Ways to Support Beginning Literacy at Home

PRINCETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. This skill is foundational for reading.

- Identify and produce words that rhyme, identify, and count syllables in a word (cup-cake, re-cess)
- Identify and isolate beginning, middle and ending sounds
- Recognize alliteration (words with the same beginning sound)
- Blend individual sounds to make a word (/c/-/a/-/t/=cat)
- Segment (stretch out) a word into its individual sounds (run=r-u-n)
- Swap in a different sound to the beginning, middle, or end of a word to make a new word (*Write mat. Change the /m/ to /r/. What word did you make? Rat*!)



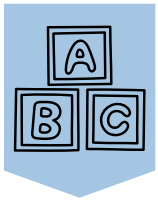
Phonics

Phonics is connecting sounds (phonemes) with letters or groups of letters (graphemes). It helps students decode words by breaking them down into smaller parts. Decoding means using this knowledge to sound out and read words on a page.

- There are 26 letters in the alphabet, but 44 sounds of speech (QR code).
- Say a sound- have your child write the letter or letters that represent the sound
- Students typically learn phonics in this continuum:
  - **CVC, Digraphs, Blends, CVCe, Vowel Teams, R-Controlled**
- **Practice known phonics patterns:**
  - **Re-read** decodable books that come home from school.
- **Puzzles and Games:**
  - Alphabet puzzles that match upper and lowercase, play 'Go Fish' with letter cards.
- **Create Flashcards:**
  - Match uppercase and lowercase letters, say letter sounds for each letter
  - Match uppercase letters to their corresponding lowercase counterparts
    For example, matching "A" to "a"
  - Play Memory (matching uppercase and lowercase letters)
- **Letter Magnets/Tiles/Paper Letters:**
  - Build simple words (it, up, cat, dog)
- **Word Chains and Word Ladders:**
  - Change words one letter at a time (cat → can → man → mat → map)

To hear the 44 phonemes:

SCAN ME!



Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read smoothly at an appropriate rate with proper expression.

- **Model fluent reading**: You read aloud or provide an audio or video version of a story.
- **Reread stories many times**: Words will become familiar, and the reading will become more fluent.
- **Choral reading**: You and your child read the text at the same time.
- **Timed reading**: Time your child reading a passage for one minute, then reread the same passage to see improvement.
- **Buddy reading**: You read first, then your child reads the same text.
- **Make flashcards:**
  - Practice seeing the letter and saying the letter sounds.
  - Practice high-frequency words (say and spell the words)
- **Re-read** decodable books and paper readers that come home from school.
- Complete activities sent home from school in book baggies.
- Practice fluency sheets sent home from your child's teacher.



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Vocabulary

Vocabulary development is the life long process of learning new words and understanding their meanings. The more words children know, the easier it is for them to understand what they read.

- Beginning readers must use the words they hear orally to make sense of the words they see in print. Children who hear more words spoken at home learn more words and enter school with stronger vocabularies. This larger vocabulary pays off exponentially as a child progresses through school.
- Teach your child the meaning of new words and use new words regularly
- Brainstorm:
  - Synonyms for common words (small, tiny)
  - Antonyms for common words (tiny, enormous)
- Read 20 minutes a day with your child!
- Talk to them and take them places!



Comprehension

Comprehension is the ability to understand and make sense of what is being read, grasping the meaning of the text, remembering details, and connecting ideas to their own experiences show a child's comprehension.

Strong readers think actively as they read. They use their experiences and knowledge of the world, vocabulary bank, and understanding of language structure to understand the text.

<u>Ask questions like:</u>

- Who were the characters?
- Where did the story take place? (This may change throughout the story!)
- What was the problem? How did the character feel?
- How did the problem get solved?
- What did you learn about in this text?
- Can you tell me what happened in the story?



Writing & Encoding

Developing good writing skills strengthens a child's comprehension, communication, vocabulary and spelling.

- Encourage your child to write their first and last names, capitalizing the first letter only.
- Practice writing complete sentences, with a capital first letter, spaces between words, and final punctuation.
- Writing develops in stages:
  - **Drawing, scribbling, fake letters, random letter strings (ages 2-5)**
  - **Inventive spelling, phonetic convention spelling (1st-3rd grades)**
- Ask your child to combine letters and pictures to create simple stories
  – Can they write what they say? That is a story!
- Show them that writing is useful in real life: leave notes, make lists, send texts or emails, or label items around the home.



Structured Literacy is a teaching approach grounded in the Science of Reading. It includes direct, systematic, and explicit instruction in the key areas of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. This method supports all learners!