THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO THE READ AT HOME FAMILY GUIDE:

The information below is intended for educators. When you print this guide for families, please only include the Read at Home Family Guide (Pages 2-21).

The goal of the Read at Home Family Guide is to assist teachers in supporting and encouraging families as they engage in their child's Read at Home Plan. This guide provides information to strengthen their understanding about what all children need to know and be able to do for skilled reading, as well as activities to help their child become a skilled reader. To achieve this, the Read at Home Family Guide includes:

1. Their child's universal screener and diagnostic results to be completed by school staff;
2. A designation of which reading area(s) their child needs more help developing; and
3. Learning experiences they can do at home with their child to support reading skills development.

The introductory pages that follow include an informational letter to families and forms to communicate the student's assessment data, and the reading area(s) the student is at risk for not reaching benchmark.

Next, the guide provides context by offering parents information about the:

- Read to Succeed Act established in Senate Bill 9 (2022);
- Reading Improvement Plan;
- Read at Home Plan; and
- Glossary of literacy terms for additional support.

The final pages will likely be the most helpful as they are organized into the five essential components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension). The sections include:

- Family-friendly descriptions of the components of reading; and
- At-home learning experiences to reinforce and support classroom reading development.

The activities provided in the Read at Home Plan do not require any teacher preparation. However, a quick review of the activities and suggested letter and word sets will help ensure students are not being asked to engage in new learning at home. Educators should recommend activities for students based on their needs.

Copying and sharing the Read at Home Plan Family Guide with families of students who are at risk of not reaching benchmark is encouraged. Teachers may decide to send the introductory section along with all five activity sections home with an at-risk student, or the introductory section and one or more activity sections at a time. Whatever the case, teacher discretion is recommended.

Please contact KDE Director of Early Literacy Christie Biggerstaff via email at christie.biggerstaff@education.ky.gov with any questions.

READ AT HOME PLAN FAMILY GUIDE

Kindergarten - Grade 3

Kentucky Department of EDUCATION

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

The Kentucky Department of Education and School District value your role and recognize the impact you have on your child's academic success. We value strong partnerships between schools and families, and recognize strong partnerships are built on clear communication and support. This Read at Home Plan Family Guide is created on these values and supports your child's Reading Improvement Plan. The following pages include information about:

1. Your child's universal screener and diagnostic results;
2. Which reading area(s) your child needs more help developing; and
3. Learning experiences you can do at home with your child to support their reading skills development.

Additionally, there is information about the Kentucky *Read to Succeed Act* per Senate Bill 9 (2022), Reading Improvement Plans, Read at Home Plans and the key role families play in student success. A glossary of literacy terms and general tips for reading at home also are included.

The at-home learning experiences contained in this document are organized into the five essential components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension). Once you know the area(s) in which your child needs the most help, you will be equipped to focus your time on the activities included in that section of this plan. Spending time on the learning experiences in the other sections also is encouraged, as skilled reading is dependent upon having success in all five of the areas.

The Kentucky Department of Education is happy to partner with the leaders and teachers at your child's school to offer support through this Read at Home Plan. If you have questions about the information or suggested learning experiences in this plan, please reach out to your child's teacher.

Sincerely,

Christie Biggerstaff

Director of Early Literacy
Office of Teaching and Learning
Kentucky Department of Education

UNIVERSAL SCREENER AND DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

(To be completed by the educator)

Student Name	
Grade	
Teacher Name	
Date	
Current Interventions	
Completed By	

UNIVERSAL SCREENER AND DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Assessment Name	Assessment Type (Universal Screener or Diagnostic)	Beginning of the Year Score	Middle of the Year Score	End of the Year Score

AREA(S) AT RISK FOR NOT MEETING GRADE-LEVEL BENCHMARKS

(Check all that apply based on approved reading diagnostic assessment. Attach data.):

- ☐ Phonemic Awareness
- ☐ Phonics
- ☐ Fluency
- ☐ Vocabulary
- ☐ Comprehension

WHAT IS A READING IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND HOW CAN FAMILIES HELP?

The Read to Succeed Act was signed into law in 2022. Any student in kindergarten through grade three who is identified as needing accelerated learning to progress toward proficient performance in reading shall receive a **Reading Improvement Plan** developed and implemented by a **Reading Improvement Team**.

A Reading Improvement team develops and oversees the progress of a reading improvement plan and includes:

- The parent or guardian of the child who is the subject of the reading improvement plan;
- No less than one regular education teacher of the child to provide information about the general curriculum for same-aged peers;
- A representative of the local education agency who is knowledgeable about the reading curriculum and the availability of the evidence-based literacy resources of the local education agency; and
- Any specialized certified school employees for children receiving language instruction, educational programming or special education services.

While a parent or guardian of the student who is the subject of the plan is a member of the team, the family and other caregivers also may support the student by referring to this guide for information on how children learn to read and helpful learning experiences to support the child in growing reading skills at home.

A **Reading Improvement Plan** should contain information about your child's current level of achievement in reading, areas where they can make the most improvements and a description of intervention and support services that will be provided to your child. Interventions must include effective instructional strategies and appropriate instructional resources necessary to help the child make accelerated progress. Your child's progress data also will be included in the plan and will be provided to the parent or guardian quarterly and may be included on the child's existing report card. Progress will inform the reading improvement team about the success of the intervention and will allow them to make instructional decisions to assist your child in progressing toward reading proficiency.

This **Read at Home Plan** is provided to the parents and legal guardians of children identified for interventions in reading. This plan includes information on how to participate in regular parent-guided reading activities at home. The *Kentucky Academic Standards* Standards Family Guides are another resource available for families.

LITERACY TERMS GLOSSARY

5 Essential Components of Reading[1]:

These are connected areas of learning that support proficient reading.

1. PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Ability to distinguish, produce, remember and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.

2. PHONICS

Knowledge of the predictable correspondences between phonemes and graphemes (the letters or letter combinations representing phonemes) and correspondences between larger blocks of letters and syllables or meaningful word parts (morphemes).

3. FLUENCY

Ability to read text with sufficient speed and accuracy to support comprehension.

4. VOCABULARY

Knowledge of individual word meaning in a text and the concepts that those words convey.

5. COMPREHENSION

The complex process of understanding and making sense of written text through decoding, background knowledge and verbal reasoning, all of which are utilized by good readers to understand, remember and communicate what has been read.

At risk for not meeting grade-level benchmarks:

Having a specific area of growth in one or more of the five components of reading as identified by universal screening and diagnostic assessment data. Identified students would need additional intervention support via the Reading Improvement Plan to address accelerated learning needs in reading.

Accelerated intervention:

Additional, specific small group or individual instruction to increase or improve skills in the five components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and/or comprehension).

Enrichment programs:

An accelerated intervention within the school day or outside of the school day or school calendar led by individuals most qualified to provide the intervention that includes evidence-based reading instructional programming related to reading instruction in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, and other instructional strategies aligned to reading and writing standards required by KRS 158.6453 and outlined in administrative regulation promulgated by the Kentucky Board of Education.

Progress monitoring:

Frequent, ongoing assessment of a child's progress toward the goals of the intervention.

Reading diagnostic assessment:

An assessment that measures a student's skills against established performance levels in essential components of reading, and identifies students that require intervention in at least one of those components to accelerate the student's progress toward proficient performance in reading.

Universal screener:

A process of providing a brief assessment to all students within a grade level to assess the children's performance on the essential components of reading.

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[1] National Reading Panel and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

GENERAL TIPS FOR READING AT HOME

- Add time to read throughout the day, and have books available at home, in a backpack or in a vehicle. Reading with your child 20 minutes per day can have lasting positive outcomes.

- Run your finger along the words as you read them.
- Gently correct your child when they misread a word, even if they are close and the words have a similar meaning. For example, a child might read “house” instead of “home” or “mother” instead of “mom.” Use phrases like, “Let’s look at each letter, and try this word again.”
- Choose books to read about events in your child’s life, such as starting school, going to the dentist or taking care of pets, or about topics or activities in which they are interested. Make connections to the reading by sharing what the text makes you think about.
- Ask and encourage your child to ask questions about the text being read. What do you think will happen next? Was your prediction accurate? How did the story match your prediction or how was it different? How does this character feel? What did you read to make you think that?

- Practice retelling stories by asking what happened in the beginning, middle and end. Pause after reading each portion, and review what has happened so far.
- While silent reading is an important skill for success in later grades, students who are at risk for not meeting benchmarks require structure and support from a caregiver when reading silently. Have your child read aloud before they practice silent reading.
- Visit libraries often, in person and virtually! For information about how to find a public library near you, visit KDE’s Summer Support: School and Public Libraries page.

- Understand that text is anything that communicates a message. Examples include, but are not limited to, books that tell a real or made-up story, posters, songs, speeches, pieces of artwork, instructions for toys and road signs.
- Purchase or make letter tiles (magnetic, paper, plastic or wooden) for phonics practice.

WHAT IS PHONEMIC AWARENESS?

Phonemic awareness ability to distinguish, produce, remember and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.

Phonemic awareness skills require a child to hear and play with sounds without reading or writing, but they support reading and spelling development.[2] The activities in this section will not include reading or writing words. Instead, your child will focus on the sounds they hear in spoken words and practice saying words with attention to the sounds at the beginning, middle and end of the words. Practicing with sounds **5-10 minutes per day** is recommended to support skilled reading.

The phonemic awareness activities in this guide are divided into two sections: beginning activities and more challenging activities to develop your child's skills in the following:

- Rhyming;
- Counting syllables;
- Recognizing sounds alone and in words;
- Adding, removing and substituting sounds in words;
- Breaking words into their different sounds and blending them back together; and
- Isolating sounds.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Beginning Activities:

Your child's teacher may refer to these types of activities as "early phonological awareness activities" as they lay the groundwork for phonemic awareness. The activities allow your child to play with language (also known as wordplay) to draw their attention to language, sounds and syllables within words.

You will see slashes before and after letters in this section, as well as some in the phonics section. When you see this, say the letter sound rather than the letter name. For instance, when you see /m/, say the sound the letter "m" makes rather than the letter "m."

These activities have been organized from least challenging to most challenging. Your child's teacher may suggest specific activities, or you may complete the activities in the order provided. Repeating activities is encouraged.

Rhyming

- Explain that rhymes are words that sound the same at the end. Provide some examples: sit/bit, bad/mad, sister/mister, kick/pick, chill/will.
- Read books containing rhymes to your child over and over again. As you read books with rhymes, have your child complete the rhyming word at the end of each line.
- Point out rhymes in songs your child enjoys.
- Say pairs of words that rhyme and pairs that do not rhyme. Ask, "Do *pan* and *man* rhyme? Why? Do *pat* and *boy* rhyme? Why not?"

  Examples: pan/man, pat/boy, day/bike, red/bed, shirt/dirt, shed/soup, back/track, pea/peak, sick/sack, cup/pup, tar/star, jump/jack

- Ask your child to make rhymes. Ask, "Can you tell me a word that rhymes with *cake*?" (rake, sake, lake, fake). Other words to practice rhyming: *track, pail, man, skip*.

[2] Brady, S.A. (2020). A 2020 perspective on research findings on alphabetics (phoneme awareness and phonics): Implications for instruction. *The Reading League Journal*, 1(3), 20-28.

Recognizing Sounds at the Beginning of Words

- Think of objects or people to describe. Tell your child to describe the object or person with a word beginning with the same sound as the object or person.

  Examples: “delicious donut,” “bouncy ball,” “green grass”

- Have your child think of silly names for family and friends. The new names must be at least three words long and must begin with the same sound as the person’s name.

  Examples: “handsome helpful Javier” or “creative character Kelly”

- Ask your child to identify words that begin with the same sound from a list of 3 words.

  Examples: “Which words begin with the same sound…
  … paper, pickle, dish?” (paper and pickle)
  … phone, carpet, fun?” (phone and fun)
  … flower, pop, flea?” (flower and flea)
  … map, chair, chat?” (chair and chat)
  … ship, flip, shape?” (ship and shape)
  … thorn, tap, think?” (thorn and think)

Counting and Playing with Words, Syllables and Sounds

- Tell your child you will take turns saying a sentence. For every word in the sentence, the other player will receive one point. Take turns saying sentences and counting words.

  Example: “She lives with her older sister and two dogs.” (9 points)

- Practice counting syllables in friends’ and family members’ names.

  Example: Rob-ert (2 syllables), Ket-ur-ah (3 syllables), Lu-ci-a (3 syllables)

- Practice syllable deletion (taking syllables apart from one another in words). Say, “Let’s play a game with words. We are going to break some long words into parts and leave a part out. If I say *toothpaste*, and then leave off the *tooth*, what’s left? That’s right: *paste*. Let’s try some more.”

  Examples: “What is softball without *ball*?” (soft)
  … sailboat without *boat*?” (sail)
  … teleport without *tele*?” (port)
  … Monday without *day*?” (mon)
  … bumblebee without *bumble*?” (bee)
  … teacher without –*er*?” (teach)

- Practice breaking words into sounds. Some teachers call this “stretching” a word, and your child can practice while stretching a rubber band. Notice your child isn’t spelling the words with letter names, but saying the sounds in the word.

  Examples: “What sounds make up the word *dog*?” (/d/ /ŏ/ /g/)
  “What sounds make up the word *let*?” (/l/ /ĕ/ /t/)
  “What sounds make up the word *kick*?” (/k/ /ĭ/ /k/)
  “What sounds make up the word *shape*?” (sh/ /ā/ /p/)
  “What sounds make up the word *drum*?” (/d/ /r/ /ŭ/ /m/)
  “What sounds make up the word *snow*? (/s/ /n/ /ō/)

- Practice saying one-syllable words into two parts (sometimes called **onsets and rimes**). Say, “Let’s say some words in parts. These words will only have one syllable. First, you’ll tell me the beginning consonant sound, and then everything else that follows. I’ll say the whole word and then you can divide it into two parts.”

  Examples: “Bar” (b – ar)
  “Chip” (ch – ip)
  “Rest” (r – est)
  “Cave” (c – ave)
  “Tie” (t – ie)
  “Sat” (s – at)

More Challenging Activities:

Your child's teacher may refer to these types of activities as "phonemic awareness activities," or activities that allow children to practice manipulating different sounds within words.

Recognizing and Blending Sounds

- Practice hearing individual sounds in words. Say, "Say this word after me: Pet." (Set)

  "What's the first sound?" (/s/)
  "What's the middle sound?" (/ĕ/)
  "What's the last sound?" (/t/)
  Words to practice with 3 sounds: mat, tub, did, pot, sip, bed, kit
  Words to practice with 4 sounds: stake, sled, Fred, plum, drip, flat

- Say simple words and ask your child to tell you what middle sound is heard.

  Examples: "What is the middle sound in *sun*?" (/ŭ/)
  "What is the middle sound in *hatch*?" (/ă/)
  "What is the middle sound in *peek*?" (/ē/)
  "What is the middle sound in *train*?" (/ā/)
  "What is the middle sound in *chick*?" (/ĭ/)
  "What is the middle sound in *lawn*?" (/aw/)
  "What is the middle sound in *foil*?" (/oi/)

- Give your child individual sounds and ask them to blend the sounds to make a word.

  Examples: "What word do the sounds /l/ /ĕ/ /g/ make?" (leg)
  "What word do the sounds /c/ /r/ /ŏ/ /p/ make?" (crop)
  "What word do the sounds /sh/ /ū/ make?" (shoe)
  "What word do the sounds /m/ /ē/ make?" (me)

Substituting and Deleting Sounds[3]

- Practice substituting beginning and ending sounds in words. Say, "Let's see if we can make some new words by changing just one sound. If I change /b/ in *bat* to /r/, what new word do I have?" (rat)

  Examples: "If I change /w/ in *wag* to /t/, what new word do I have?" (tag)
  "If I change /l/ in *shell* to /f/, what new word do I have?" (chef)
  "If I change /p/ in *poodle* to /n/, what new word do I have?" (noodle)
  "If I change /tch/ in *witch* to /n/, what new word do I have?" (win)
  "If I change /s/ in *race* to /z/, what new word do I have?" (rays)

- Practice substituting middle sounds in words. Say, "Let's see if we can make new words by changing just one sound in the middle — the vowel sound. For example, say the word, 'moose.' Now say each sound after me: /m/ /ū/ /s/. If we wanted to change *moose* to *mouse*, which sound changed?" (/ū/ became /ow/)

  Examples: "What sound changes if I change *moon* to *man*?" (/ū/ became /ă/)
  "What sound changes if I change *fawn* to *fin*?" (/aw/ became /ĭ/)
  "What sound changes if I change *soup* to *sap*?" (/ū/ became /ă/)

- Practice deleting sounds from words.

  Examples: "Say *potato* without the /pō/."(tato)
  "Say *peas* without the /p/." (ease)
  "Say *stop* without the /s/." (top)
  "Say *sheet* without the /t/." (she)

[3] These exercises were adapted from the *LETRS Manual* by Louisa Moats and Carol Tolman.

WHAT IS PHONICS?

Knowledge of the predictable correspondences between phonemes and graphemes (the letters or letter combinations representing phonemes) and correspondences between larger blocks of letters and syllables or meaningful word parts (morphemes).

The purpose of phonics instruction is to teach the relationship between letters and the sounds they make so that readers have the skills they need to sound out words. Sounding out words is also known as **decoding words**. When your child is able to sound out (or decode) words quickly and accurately, they have strong phonics skills.

Children build strong phonics skills through direct instruction and practice.[4] Strong phonics skills allow students to spend more time thinking about what the words are telling them (their meaning) rather than figuring out what the words on the page say.

The phonics activities in this guide will help your child develop an understanding of and skills that demonstrate how:

- How letters represent sounds;
- The relationship between letters and their sounds is predictable;
- Sometimes just one sound is made by two or more letters coming together;
- Predictable patterns determine vowel sounds;
- Often two or more vowels work together to make one long or short sound;
- Sometimes two vowels form a new vowel sound;
- When R follows a vowel, it changes the vowel sound; and
- Longer words are made up of shorter syllables that can be sounded out one part at a time.

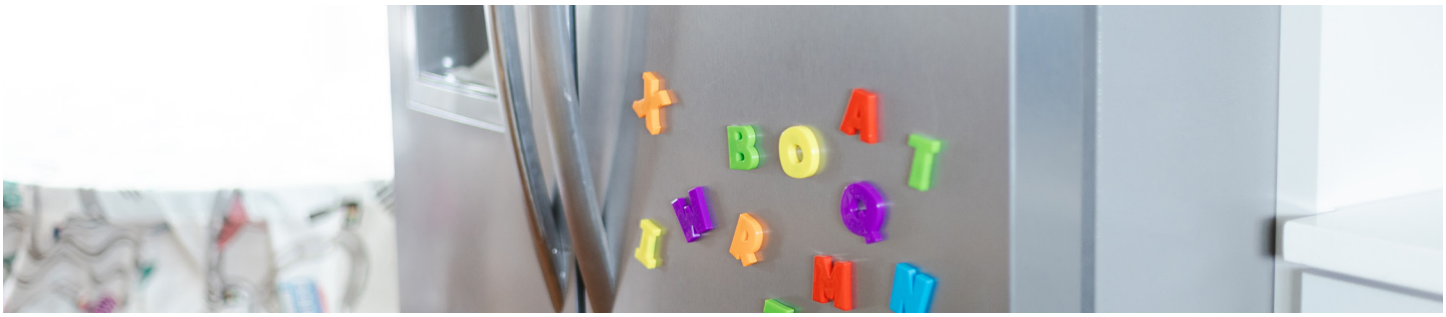
Often, students struggling with phonics need more practice with sounds. If needed, refer to or ask your child's teacher for the Phonemic Awareness section of this guide for activities focused on understanding and manipulating sounds.

PHONICS ACTIVITIES

These activities loosely move from least challenging to most challenging. Your child's teacher may suggest specific activities, or you may complete the activities in the order provided. Repeating activities is encouraged.

Letters Represent Sounds.

- Choose a letter and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that letter sound. If the target sound is /m/ the child might find mop, mat, mom, money and microwave. As each object is found, have your child practice writing the letter m and say the name of the object.
- Place magnetic letter tiles on the refrigerator. Call out letter names or letter sounds while preparing food, and have your child remove the magnet that matches the letter or sound you called out from the refrigerator.



[4] Brady, S.A. (2011). Efficacy of phonics teaching for reading outcomes: Implications from Post-NRP research. In S.A. Brady, D. Braze, & C. Fowler (Eds.), *Explaining individual differences in reading: Theory and evidence* (pp. 69-96). New York, NY: Psychology Press.

- Have your child use play clay to roll out and make the shapes of different letters. Call out the name or sound of the letters and watch them build the letter shapes.

The Relationship Between Letters and Their Sounds is Predictable.

These activities practice reading and writing one-syllable words like bat, ham, sun or lip.

- Make word family patterns using two magnet letters side by side to represent the middle and ending sounds of a word. Ask your child to think of single letters that could be added to the beginning to make words. Have your child read aloud and write the word they build before building a new word.

Example: If the ending word family pattern is "op," select magnets o and p and the letter m could be added to the beginning to make mop and t could be added to the beginning to make top. Other words that could be made include pop, cop, sop, lop. Even made-up words like nop, rop and yop are fun for kids to read and write when practicing word families.

- Using one of the lists from below, write the letters that make up the words on small squares of paper or sticky notes. For the first activity, write one letter per square. For the second activity, choose beginning letters from one of the letter sets below to write on each square and write ending letters from the same set on another square. Help your child create words using the letter cards you've made. For the first activity, alternate between giving a beginning and ending letter and asking your child to give the middle letter and then giving the middle letter and asking your child to come up with a beginning and ending that will make a word. For the second activity, sometimes give a beginning and ask your child to give you an ending and sometimes give the ending and ask your child to provide the beginning.

  Activity #1, List #1: b, a, t, r, e, d, s, u, n, l, i, p, c, u (bat, red, sun, lip, cup, sit)
  Activity #1, List #2: t, i, p, l, e, r, u, n, o, b, c (tip, let, run, pin, rob, cop)
  Activity #1, List #3: s, e, t, n, l, p, r, i, h, a, m, o (set, nip, rip, ham, tan, pop)
  Activity #2, List #1: beginning letters – l, s, t; ending letters – op, it, et (sit, set, sop, lit, top)
  Activity #2, List #2: beginning letters – c, p, r; ending letters – at, up, un (pat, pun, cup, cat, run)
  Activity #2, Set #3: beginning letters – c, d, t; ending letters – en, ot, an (den, ten, cot, dot, can)

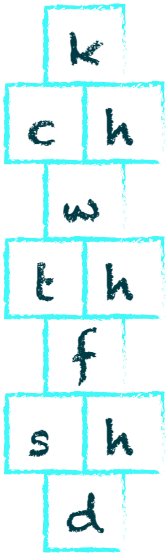
These activities practice reading and writing longer one-syllable words like clot, trim, slap, rust.
These words have beginning or ending letters that stick together, and both letter sounds can be heard. Some examples of these letter combinations include cl, tr, sl and st. They are called ***blends****.*

- Using one of the lists from below, write the letters that make up the words on small squares of paper or sticky notes. For the first activity, write the specified letter(s) on each square. For the second activity, choose beginning letters from one of the letter sets below to write on each square and write ending letters from the same set on another square. Help your child create words using the letter cards you've made. For the first activity, alternate between giving a beginning and ending letter card and asking your child to give the middle letter, and then giving the middle letter and asking your child to come up with a beginning and ending card that will make a word. For the second activity, sometimes give a beginning and ask your child to give you an ending, and sometimes give the ending and ask your child to provide the beginning. Have your child write and read the words they make.

  Activity #1, List #1: blend, blue, black, blur (Make letter cards for: bl, e, nd, ue, a, ck, ur)
  Activity #1, List #2: snake, snack, sneak, snap (Make letter cards for: sn, ake, ea, k, a, p)
  Activity #1, List #3: cold, told, fold, mold (Make letter cards for: ld, o, t, f, m)
  Activity #1, List #4: crown, stop, last, find (Make letter cards for: cr, ow, n, st, o, l, a, f, l, nd)
  Activity #2, Set #1: beginning letters – sl, r, b ending letters – ot, it, est (slot, slit, rot, rest, best)
  Activity #2, Set #2: beginning letters – tr, l, s ending letters – ip, ot, end (trip, trot, lot, lend, send)

Sometimes Just One Sound is Made by Two or More Letters Coming Together.

Examples of letters that make just one sound when they come together include sh, ch, th and tch. These are called digraphs (2 letters) and trigraphs (3 letters).



- Use sidewalk chalk to draw a hopscotch formation. In each box, write a letter. On the squares that go two-across (the crossbar), write the letters found in the list below. When your child jumps on a square, tell them to say the letter's name and the sound the letter makes. When your child jumps on the crossbar, tell them to say the name of the letter in the left box, then jump to the letter in the right box and say its name before finally shouting the sound the letters make when read together.

  Example letters for boxes: b, d, f, j, k, m, p, r, s, t, w
  Example letters for the crossbars: ch, kn, ph, sh, th, wh, wr, ck

There are Predictable Patterns that Determine Vowel Sounds.

Examples of words with a predictable pattern include bike, make, rope, stole and stroke. The e on the end makes the vowel in the middle say its long sound, which is its name.

- Help your child understand that the pattern of the consonants and vowels in a word can help determine the sound the middle vowel will make. Words that end in a vowel, consonant and e (VCe) will usually have a long vowel sound. On a piece of paper or small marker board, write examples such as these: bike, rope, stride, life, take, save. Read the examples with your child and focus on how the vowel is saying its name because of the Vce pattern. Erase or mark out the e at the end of each word and ask your child to read the words again. Without the e at the end, the Vce pattern is lost. Therefore, the words must be read with a short vowel sound instead of their long sound. Call out Vce words for your child to write from the example words below. Have your child practice reading the words with and without the e on the end to reinforce that changing the pattern changes the vowel sound.

  Example Vce words: tape, eve, shine, home, cute, wake, mine, bone, flute, snake, code

Often Two or More Vowels Work Together to Make One Long or Short Sound.

*These are called **vowel teams**. Some examples of these vowel teams include ai, ea, oa, igh and eigh. The vowel teams made up of just two vowels are also called **vowel digraphs**. Some examples of words that have vowel teams that make a long vowel sound include main, beam, goat, feet, sigh and weigh. Notice that different letters can represent the same sound as in ai in main and eigh in weigh both spell the long a sound.*

- Use notecards or square pieces of paper and the suggested letter sets below for this game. Choose a set of letters. Write the letters each on a separate notecard or square piece of paper. Lay the cards face down in front of you. The goal of the game is to be the first player to build a word. Player one will flip over a card and say the sound(s) spelled by the letter(s) on the card. Player two will do the same. On player one's second turn, they will flip over another card and read the sound(s) on the card. If player one is able to make a word using the cards and read the word correctly, player one is the winner. If not, player two turns over another card and the game goes on until a player is able to build a word and read it accurately. If all the cards get turned over and no words have been built yet, each player can choose two cards to keep and then they will turn the rest back over and continue playing until someone is able to build and read a word accurately. Play again using a new set of letters.

  Set #1: ai, p, r, m, n, pl, st (pain, rain, plain, main, stain)
  Set #2: oa, c, t, d, l, r, fl (coat, moat, road, load, float)
  Set #3: ay, l, s, b, r, m (say, ray, lay, bay, may)

Sometimes Two Vowels Form a New Sound.

*Vowel combinations that do this are called **dipthongs** (this word has a "ph" /f/ sound). There are two that are the most common in the English language, and they are /oi/ as in coin or boil and /ou/ as in loud, or now. Examples of other words that have these kinds of vowels include oil, toil, out and bout.*

- Use notecards or square pieces of paper and the suggested letter sets below for this activity. Choose a set of letters. Write the letters each on a separate notecard or square piece of paper. Lay the cards between you and your child. Together, read the letters on the cards and practice the sounds the letters on each card spell. Now, take turns building words with the letters. You can even make it a game to see who can create the most words out of the letters. Each word is worth one point. Play again using a new set of letters.

  Set #1: ow, pr, c, n, fl, er (cow, now, flower, prow)
  Set #2: ou, nd, pr, cl, d, l, r, s, t, p (cloud, loud, proud, round)
  Set #3: oi, l, s, t, b, f (oil, soil, toil, boil, foil)

When R Follows a Vowel, it Changes the Vowel Sound.

*These are also called **vowel-r combinations** or **r-controlled vowels**. Examples of words that have a changed vowel sound because of the letter r include words like art, torn, march, car, sport, her, burn and first.*

- Use notecards or square pieces of paper and the suggested letter sets below for this activity. Choose a set of letters. Write the letters each on a separate notecard or square piece of paper. Place the cards in a bowl. Have your child pull out one card at a time and read the card saying the sound(s) made by the letter(s) on the card. Your child will continue pulling one card out of the bowl at a time until there are no more in the bowl. Each time they pull out a new card, they try to build a new word with the cards they have available. Encourage them to build as many words as possible with the letters they pull out. Be sure to have them read the words they build and notice how the vowel makes a different sound because of its placement by the letter r.

  Set #1: (ar words) c, ar, t, sh, ar, p, m, ar, k, f, ar, m
  Set #2: (er words) h, er, d, g, er, m, cl, er, k, p, er
  Set #3: (ir words) sh, ir, t, b, ir, d, c, ir, cle, f, ir, st, b, ir, th, day
  Set #4: (or words) sh, or, t, c, or, n, st, or, y, p, or, t
  Set #5: (ur words) h, ur, t, t, ur, tle, b, ur, n, p, ur, ple

Longer Words are Made Up of Shorter Syllables That Can be Sounded Out One Part at a Time.

*Reading and writing words with more than one syllable includes **compound word**s and words with **prefixes** and **suffixes**. Examples of words like these include rainstorm, landing and retell.*

- Play word-building games such as Scrabble©, Boggle© or Word Up© with your child.
- Use square pieces of paper (cutting a notecard into squares works well) and the suggested syllable sets provided below for this activity. Write one syllable per card or piece of paper. Read a word from the word set you chose and ask your child to build the word using the syllable cards. As they pick each syllable, ask them to read the card to you. Once they build the whole word, ask your child to say the parts aloud and read the whole word. Talk about what the word means and practice using the word in a sentence. Challenge your child to build more words with the word parts not yet used.

  Syllable Set #1: (park, look, open, sing, watch, ing, re, un, ed, s, es)
  parked/looking/parks/reopening/singing
  Syllable Set #2: (close, trust, heat, block, charge, dis, un, re, ing, s, ing)
  disclose/closing/reheat/unblock/charges
  Syllable Set #3: (act, cover, draw, load, make, re, ing, tion, s, dis, un)
  action/discover/drawing/unload/making

WHAT IS FLUENCY?

Fluency is the ability to read text with sufficient speed and accuracy to support comprehension. This includes:

- Automatic word recognition;
- Accurate word recognition;
- Use of expression when reading aloud; and
- Understanding what is read, both silently and aloud.

Fluency is the result of strong skills in phonemic awareness and phonics. If a student is struggling to read with speed and accuracy, they may need more practice with the Phonemic Awareness and Phonics sections of this guide. Talk with your child's teacher to determine which of the activities below may be best.

The main goal of fluency practice is always for children to understand what they read.[5] When children can read fluently, they can focus less on decoding (reading) one word at a time and focus more on the overall message of the text.

FLUENCY ACTIVITIES

These activities have been organized into five categories that can support fluency. Your child's teacher may suggest specific activities, or you may complete the activities in the order provided. Repeating activities is encouraged.

Listening to Models of Fluent and Expressive Reading

- Read to your child every day! When you read aloud with your child at any age, you are demonstrating a model of what fluent reading sounds like.
- Find opportunities for your child to listen and follow along with audio recordings. YouTube, StoryOnline and local libraries have a variety of recorded stories.
- Use appropriate expression when reading dialogue. For example, if the character is excited about going to the park, you can speak with an excited voice and encourage your child to include emotions when reading as well.
- Alternate repeating the favorite lines of a poem or song with your child, encouraging them to mimic your phrasing and expression.

Selecting Books for Practicing Fluency

- You can always practice fluency with books that your child's teacher sends home and recommends.
- Use the "Ten-Finger Rule." Ask your child to select a book from the library or books at home. Ask them to read 1-2 pages aloud. If your child misses 1 out of 10 words, the book is appropriate for practicing fluency. If your child misses 1 out of 5 words, the book is good for you to read aloud but may be too difficult for your child to practice fluency.

Reading Together

- Practice echo reading with your child. Use a less familiar story or text and read small chunks of words (5-8 words), using your finger to track what you are reading. After you finish, let your child echo what you just read with the same speed and expression.
- Practice choral reading (or reading the words together at the same time). You can model fluent reading and encourage your child to read at your rate.
- Read to different audiences, perhaps including neighbors, grandparents, pets, favorite toys or younger family members. When a reader keeps the audience in mind, they know to be fluent and expressive.

[5] Hudson, R., Pullen, P.C., Lane, H.B, & Torgesen, J.K. (2009). The complex nature of reading fluency: A multidimensional view. *Reading and Writing Quarterly,* 25(1), 4-32.

Repeated Readings and Chunking the Text

- Reread the same story many times. Repeated reading of a story helps your child to become familiar with the words and sounds they make when they are read fluently.
- Reread selected sentences or passages with your child. Read the passage aloud to your child, and then read it together at the same time, helping your child decode words they misread, explaining any mistakes they make. Next, have your child read the passage to you with a focus on accuracy. Finally, have your child read the passage to you again, paying attention to fluency and expression. The goal is to sound smooth and natural.
- Record the reading. After your child has practiced a passage, record the reading with a cell phone or other recording device. Your child can listen to their reading and follow along in the book. You can repeat this process together to make each recording even better each time.
- Using a pencil, draw lines between the words where you hear a natural break. Have your child practice reading the entire passage, chunking together the words between the pencil lines as they read.

  Example: "From then on, / every afternoon, / as soon has her mother / had left for bingo, / Matilda would toddle / down to the library. // The walk took / only ten minutes / and this allowed her / two glorious hours / sitting quietly / by herself / in a cozy corner / devouring one book after another." (from *Matilda* by Roald Dahl)

Reading for Speed

- **For children who have just learned letter names:** Practice saying letter names quickly from a list of capital and lowercase letters. Say, "Let's see how many letters you can name in one minute." To make this feel more like a game than a drill, challenge your child to read more letters with each try.

  Sample list: H o j L s W t g R p Q a A c x D O

- **For children learning sight words at any grade:** Automatic recognition of words supports fluent reading. You can practice reading words from a list provided by your child's school and try to read the list faster each time. Making the words into flashcards to play memory and matching games can also support automatic recognition of words.

WHAT IS VOCABULARY?

Vocabulary is knowledge of individual word meaning in a text and the concepts that those words convey. This includes:

- Understanding words when reading or listening, and
- Using words when writing or speaking.

Some researchers predict that the average child entering kindergarten knows about 4,000 words and will learn 800 to 1,000 new words each year through grade 6.[6] Other researchers estimate that children can learn 2,000 to 3,000 new words each year![7] Children can constantly learn new words at home and at school, especially with repeated exposures and hands-on experiences with new words.

A note for bilingual and multilingual families:

Speaking multiple languages is a strength! If you speak a language other than English at home, teaching your child many words in your home language will also strengthen their knowledge of English vocabulary. A stronger vocabulary in your child's home language(s) will result in vocabulary growth in English.

VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

Using Conversations to Build Vocabulary

- Ask open-ended questions, or questions that don't just have a one-word answer. Open-ended questions encourage your child to think for themselves and grow in expressing their ideas.

  Examples:
  What was your favorite part of our day? Why?
  What makes you enjoy _____? (insert a sport, activity, show, food or place)
  What do you think might happen if … ?
  How do you think we should … ?

- Have conversations with your children during dinner or while riding in the car. Talk as much as possible about what you see, wherever you are. Talking about your child's day at school, weekend plans or family memories can help grow your child's vocabulary.

Using Life Experiences to Build Vocabulary

- Come up with child-friendly definitions for words you see and hear. For example: "The word *enormous* means something really, really big." Then, use the word in your daily life: "Wow! Look at that cloud! It's *enormous*!"
- When you see an object or landmark at home or in your neighborhood, see how many words you can come up with related to the object or landmark. Say, "Let's see how many words we can come up with that are related to *railroad*?" (tracks, trains, crossing, cars, horn, wheels, stopped, lights, conductor, engine, caboose)
- Play with homonyms, or words that sound the same but have different meanings. Say, "Look at this tree. What do we call the wood on the outside of the tree?" (bark) "What else can bark mean?" (the sound a dog makes)

  Other homonyms to practice with:
  - Ring (a piece of jewelry and the sound of a phone or doorbell)
  - Flu/flew (an illness or the past tense of fly)
  - Pain/pane (discomfort or the glass in a window)

[6] Biemiller, A. (2005). Scope and sequence in vocabulary development: Implications for choosing words for primary grade instruction. In E.H. Hiebert & M.L. Kamil (Eds.), *Teaching and learning vocabulary: Bringing research to practice* (pp. 223-242). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

[7] Stahl, S.A., & Nagy, W.E. (2006). *Teaching word meanings.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Using Texts to Build Vocabulary

- Read informational texts (nonfiction) together to learn about topics related to your child's interests. Talk about the words after reading and point them out in your daily life.
- Before reading a book aloud, introduce any challenging or new words. Explain what the words mean and ask your child to say each word. While reading, point out the words and explain their meaning again.
- Read road signs, billboards and other signage aloud to your child. Talk about what those words mean.
- Watch favorite movies and television shows with your child with a focus on listening for big words to start using at home. Add these words into your everyday conversations with your child.

Learning Word Parts to Build Vocabulary

These activities are more advanced. Children who understand how parts of words fit together to change word meanings can read and figure out the meanings of new words.

Reinforce what your child is learning about prefixes and suffixes at school. **Prefixes** are word parts that can be added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning. **Suffixes** are word parts that can be added to the end of a word to change its meaning.

Common Prefixes to Practice	Common Suffixes to Practice
dis- (not, apart, absence of) pre- (before) re- (again, back)	-s/es (more than one) -ed (past tense of actions) -tion (act or state of)

- Point out words with prefixes and suffixes while reading books or when you see them on signs or advertisements. Talk about how the meanings of words change when we add prefixes and suffixes.
- Select a prefix or suffix your child has learned at school. Try to come up with as many words as possible that use that prefix or suffix. Define the words as you practice. Example: "My prefix is mis-, and it means 'wrong.' So then misspell means to spell wrongly, and misbehaved means someone behaved wrongly."
- Start with a root or word like *act*. Work with your child to write as many words as you can that use that word and discuss how the prefixes and suffixes change the word meanings. From *act*, you might write react, reacts, reacted, reacting, reaction and reaction. Other roots or words to try are flect, heat or inform.

WHAT IS COMPREHENSION?

The complex process of understanding and making sense of written text through decoding, background knowledge and verbal reasoning, all of which are utilized by good readers to understand, remember and communicate what has been read.

Comprehension requires students to not only have strong phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and vocabulary skills, but also it requires students to use background knowledge, knowledge of sentence structure, the ability to make inferences (draw new conclusions) and knowledge of different texts.[8]

Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading. Mastering all of those skills is important because they allow children to focus on critical thinking and processing required to understand and analyze what they are reading.

Children with a strong reading comprehension:

- Monitor their own understanding and reread or discuss the text if it doesn't make sense;
- Know their purpose for reading (to learn new information, to be convinced or to be entertained);
- Make inferences (draw new conclusions) from the text;
- Keep information organized in their minds as they read; and
- Understand how new information relates to or changes their current knowledge or beliefs.[9]

COMPREHENSION ACTIVITIES

General Comprehension Tips

- Read a variety of informational and literary texts. **Informational texts** are non-fiction and based on facts, real events and real people. Informational texts may include biography, historical accounts, scientific explanations, mathematical charts and graphs and more. **Literature or literary texts** are sometimes called fiction and involve imaginary events and people. These texts may include poetry, plays, short stories, fables, folktales or novels.
- Talk about errands that you will run together. Use sequencing words (first, next, last, finally) when describing your day. For example, you might say, "We are going to make three stops. First, we will go to the gas station. Next, we will go to the bank. Finally, we will go to the grocery store."
- Stories are everywhere in the media that children enjoy beyond printed books. Discuss a movie, video, video game or television show: "Who were the main characters/people involved? What kind of problems did they have? How did they try to solve those problems? How did the movie begin? How did the show end?

BEFORE Reading Activities:

- Have your child read the title and go page-by-page through the book to preview the text. Ask your child what they think the story will be about. **Alternate version:** If you are reading an informational text, have your child look at the different text features (headings, photos or captions) to help them make predictions about the text.
- Talk with your child about what they already know about the topic or idea. Ask what your child might learn or want to learn from reading the book. This process is called **setting a purpose** and can guide comprehension.
- If you are reading a chapter book over several days, have your child give you a recap before starting the new chapter. Say, "Think back to the last time we read. Who were the characters? What were they trying to accomplish? What did the details from the story tell us about them?" Rereading from the page last read may be necessary.

[8] Scarborough, H. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory and practice. In S.B. Neuman & D.K. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (Vol. 1, pp. 97-110). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

[9] Anderson, R.C., & Pearson, P.D. (1984). A schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading. In P.D. Pearson (Ed.), *Handbook of Reading Research* (pp. 225-291). New York, NY: Longman.

DURING Reading Activities

- When you read aloud to your child, talk about what you are thinking. This is an opportunity to show your child that reading is a lot more than just figuring out the words. Describe how you feel about what's going on in the book or what you thought about a character's choice.
- Pause every few pages to check your child's understanding of what is being read. Ask who, what, when, where, why and how questions. If your child does not know, go back and reread to model that strong readers reread when they don't understand something.
- Help your child learn how to infer meaning from what is not said in the text. When a character has a major event, ask your child to think about how the character might feel, or what their next steps might be based on what the character has already done in the story.
- Point to literal and figurative language in the text. **Literal** means that the text says exactly what it means while **figurative language** may exaggerate or make a comparison. For example, "The book says that Maria's backpack weighed a ton. Do you think it really weighs a ton? Why or why not?"
- Encourage your child to visualize the characters, setting or events from the book they are reading. Ask your child to describe, using details from the text, what they imagine as they read.

AFTER Reading Activities

- Have your child retell you what happened. Ask your child to include details on the main characters, the setting and the major events. Encourage your child to retell the story in the correct sequence of events.
- Return to your purpose for reading: "Did you learn what you wanted to learn?" If not, engage in some research online or at the library to learn more.
- Create a story bag. Use a grocery bag and fill it with items from around your home that are related to the characters, setting or events in the story. As you pull each item from the bag, ask your child how the object is related to what you read together.
- After reading, ask your child to form an opinion about some part of the text and to provide reasons from the text to support the opinion, "Do you agree with the character's choice? Show me that part. Why don't you agree?"
- Ask questions about character traits, motivations, actions or feelings: "Which character do you think was kind? Which character was bossy? What details from the text show us that?" If your child doesn't know, reread a portion that demonstrates your answer.
- Encourage sequential thinking by asking, "If the story kept going, what do you think would happen next? What from the story makes you think that? How would an event like that affect the character?"
- Help your child make connections to their own experiences or beliefs. Say, "Is there anything you read in the story that reminds you of something from our life?"