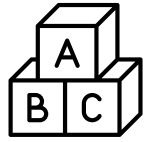
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Concepts About Print

Activities that build concepts about print in young children:

- **Make reading books to young children a part of your daily routine.**
- **Look at words and letters in your environment.**
- **Point out and talk about letter names and the sounds they represent.**
Ex. This word is dog. The first letter is d and it represents the sound /d/.
- **Point out and talk about letters, words and sentences on signs, posters and in books.**
- **Talk about the parts of a book.**
Point out the title of the book, the illustrations, the cover, etc.
- **Model reading from left to right; top to bottom.**
- **Make magnetic alphabet letters available for play.**
- **Read alphabet books and play card games with both upper and lower case letters.**



Phonological/Phonemic Awareness

What is phonological awareness/phonemic awareness?

Phonological Awareness-

The ability to recognize and manipulate the spoken parts of words: syllables, onset-rime, phonemes.

Phonemic Awareness-

The ability to hear, identify and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.

Why is phonological/phonemic awareness important?

The ability to hear the sounds in words, take them apart and put them back together develops an important foundational pre-reading skill. ex. /d/ /og/ = dog, or /d/ /o/ /g/ =dog.

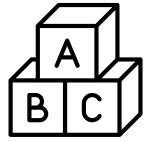
How does developing phonological/phonemic awareness help with future reading achievement?

Strong awareness of the sound units and individual sounds in words supports students' progress with word recognition.



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Phonological/Phonemic Awareness

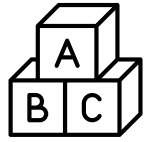
Activities that build phonological/phonemic awareness in young children:

Rhymes and Poetry:

- Read picture books that feature rhymes and poems.
- Playing rhyming games. Ex. I am thinking of a word that rhymes with dog. The word is log.
- Make up silly rhymes and poems

Onset-Rime:

- Say a word using its initial (onset) sound and then its final sound unit (rime) and have child put the word back together. Ex. Q: Where is the /d/ /og/? A: The dog is in the bed.
- Use onset-rime brain breaks. Say an action word using its onset-rime. The child will say the word and perform the action. Ex. action word /j/ /ump/. Child will put the word together and say jump followed by the action (child will jump).
- **Count words in sentences.**
- **Clap out syllables in words and names.**
- **Pick an initial sound and make up alliterations using that sound:** Ex. Millie Makes Mustard Muffins.



Phonological/Phonemic Awareness

Activities that build phonological/phonemic awareness in young children:

I Spy:

- Play a game of initial sound I Spy. Choose different categories of words, like food. Ex. I Spy something in the kitchen that begins with the /c/ sound.
Answer: cake? Yes, cake begins with the /c/ sound.

Blend words orally:

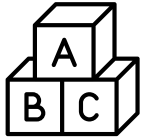
- Say a word breaking it up by its individual sounds and then have child put the word back together Ex. /d/ /o/ /g/.The child should repeat the sounds /d/ /o/ /g/ is dog.

Initial sound games:

- During walks or at mealtime pick a word and say it. Talk about or ask child to identify the initial (first) sound they hear. Ex. The word is tape. What sound do you hear first in the word tape?
The first sound in the word tape is /t/.
Continue playing this game with simple words.

Magnetic letters:

Use letters to make simple words: cat, dog, it etc. Talk about the position of each letter in the word and what sound it represents.



Alphabetic Knowledge/Principle

What is alphabetic knowledge/principle?

The idea that words are made up of letters and those letters represent the sounds of spoken language.

Why is alphabetic knowledge/principle important?

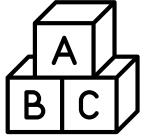
Understanding that words are made up of letters that represent the sounds of spoken language is a foundational pre-reading skill that supports word reading.

How does developing alphabetic knowledge/principle help with future reading achievement?

Knowledge of the relationship between letters and sounds helps students to decode and read words.



[Click on the image to learn more](#)

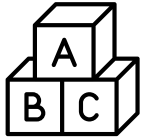


Alphabetic Knowledge/Principle

Activities that build alphabetic knowledge/principle in young children:

With all of these activities discuss the letter names and the sounds they spell/represent.

- Write your child's name and talk about the letter names and sounds in it.
- Talk about the beginning sounds of words.
Ex. Dog begins with the sound /d/.
- While reading point out and talk about the letters in books/print and talk about the sounds they represent.
- Pick out and read alphabet/ABC books together.
- Use Play Dough to form alphabet letters.
- Play with magnetic alphabet letters.
- When teaching letter names, talk about the sounds they represent. Ex. This is the letter Aa, it represents/spells the sound /a/
- Go on a letter hunt in your neighborhood. Look for letters on signs, posters, billboards, storefronts etc.
- Learn songs that teach the letter names and the sounds they represent.



Reading Aloud

What is a read aloud?

When a parent, caregiver, family member, or teacher shares time with a child reading a book or story aloud.

Why is reading aloud to young children important?

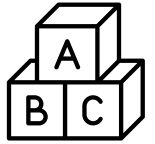
Read alouds develop oral language, listening skills, vocabulary, background knowledge, and connections between spoken language and written words.

How does reading aloud to young children help with future reading achievement?

"Reading aloud is one of the most important things parents and teachers can do with children. Reading aloud builds many important foundational skills, introduces vocabulary, provides a model of fluent, expressive reading, and helps children recognize what reading for pleasure is all about."



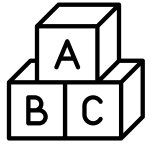
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Reading Aloud

Activities for making interactive read alouds fun and engaging:

- Make reading with your child a regular part of your routine.
- Talk to your child about the story and characters while you are reading.
- Pick some words in the story and teach your child the meaning of those words.
- Ask your child what they notice in the pictures.
- Ask them what they think is going to happen in the story.
- Read with expression, act out the story, make silly faces and voices.
- Let your child pick the books they want you to read to them.
- Find a comfortable place to read.
- Make connections to the story and your own experiences.
- Teach children about the parts of the book.
- Point to the words as you read.



Vocabulary Development

What is vocabulary?

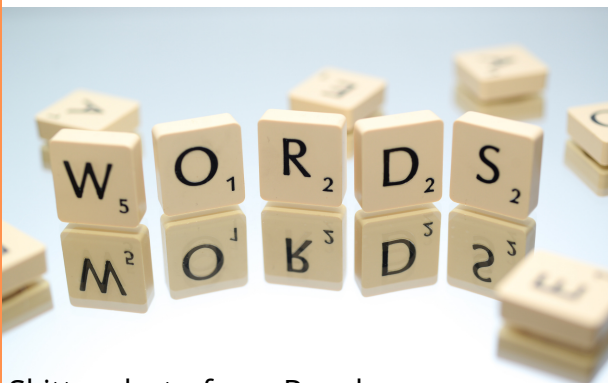
The words and their meanings that students need to know for reading, writing and speaking.

Why is vocabulary development important?

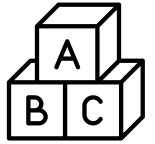
"The development of early childhood vocabulary is an important foundation for language development and early reading skills."

How does vocabulary development help with future reading achievement?

Vocabulary plays an important role in supporting students' comprehension of what they are reading.



[Click on the image to learn more](#)



Vocabulary Development

Activities for building vocabulary in young children:

Read aloud to child regularly.

Exposure to the language used in books and stories helps children to develop their vocabulary.

Teach children new words through conversations.

Try using more complex synonyms for the simple words your child already knows. For example, if your child knows what big means, begin to use words like huge, large, or massive to describe those objects that fit that description. 'Look at that massive tree.'

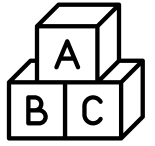
Explain that massive means really big.

Walk and talk.

Go for a walk with your child and teach them the names of the objects in your environment. Explain how things work or what people are doing. Ex. If you see a garbage truck, narrate to them what is happening.

Teach your child a weekly word.

Pick a word for the week, teach your child what it means, giving lots of examples and use it throughout the week. Let other family members know the word, so they can use it in conversation with the child. Ex. Cling means to hold tight to something or someone. Let the child hold something tight and reinforce that they are clinging to it.



Vocabulary Development

Sort and group objects.

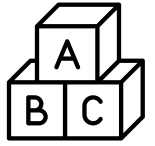
Play sorting games. Ex. Put different color blocks, toy cars, etc. into groups based on size, shapes, colors. Label and discuss the categories. How are these blocks the same/different?

Teach children the words associated with your hobbies and interests.

If you garden, teach your child the proper names for the tools and supplies you use: watering can, garden hose, hand trowel, pruning shears, soil, rake, shovel, etc. Also, show/explain how they work and what you are doing.

Storytelling.

Use storytelling to introduce your child to new words/concepts. Share made up or real stories with children. Choose stories that introduce new words and ideas.



Reading Comprehension

What is reading comprehension?

The ability to understand and make meaning of what is read.

Why is reading comprehension important?

Reading comprehension allows students to gain meaning from what they are reading.

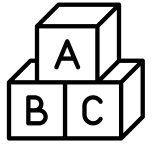
How does reading comprehension help with future reading achievement?

The ability to make meaning of a text builds background knowledge and supports students in gaining new knowledge.



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Reading Comprehension

Activities for supporting comprehension in young children:

Read multiple books with your child on the same topic to increase vocabulary and background knowledge.

If you are learning about spiders, read both fiction and non-fiction books about spiders.

After you read a story practice retelling it with your child.

Talk about what happened in the beginning, middle and end of the story.

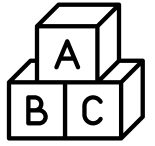
Take turns making inferences about the characters/story.

Ex. I think the the character(s) is happy because I see that they are smiling and jumping in the air. The clues are that when people are happy they usually smile and get excited. Jumping in the air shows excitement.

Practice making predictions about the story as you read.

I think that the dog is going to run away because...

**Look at pictures and talk about what you notice.
I notice...**



Fine Motor Skills

What are fine motor skills?

Fine motor skills relate to the use of small muscles in the hands and wrists to complete tasks such as writing.

Why is developing fine motor skills important?

"The small muscles of the hands and fingers are the most important for developing handwriting skills."

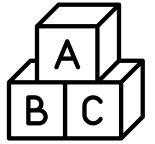
How does strengthening fine motor skills help with future writing achievement?

When young children perform tasks that develop their fine motor skills, it strengthens their ability to write.



Antoni Shkraba from Pexels

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Fine Motor Skills

Activities for supporting the development of fine motor skills in young children:

Rolling, squeezing, kneading, pinching and playing with Play Dough

Art activities (painting, drawing, coloring)

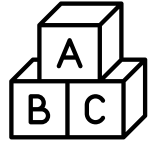
Playing with blocks/legos

Putting puzzles together

Cutting activities using safety scissors

Tracing letters, numbers, lines and shapes

Picking up and grasping items with fingers



Advocacy Tips

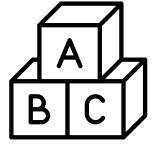
Ways to advocate for your child once they are in school:

- Familiarize yourself with school policies related to support services available to students.
- Build a relationship with your child's teachers and the people who have the power to make decisions about your child's education.
- Maintain all documentation concerning your child's progress, questions/concerns, and notes taken during meetings/correspondences.
- Attend parent meetings, literacy events and workshops to learn strategies to support your child at home.
- Support your child in building the confidence to ask for help.
- Be solution oriented.
- Provide as much information as you can about your child to aid in developing an effective learning environment.
- Become familiar with the curriculum and approaches used to teach your child to read.
- Ask for specific strategies to use at home to support your child.

Early Literacy

"Early literacy does not mean teaching young children how to read. Instead, it means helping children develop the skills they will need to become successful readers. Early literacy activities build rich language skills: vocabulary, self-expression, and understanding (comprehension). These skills help children make sense of printed words when they start reading."





Additional Activities to Build Early Literacy Skills and an Interest in Reading:

- Point out letters and words while doing your daily routines.
- Turn off the lights and use a flashlight to read.
- Make an alphabet book.
- Go outside and practice writing with chalk.
- Make up silly rhyming songs/poems.
- Make letters and words with play dough.
- Play letter and word games.
- Sing songs.
- Play letter matching games.
- Look at pictures and make up your own stories.

"The child's first and most influential teacher is the parent."



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Balazs Toth

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Parent Resources [Literacy Now](#)

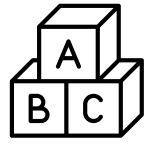
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