

Dublin City Schools English Language Arts Graded Course of Study Early Childhood

I. Content Standard: Phonemic Awareness, Word Recognition and Fluency Standard

A key finding in recent research has been the importance of developing phonological awareness in children during the preschool years. Phonological awareness is hearing and understanding the different sounds of spoken language. It includes the different ways oral language can be broken down into individual parts (for example, separate sounds and syllables). The skills that make up phonological awareness are on a continuum of complexity. The most basic level includes skills such as playing with rhymes; noticing how words begin with the same sounds; or clapping out individual words or syllables of a song, rhyme or chant. Playing with sounds in speech helps children in their growing understanding of phonemic awareness – the ability to hear, identify and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken language. Although phonemic awareness is not an expectation for preschool, some preschool children demonstrate the ability to take words apart, sound by sound. Phonemic awareness is addressed in kindergarten curriculum.

Preschool-age children also begin to recognize some printed alphabet letters and words, especially the ones found in their own names. Knowing about letters involves understanding that a letter is a symbol that represents one or more sounds in English, that these symbols can be grouped together to form words, and that these words have meaning. To support young learners, early childhood educators should draw children’s attention to letters and words as they come up in everyday activities and provide children easy access to and opportunities for engagement with letters and words in many forms, such as alphabet books and books with repetitive words and phrases. Children who use magnetic letters or other alphabet materials to form their name or who attempt to write a phone message in the dramatic play center provide examples of how young learners demonstrate their understanding of letters and words.

Benchmark	Early Childhood Indicator(s)
<p>Benchmark A: Use letter-sound correspondence knowledge and structural analysis to decode words.</p>	<p>Benchmark A Indicator(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify matching sounds and recognize rhymes in familiar stories, poems, songs and words (e.g., cat/hat, dog/frog). • Hear sounds in words by isolating the syllables of a word using snapping, clapping or rhythmic movement (e.g., cat, ap-ple). • Differentiate between sounds that are the same and different (e.g., environmental sounds, animal sounds, phonemes). • Recognize when words share phonemes (sounds) and repeat the common phoneme (e.g., /b/ as in Bob, ball, baby; /t/ as in Matt, kite, boat). • Recognize and name some upper and lower case letters in addition to those in first

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	<p>name.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that words are made up of letters (e.g., c-a-t).
<p>Benchmark B: Demonstrate fluent oral reading using sight words and decoding skills, varying intonation and timing as appropriate for text.</p>	<p>Benchmark B Indicator(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify own name in print. • Recognize and “read” familiar words or environmental print (e.g., McDonalds, Bob Evans). • Demonstrate an understanding of reading fluency by use of phrasing, intonation and expression in shared reading (e.g., <i>Brown Bear, Brown Bear</i>).



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II. Content Standard: Acquisition of Vocabulary Standard

The preschool years are a time of vocabulary explosion. Children who are exposed to sophisticated vocabulary in the course of interesting conversations learn the words they will later need to recognize and understand when reading. Vocabulary children acquire is related to their language experiences both at home and at school. Therefore, during the preschool years, early childhood educators must provide many opportunities for children to develop vocabulary and use these words as part of their growing ability to engage in conversation, ask for information and provide information. These opportunities include informal conversations with adults and peers through the day; engagement in songs, rhymes, finger plays or movement activities; and first-hand experiences that involve sharing new words to describe what children are seeing and doing. In addition, read-alouds using books with unique words – words that appear infrequently in everyday spoken language – facilitate children’s listening, talking about and developing understanding of words they do not hear while listening to television or engaging in everyday conversations.

Trust with familiar adults, including the early childhood educator, must be developed and maintained for children to take risks using language, particularly in new and creative ways. Children need to play with familiar language, explore meanings and test uses of language in different settings. Using new words to describe familiar objects, inventing new ways to use well-known words and discovering additional ways to tell about events and dreams all happen in interactive settings with a devoted adult who listens and responds in positive ways to reinforce the vocabulary and language play so it will continue. These many and varied opportunities support the oral language and vocabulary development critical to future reading and writing success in school.

Benchmark	Early Childhood Indicator(s)
<p>Benchmark A: Use context clues to determine the meaning of new vocabulary.</p>	<p>Benchmark A Indicator(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the meaning of new words from context of conversations, the use of pictures that accompany text or the use of concrete objects.
<p>Benchmark B: Read accurately high-fluency sight words.</p>	<p>Benchmark B Indicator(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and demonstrate an understanding of environmental print (e.g., STOP on a stop sign). Name items in common categories (e.g., animals, food, clothing, transportation, etc.). • Demonstrate or orally communicate position and directional words (e.g., inside, outside, in front of, behind).

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Benchmark C: Apply structural analysis skills to build and extend vocabulary and to determine word meaning.	There are no indicators age appropriate for this level.
Benchmark D: Know the meaning of specialized vocabulary by applying knowledge of word parts, relationships and meanings	There are no indicators age appropriate for this level.
Benchmark E: Use resources to determine the meanings and pronunciations of unknown words.	Benchmark E Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Determine the meaning of unknown words with assistance or cues from an adult (e.g., providing a frame of reference, context or comparison).



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III. Content Standard: Reading Process: Contents of Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self-Monitoring Strategies Standard

A central goal during the preschool years is to enhance children’s exposure to and concepts about print. These concepts are related to the visual characteristics, features and properties of written language. Some early childhood educators use “big books” to help children distinguish many book and print features, including the fact that a book must be held right-side up to read the words and view the illustrations; that print, rather than pictures, carries the meaning of the story; that print conveys not just any message, but a specific message; that the strings of letters between spaces are words that correspond to oral versions; and that reading progresses from left to right and from top to bottom.

The process of gaining meaning from spoken language begins in infancy, as young children search for meaning through context, gestures and facial cues. Children demonstrate their understanding or comprehension by asking questions and by making comments throughout the day. They bring this curiosity to reading events, and they develop comprehension skills through the conversations around the story – by making predictions about a story’s events or characters or by commenting on the topic of a story being read to them. In addition, children take delight in retelling stories or acting out the events of a story in their play. Pausing at the end of a sentence to let children join in, asking open-ended questions and helping children make connections to prior experiences are all effective teaching strategies for developing comprehension skills.

Benchmark	Early Childhood Indicator(s)
Benchmark A: Establish a purpose for reading and use a range of reading comprehension strategies to understand literary passages and text.	Benchmark A Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin to visualize, represent, and sequence an understanding of text through a variety of media and play.
Benchmark B: Make predictions from text clues and cite specific examples to support predictions.	Benchmark B Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Predict what might happen next during the reading of text.
Benchmark C: Draw conclusions from information in the text.	Benchmark C Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin to visualize, represent, and sequence an understanding of text through a variety of media and play.

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Benchmark D: Apply reading skills and strategies to summarize and compare and contrast information in text, between text and across subject areas.	Benchmark D Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect information or ideas in text to prior knowledge and experience (e.g., “I have a new puppy at home too.”).
Benchmark E: Demonstrate comprehension by responding to questions (e.g., literal, informational and evaluative).	Benchmark E Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answer literal questions to demonstrate comprehension of orally read age-appropriate text.
Benchmark F: Apply and adjust self-monitoring strategies to assess understanding of text.	Benchmark F Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respond to oral reading by commenting or questioning (e.g., “That would taste yucky.”)

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IV. Content Standard: Reading Applications: Informational, Technical and Persuasive Text Standard.

During the preschool years, children learn that books contain different kinds of information. There are those books that provide facts about a topic; those that help us understand general ideas or themes, such as numbers and the alphabet; those that tell us stories about real people and events; and those that share fairy tales and make believe, such as *The Three Little Pigs*. Through multiple, varied and engaging experiences, children develop concepts about these texts, how they are organized and how they are useful tools in learning about the world.

Benchmark	Early Childhood Indicator(s)
Benchmark A: Use text features and structures to organize content, draw conclusions and build text knowledge.	Benchmark A Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use pictures and illustrations to aid comprehension (e.g., talks about picture when sharing a story in a book).
Benchmark B: Ask clarifying questions concerning essential elements of informational text.	There are no indicators age appropriate for this level.
Benchmark C: Identify the central ideas and supporting details of informational text.	Benchmark C Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retell information from informational text. Tell the topic of a selection that has been read aloud (e.g., What is the book about?).
Benchmark D: Use visual aids as sources to gain additional information from text.	Benchmark D Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain text information from pictures, photos, simple charts and labels.
Benchmark E: Evaluate two- and three-step directions for proper sequencing and completeness.	Benchmark E Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow simple directions.

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V. Content Standard: Reading Applications: Literary Text Standard

Storybooks offer important learning opportunities about narrative text. By listening to many stories, children begin to build an awareness of the ways stories are organized. Children’s concept of the story gradually develops to include the notion that stories have characters that are sustained throughout the story and that stories have actions or events that lead to an ending. In addition, through read-alouds and shared readings with adults, children learn that a story has a setting where it takes place and that conversations might be taking place between characters. Their growing awareness and understanding of stories is often demonstrated when they attempt to retell or re-enact events from their favorite story with the support of their peers.

Benchmark	Early Childhood Indicator(s)
Benchmark A: Compare and contrast plot across literary works.	Benchmark A Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify characters in favorite books and stories. • Retell or re-enact events from a story through a variety of media and play events (e.g., dramatize a favorite story).
Benchmark B: Use supporting details to identify and describe main ideas, characters and setting.	Benchmark B Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify characters in favorite books and stories.
Benchmark C: Recognize the defining characteristics and features of different types of literary forms and genres.	Benchmark C Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to demonstrate an understanding of the differences between fantasy and reality (e.g., talking flowers and animals). • Participate in shared reading of repetitious or predictable text.
Benchmark D: Explain how an authors word choice and use of methods influences the reader.	There are no indicators age appropriate for this level.
Benchmark F: Identify the theme of a literary text.	There are no indicators age appropriate for this level.



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VI. Content Standard: Writing Process Standard.

Children’s books and personal and shared experiences provide opportunities for early childhood educators to demonstrate and engage young children in the process of writing. Through small-group discussion or through one-on-one dialogue, adults engage children through modeled and shared writing experiences where text is created, the relationship between the written and spoken word is modeled, and the function and purpose of writing are illustrated. Writing invitations, letters, morning messages and lists with children illustrate a few meaningful contexts wherein educators can support children’s understanding that writing is a process – one can change one’s mind as one writes, add new thoughts later and reread the thoughts one has recorded. It is through these meaningful modeled and shared experiences with writing that will motivate children to find purpose in creating “writing” on their own.

Benchmark	Early Childhood Indicator(s)
Benchmark A: Generate ideas for written compositions.	Benchmark A Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate ideas for a story or shared writing with assistance. • Choose a topic for writing related to shared or personal experience.
Benchmark B: Develop audience and purpose for self-selected and assigned writing tasks.	Benchmark B Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to determine purpose for writing (e.g., writing invitations to a birthday party).
Benchmark C: Use organizers to clarify ideas for writing assignments.	Benchmark C Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate ideas for a story or shared writing with assistance.
Benchmark D: Use revision strategies and resources to improve ideas and content, organization, word choice and detail.	Benchmark D Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat message conveyed through dictation or "writing" (e.g., retell what was written). • Begin to use resources (e.g., labels, books, adults, word walls, computer, etc.) to convey meaning.
Benchmark E: Edit to improve sentence fluency, grammar and usage.	Benchmark E Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dictate or produce “writing” to express thoughts.
Benchmark F: Apply tools to judge the quality of writing.	There are no indicators age appropriate for this level.
Benchmark G: Publish writing samples for display or sharing with others using techniques such as electronic resources and graphs.	Benchmark G Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display or share “writing” samples, illustrations and dictated stories with others.

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VII. Content Standard: Writing Applications Standard.

Preschool-age children who have had plenty of opportunities to express themselves on paper – by scribbling, drawing and painting – are already on their way to becoming writers. They understand that print carries a different kind of message than pictures, and they begin to demonstrate their understanding of print as they incorporate it into drawings and paintings. This early application of writing often takes the form of asking for adult assistance or trying on their own to have their name, labels or a story written on their drawings and paintings. As children learn to form letters and develop phonological awareness, their writing takes on more conventional forms, as they print their own names and write words using inventive spelling to express their ideas and thoughts.

Within preschool settings, children need to access a variety of paper, writing utensils and materials for bookmaking, as well as numerous opportunities to experiment and explore writing for authentic reasons. Writing to remember a phone number in the dramatic play area, to tell the steps needed for building a tower of blocks, or to invite a friend to their birthday party are authentic reasons for writing. Adults must celebrate all early writing attempts and approximations of writing. Children should be viewed as they view themselves – as young adults.

Benchmark	Early Childhood Indicator(s)
<p>Benchmark A: Compose writings that convey a clear message and include well-chosen details.</p>	<p>Benchmark A Indicator(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dictate stories or produce simple stories using pictures, mock letters or words. • Name objects and label with assistance from adult cues (e.g., table, door). • Play at writing from top to bottom, horizontal rows as format. • Dictate words or produce writing approximations for a variety of purposes (e.g., menus in dramatic play, note to friend).
<p>Benchmark B: Write responses to literature that demonstrate an understanding of the literary work.</p>	<p>There are no indicators age appropriate for this level.</p>
<p>Benchmark C: Write friendly letters and invitations complete with date, salutation, body closing and signature.</p>	<p>Benchmark C Indicator(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dictate words or produce writing approximations for a variety of purposes (e.g., menus in dramatic play, note to friend).

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VIII. Content Standard: Writing Conventions Standard.

When children are surrounded by print and observe others around them reading and writing, they become aware of print and its function. As children play at writing, they scribble, print letter-like shapes and form cursive-like markings, imitating the adults they see. These early scribbles or “writing” may or may not be intended to carry a message. Often writing is mixed with a painting or drawing. However, through experiences with writing, children quickly learn to distinguish between drawing and writing. Their scribbling and pretend writing should be supported and encouraged as children move from these immature attempts at writing to more conventional forms using letter-like marks, symbols, and strings of actual letters.

Benchmark	Early Childhood Indicator(s)
Benchmark A: Print legibly using appropriate spacing.	Benchmark A Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print letters of own name and other meaningful words with assistance using mock letters and/or conventional print. • Begin to demonstrate letter formation in “writing.”
Benchmark B: Spell grade-appropriate words correctly.	Benchmark B Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scribble familiar words with mock letters and some actual letters (e.g., love, mom, child’s name).
Benchmark C: Use conventions of punctuation and capitalization in written work.	Benchmark C Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate an awareness of letters that cluster as words, words in phrases or sentences by use of spacing, symbols or marks.
Benchmark D: Use grammatical structures in written work.	There are no indicators age appropriate for this level.

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IX. Content Standard: Research Standard

Young children are naturally curious – asking questions about experiences and areas of interest to them. A preschool environment filled with many types of informational books, picture dictionaries and other resource material provides numerous tools and opportunities for adults and children to capitalize on the young learners’ quest for information around their inquiries. With adult support, young children then share their new findings with others through various media, including drawings, dramatization and oral expressions.

Benchmark	Early Childhood Indicator(s)
<p>Benchmark A: Generate questions for investigation and gather information from a variety of sources.</p>	<p>Benchmark A Indicator(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions about experiences, areas of interest, pictures, letters, words, logos or icons (e.g., EXIT on a sign in the grocery store). • Use a variety of resources to gather new information with assistance (e.g., picture dictionary, informational picture books).
<p>Benchmark B: Retell important details and findings.</p>	<p>Benchmark B Indicator(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recall information about a topic dictated or constructed by child. • Share findings of information through retelling, media and play (e.g., draw a picture of the desert).

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X. Content Standard: Communication: Oral and Visual Standard

During the preschool years, children learn language more quickly than at any other time in their lives. The world is filled with sound, and as children develop growing awareness of their environment, they begin to recognize and discriminate between the sounds of machines, music, street noise, talk on television, people and animals. However, learning to listen should be considered part of a broader context that includes speaking, interpersonal relationships and information processing. Learning to listen involves paying attention to adults and peers as they talk to share information and ideas. Children begin to understand and appreciate others' points of view as they connect the new information they hear with their own personal ideas and experiences.

Oral communication is developed through socialization. Through interaction with peers and adults, children learn to engage in social interaction and to use language for a variety of functions. When early childhood educators talk with children and give them opportunities to talk, language is being taught. Children need appropriate and effective language skills to think and learn; to share ideas, feelings and needs; and to make friends and enjoy each other. Associating language with interesting, exciting and pleasant experiences encourages children to talk. Children will talk when the environments where they live and play promote a natural need to communicate. Young children's oral language grows when environments encourage risk-taking, when someone listens, and when there is a need to initiate, sustain and exchange language with others.

Oral communication plays an important role in all aspects of learning. It provides the foundation for reading and writing. Young children's proficiency in oral language – their sense of words and sentences, sensitivity to the sound system, and understanding of word meanings – influences their early attempts to read and write. Although listening and oral communication (speaking) appear within this separate standard, their interdependence and influence on all other aspects of the language arts program must be recognized and understood.

Benchmark	Early Childhood Indicator(s)
Benchmark A: Use active listening strategies to identify the main idea and to gain information from oral presentation.	Benchmark A Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend to speakers, stories, poems and songs.
Benchmark B: Connect prior experiences, insights and ideas to those of a speaker.	Benchmark B Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect information and events to personal experiences by sharing or commenting.
Benchmark C: Follow multi-step directions.	Benchmark C Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow simple oral directions.
Benchmark D: Speak clearly and at an appropriate pace and volume.	Benchmark D Indicator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak clearly and understandably to express ideas, feelings and needs. Initiate and sustain a conversation through turn taking.

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<p>Benchmark E: Deliver a variety of presentations that include relevant information and a clear sense of purpose.</p>	<p>Benchmark E Indicator(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present own experiences, products, creations or writing through the use of language (e.g., share and talk about a drawing with others).
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