



Continuum of Literacy Development
excerpt taken from
Alabama's **Action Plan for Literacy:**
Birth Through Grade 12

*Start here to
learn more about
literacy development.
This information
is also available
on pages 6-11 of
the Action Plan
for Literacy.*

http://www.alsde.edu/general/STATE_LITERACY_PLAN.pdf

SECTION 1 – Continuum of Literacy Development

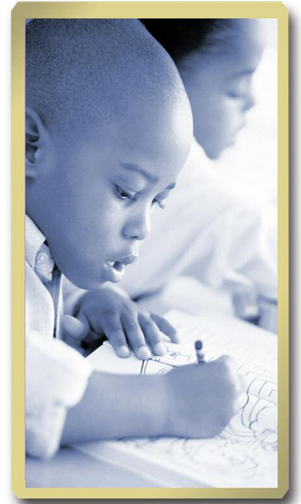
*Adapted from Chall, J. S. (1996). Stages of reading development (2nd ed.).
Fort Worth, Tex.: Harcourt Brace.*

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS WHEN LOOKING AT THIS CONTINUUM:

- The instruction provided at home and/or in the classroom has a considerable effect on how reading develops.
- The reading stages are not necessarily age- or grade-dependent.
- Skills introduced in one stage will continue to develop throughout the continuum.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION:

- Each stage is dependent upon adequate development in earlier stages.
- Assessments must be used to determine students' levels of development.
- Instruction must start where the students are and build on that to move to higher levels.



Pre-Reading

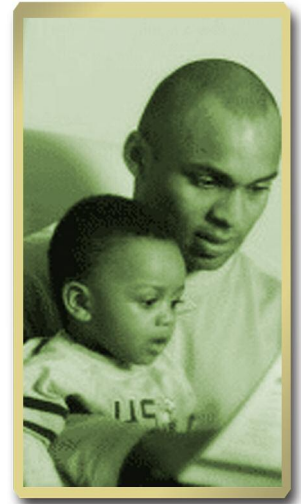
In this stage of literacy development, the learner becomes more familiar with the language and its sounds and with letters and numbers.

WHAT THE CHILD DOES:

- Develops listening skills in order to comprehend.
 - Follows simple spoken directions.
 - Answers questions.
 - Joins in conversations.
 - Understands a story's meaning and can retell the story.
- Grows in knowledge and use of spoken language.
 - Expresses thoughts and ideas for many purposes.
 - Gets better at speaking English (for English language learners).
 - Starts conversations with others.
- Uses a growing vocabulary.
 - Identifies and names people and objects to express needs and wants.
 - Increases vocabulary through everyday conversations.
 - Uses new words correctly and in different ways.
- Develops a beginning understanding that words are made up of sounds and that sounds are connected with letters.
 - Identifies words that rhyme.
 - Hears syllables in words.
 - Recognizes words that sound the same at the beginning or the end.
 - Understands that spoken words can be broken into parts and put together to form whole words.
 - Invents words by changing the sounds in a word.
- Develops a beginning knowledge of print.
 - Draws or writes letter-like forms or scribbles that look like letters and numbers.
 - Recognizes own name in print.
 - Learns names of letters of the alphabet, especially letters in own name.
 - Prints name and a few other letters.
 - Plays with books, pencils, and paper.
 - Begins to notice print in all surroundings.
- Begins to understand some things about books.
 - Pretends to read.
 - Holds the book right-side up.
 - Recognizes certain words.
 - Understands that print is read from left to right, top to bottom.
- Begins to understand that the print carries meaning.
 - Understands that print is used to communicate thoughts, feelings, and information.
 - Knows the differences between drawing and writing.
 - Scribbles, draws, and/or writes to tell about a story, activity, or event.
 - Retells a story.
 - Connects spoken words with written words by following print as it is read aloud.

WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO:

- Plan activities for children to listen and respond in different ways.
- Ask the child to retell a story using puppets, picture cards, or drawings.
- Talk to children throughout the day in interesting conversations and language games, using effective communication skills.
- Provide rich experiences that build vocabulary and thinking skills.
- Plan for conversations with children about many different topics throughout the day.
- Expand children's vocabulary by selecting and using new words and repeating the new words throughout the day.
- Model sound and word play by repeating rhymes; play games with the beginning and ending sounds of words and with the sounds in children's names; clap syllables.
- Model appropriate writing and use the names of the children on work, drawings, learning centers, and charts to help draw children's attention to print.
- Provide alphabet/letter cards, tiles, puzzles, alphabet books, and writing tools.
- Bring attention to and use the print found on signs, labels, and advertising.
- Promote purposeful literacy-related play and performance activities.
- Read aloud to model good reading and purposeful reasons for reading throughout the day.
- Plan activities that use a wide variety of books and learning center activities that increase world knowledge and vocabulary.
- Plan activities using paper, pencils, letters, and computers to display print all around.
- Model writing for many purposes such as simple stories, new and useful words, experiences, etc.



WHAT PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS CAN DO:

- Engage in language activities throughout the day.
 - Have daily conversations with children; listen and encourage them to talk with you.
 - Use a rich vocabulary when talking with children; speak in complete sentences.
 - Name the people, objects, and activities that children hear and see.
 - Use adult vocabulary when talking with children and share a love of words.
 - Sing or say nursery rhymes, simple songs, and finger plays.
 - Encourage children to describe ideas and events that are important to them.
- Read to children every day, throughout the day.
 - Read, read, read to children for fun and learning throughout the day.
 - Read aloud, discuss, and reread simple stories – let children join in with rhyming words.
 - Read aloud nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and high-quality literature to children.
 - Visit the library with your child regularly.
 - Be a reader – let your children see you reading.
- Provide opportunities for children to draw and print, using markers, crayons, pencils, and computers.
 - Encourage scribbling, pretend writing, and pretend reading of that writing.
 - Make connections between spoken and written language – ask children to describe their drawings as you write down what they say.
 - Involve children with you in writing and drawing using the computer and other technologies.

For more information about this stage of literacy development, see Alabama Department of Children's Affairs. (2009).

Alabama Performance Standards for 4-Year-Olds: Preparing Children "4" Lifelong Learning. Montgomery, AL: Alabama Office of School Readiness.

<http://children.alabama.gov/uploadedFiles/File/PerformanceStandards2009-2010.pdf>

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). *Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

<http://niefl.gov/publications/pdf/NELPReport09.pdf>

Alabama State Department of Human Resources. (no date given).

The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines. http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/large_docs/AELG.pdf

Initial Reading or Decoding

At this stage, the learner becomes aware of the relationship between sounds and letters and begins using this knowledge to learn to read.

WHAT THE CHILD DOES:

- Shows understanding that a spoken word is made up of different sounds.
- Joins spoken syllables into a word; then can count the number of syllables in a word.
- Produces another word that rhymes with a spoken word.
- Writes many uppercase and lowercase letters without help.

- Names letters and matches them with the correct sound.
- Begins to use knowledge of consonants and vowels to blend (put sounds together to make words) or segment (take words apart to name the different sounds in the words).
- Accurately sounds out (decodes) regular one-syllable and nonsense words.
- Sounds out unknown words when reading text.
- Reads simple texts.
- Uses letters in the word to self-correct mispronunciations.
- Accurately spells many words using the knowledge of sounds and knowledge of letters.
- Creates own spellings using knowledge of the spelling-sound system for self and others to read.
- Shows a growing awareness of and curiosity about words.
- Expands language as shown by word choice and word use.
- Demonstrates comprehension during read-alouds by asking and answering questions and by discussions with other children and adults.
- Pays attention to own reading; recognizes when meaning breaks down.
- Reads appropriate grade-level fiction and nonfiction to answer simple written questions about the reading.
- Creates own writing for self and others to read.
- Produces a wide variety of writings for different purposes (journals, descriptions, stories, lists) using pictures, charts, and simple text features.



WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO:

- Read aloud to model different purposes for reading and to model good reading.
- Plan for direct and systematic phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling instruction.
- Plan activities that practice blending (putting sounds together to make words) and segmenting (taking words apart).
- Provide many different activities to blend words to read and segment words to spell.
- Practice with decodable text that uses the sounds and spellings that the child has learned.
- Provide books with a good picture/text match for English learners.
- Provide repeated oral readings of stories to build fluency and comprehension.
- Ask critical questions that cause the child to think about a story.
- Plan for the child to do some writing following instruction.
- Provide conversation throughout the day to build language skills and vocabulary.
- Provide many opportunities for children to write to express ideas and feelings related to what they are reading.
- Check student progress frequently to guide planning of instruction and reteaching.

WHAT PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS CAN DO:

- Talk with children often using complete sentences and rich vocabulary.
- Plan for children to read daily and to talk and write about favorite storybooks.
- Read/discuss/reread simple stories and grade-level text.
- Read aloud fairy tales, poems, informational text, and high-quality literature.
- Visit the library with your child regularly.
- Plan for children to write to friends and family, make grocery lists, take food orders, write family members' names, label household objects, and write stories and poems.
- Become involved in school activities.

For more information about this stage of literacy development, see Alabama Department of Children's Affairs. (2009). *Alabama Performance Standards for 4-Year-Olds: Preparing Children "4" Lifelong Learning*. Montgomery, AL: Alabama Office of School Readiness. <http://children.alabama.gov/uploadedFiles/File/PerformanceStandards2009-2010.pdf>

National Reading Panel. (2001). *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*. Washington DC: National Institute for Literacy. <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubskey.cfm?from=reading> and Alabama State Department of Human Resources. (no date given). *The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines*. http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/large_docs/AELG.pdf

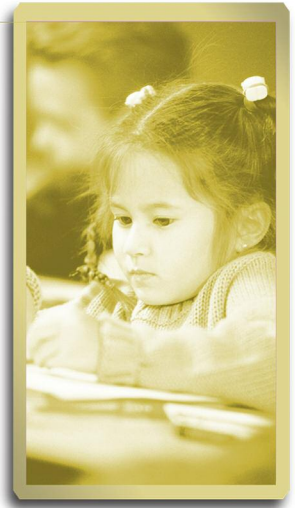
Confirmation, Fluency, Automaticity

At this stage, the learner improves decoding skills to include more complex spelling patterns and expands the number of words recognized by sight to build fluency.

WHAT THE CHILD DOES:

- Shows that he can decode words.
 - Applies knowledge of letters and sounds to read most words automatically.
 - Accurately reads many words using spelling patterns and common word endings.

- Accurately decodes regular, multisyllable words and nonsense words.
- Uses letter-sound knowledge and knowledge about the way words are put together to help decode words.
- Uses known roots, prefixes, and suffixes to figure out word meanings.
- Reads passages with ease and expression.
 - Demonstrates more fluent reading of simple stories.
 - Exhibits oral reading that is more fluent and sounds more like talking.
 - Reads longer fiction and nonfiction selections, chapter books, and poetry without help.
- Shows growth in making meaning.
 - Combines sight words and decoding to make meaning.
 - Reads approximately 3,000 words.
 - Has a listening vocabulary of approximately 9,000 words.
 - Comprehends text more easily through listening than through reading.
 - Reads and comprehends appropriate texts for the grade level.
 - Shows an understanding of fiction; discusses some parts of a story.
 - Notices text features, pictures, and charts which help the understanding of nonfiction texts.
- Produces a variety of written work.
 - Writes stories, poems, and plays.
 - Uses new vocabulary and language patterns in own writings; uses information from many sources when writing stories, reports, and letters.
 - Looks back over own writing; discusses writing with other students to improve the writing.



WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO:

- Provide direct instruction in advanced decoding skills, including how words are formed.
- Talk to students throughout the day to expand language skills and vocabulary.
- Provide many opportunities to read materials at different levels of difficulty.
 - Choral reading (e.g., reading aloud together as a group).
 - Student-adult reading (e.g., reading to each other).
 - Tape-assisted reading (e.g., reading along with a tape).
 - Partner reading (e.g., a fluent partner provides a model of fluent reading, helps with word recognition, and provides feedback).
 - Independent reading.
- Structure rereading opportunities to build fluency and automaticity.
- Provide a wide variety (genre) of texts with rich vocabulary and many opportunities for students to talk and write about what they have read.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking through conversations and discussions with other students and adults about what they are reading.
- Provide many planned opportunities for students to write about what they are reading.

WHAT PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS CAN DO:

- Join children in frequent conversations and interesting discussions.
- Provide activities that require reading and writing for information and for pleasure.
- Continue to read to children and encourage them to read to you and discuss what they are reading.
- Provide opportunities for children to write to friends and family, make detailed written plans, keep a journal, write stories and poems, and use computers to communicate.
- Visit the library with your child regularly.
- Become more involved in school literacy activities.

For more information about this stage of literacy development, see National Reading Panel. (2001).
Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read. Washington DC: National Institute for Literacy.
<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubskey.cfm?from=reading>

Reading for Learning

At this stage, the reader has enough reading skill to learn new information and facts from reading.

WHAT THE CHILD DOES:

- Shows growth in vocabulary and background knowledge.
- Begins to gain new knowledge, information, thoughts, and experiences by reading.

- Begins to gain new knowledge, information, thoughts, and experiences by reading.
 - Expresses new ideas and experiences.
 - Speaks from single point of view.
 - Can understand a story from either listening or reading.
- Reads from a growing range of materials.
 - More interested in reading on his own for a variety of purposes.
- Writes using more mature vocabulary and includes new ideas and new learning.

WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO:

- Provide opportunities to read more difficult text and different types of text.
- Provide opportunities to think about text through conversations, discussions, and writing.
- Provide direct instruction in comprehension strategies and many opportunities to practice using these strategies.
- Provide activities to hear and to read unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Plan many opportunities for conversation and discussion.

WHAT PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS CAN DO:

- Engage children in frequent conversations.
- Build a love of language in all its forms.
- Support a child's specific hobby or interest with reading materials and references.
- Stay in regular contact with teachers about progress in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

For more information about this stage of literacy development, see Biancarosa, C., & Snow, C. E. (2006). *Reading Next – A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy: A Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. <http://www.all4ed.org/files/ReadingNext.pdf>

Construction, Viewpoints, and Judgment

The reader at this stage begins to analyze what is read.

WHAT THE CHILD DOES:

- Reads and forms own opinions about what is read.
 - Reads widely from a variety of complex materials.
- Starts to hear and read different viewpoints and begins to question and think about the viewpoints of others.
 - Looks for multiple viewpoints.
- Combines one's knowledge with that of others to form new knowledge.
- Begins to control the reading process based on one's purpose as a reader and demands of the text.
- Pays attention to comprehension.
 - Recognizes how material is organized.
 - Identifies main ideas.
 - Relates details to main ideas.
 - Adjusts reading rate or rereads when necessary.
- Gains more meaning from difficult material by reading rather than by listening.

WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO:

- Provide systematic study of words and word parts.
- Provide practice with a wide variety of texts with planned opportunities for discussion.
- Create many different writing opportunities.

WHAT PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS CAN DO:

- Discuss books and interesting ideas with readers.
- Encourage appropriate expression of differing viewpoints and judgments.
- Maintain communication with teachers about your child's literacy progress.

For more information about this stage of literacy development, see Biancarosa, C., & Snow, C. E. (2006). *Reading Next – A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy: A Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. <http://www.all4ed.org/files/ReadingNext.pdf>



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