

# *FAMILY*



# *FUNdamentals*

School-Home Literacy  
Connections

Activities for students moving from  
Pre-K to K

In support of the State Board of Education's Commitment  
To Improving Academic Achievement for all Students



# Phonological Awareness

*Phonological awareness* is the understanding that language we speak and hear is composed of units of sound called phonemes.

*Why does my child need this skill?*

Children need to be able to hear the separate sounds that make up words before they try to read or write them. In fact, there are three kinds of phonological and phonemic awareness:

**Rhyming**-Children need to hear and make rhymes so they can make new words from words they already know. For example: If a child knows the word "fun," then s/he can make the word "run."

**Blending**-Phoneme blending helps children connect sounds in words.

**Segmentation**-Segmentation helps children learn to separate sentences into words and words into sounds. This will help a child to write the words s/he hears.

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## Sound Spy

Goal:

To help your child identify the beginning, middle and ending sounds in words

### What You Will Need:

- Time with your child



### Let's Go!

1. Invite your child to play "Sound Spy" with you. S/he will be a "spy" who has to find matching sounds at the beginning of words.
2. Now, think of two words that begin with the same sounds and one word that begins with a different sound.  
Example: mat, sit, mop
3. Say the words and have the child say them with you.
4. Then say, "I hear two words that begin with the same sound. Can you 'Sound Spy?'"  
(Your child may need a lot of help at first.)

### Let's Go On!

5. Try the same game, but this time match middle or ending sounds. This is harder, but with practice, your child should be able to "Sound Spy" in no time!

# Secret Language Shopping

## Goal:

To help your child recognize the different sounds in speech and to separate sounds from words

## What You Will Need:

- Time with your child

## Let's Go!

1. Tell your child that you are going to a new store today, and ask her/him to help you with your shopping list, using a new "secret language."
2. Say the first item on your list- corn. This word in the new secret language would be "orn."
3. Repeat with another word- juice. This word in the new secret language would be "uice."
4. Continue with familiar food items, asking your child to help you say the words in the new secret language leaving out the first sounds of the words.



## Quick Tip for Literacy:

Got a minute? Practice listening to the sounds in words by singing Silly Songs. First sing a familiar song like "Happy Birthday to You." Next replace all the beginning sounds (consonants) in the song with one sound.

Example: Sappy sirthday so sou, sappy sirthday so sou,  
Sappy sirthday sear Sally, Sappy sirthday so sou.

Sing happy birthday this way to everyone in the family, changing all the beginning sounds to match the name of the character.

Try it with other favorite songs, too.



# Phonics

*Phonics* activities can help a child connect the sounds s/he hears to the printed words s/he sees. These activities include recognizing letters and the sounds they make; hearing and writing down the sounds buried within words; and developing strategies to "decode" unfamiliar words.

Why does my child need this skill?

Children need to be taught the sounds individual printed letters and groups of letters make. Knowing the relationships between letters and sounds helps children to recognize familiar words accurately and automatically, and "decode" new words.

## Point to the Letter

### Goal:

To help your child recognize letters and letter sounds

### What You Will Need:

- A set of 26 letter cards, magnetic letters, or wooden block letters

### Let's Go!

1. Put all letters out in a-b-c order for your child to see.
2. Sing the alphabet song together while pointing to the letters.
3. Have your child point to a letter that s/he knows.
4. Ask your child to tell you a word that begins with that letter sound. Or have her/him draw a picture of something that starts with that letter sound.



# Trace That Letter!

## Goal:

To help your child identify letters through touch

## What You Will Need:

- Letter cards, magnetic letters, or wooden letter blocks
- A plastic or metal baking tray filled with 1/2" of sand, cream of wheat, or rice
- Paper
- Pencil or pen
- Crayon

## Let's Go!

1. Show your child a letter and have her/him practice writing the letter in the tray of sand.
2. Say the name of letter together while s/he writes the letter.
3. Now use the paper and pencil. Write a large letter on the paper as your child watches you.
4. Next have your child write over the letter using a crayon. Have the child say the letter while s/he writes.
5. Continue with a few more letters.



### Quick Tip for Literacy:

A trip to the beach or park can turn into a literacy lesson in a flash!

While digging, sifting, shaking and shaping in the sand or garden soil, take a moment to write letters or your child's name in the soil. Label garden rows, play alphabet tic-tac-toe, add a family crest (use your initials) to a sand castle.

Use your imagination to bring letters and literacy into every day activities.



# Comprehension

*Comprehension* strategies help children understand, remember and communicate what they read. They also help children to link what they are reading to what they already know.

Why does my child need this skill?

To become independent readers and thinkers, children need lots of practice at predicting what is coming next, and then checking to see if s/he was right. They need to think about ideas and information, ask questions, and solve problems. Children need to know the steps good readers use to make sure they understand text. Students who are in control of their own reading comprehension become more purposeful, active readers.

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## What's Happening?

### Goal:

To help your child predict familiar and unfamiliar stories

### What You Will Need:

- Lots of fiction books

### Let's Go!

1. Select a book. You can choose either a new story or an old favorite.
2. Ask your child to predict what the story is about based on the title and picture on the cover.
3. Read a few pages. Ask, "Were you right? Do you want to make a new prediction?"
4. Remind your child to use the pictures to help make new predictions. Ask, "What do you think will happen next?"
5. Read to check if your child was right.



# Reading The World

Goal:

To help your child become more aware of print as a source of information

## What you Will Need:

Boxes and/or labels with which your child is familiar

Metal ring clip and hole punch OR

Shoe box



## Let's Go!

1. Collect labels or box fronts from products your family uses.
2. Punch a hole in one corner and clip them together with a metal ring or place them in a shoe box.
3. Talk with you child about these labels. Ask, "How do people know what's inside packages?" Ask your child to tell you about the labels and what the words might say.
4. Practice them with your child when you get a chance.

## Let's Go On!

5. When shopping for these items, bring your labels along and ask your child to help you locate items on the store shelves.

### Quick Tip for Literacy:

Play "10 Questions" with your child after reading favorite stories to help them learn to ask questions about characters when they read.

Read a book or story with your child. Think of a character in the story. Invite your child to ask you questions that can only be answered with a yes or no. When s/he has enough clues, s/he may guess the character. If s/he can't guess by the tenth question, give the answer and start again. This time, switch places and let your child think of the character.



# Fluency

*Reading fluency* is the ability to read text accurately and quickly. Several skills help children read fluently: paying attention to punctuation, grouping words into meaningful chunks, and using expression. Fluency also requires children to use strategies to figure out unfamiliar words and to know a lot of sight words that can't be "sounded out."

Why does my child need this skill?

Children who read words smoothly and accurately are more likely to enjoy reading and to understand what they read. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. When fluent readers read aloud, they read effortlessly and with expression. Readers who are weak in fluency read slowly, word by word, focusing on decoding words instead of understanding the meaning of what they read.

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## Read-aloud Tips for Grown-ups

### Goal:

To put strategies into action that will help your child become a good reader and writer



### What You Will Need:

- Time with your child
- Favorite books or other reading material

### Let's Go!

1. Invite your child to read with you every day.
2. When reading a book where the print is large, point word by word as you read.
3. Read a child's favorite book over and over again.
4. Read many stories with rhyming words and lines that repeat. Invite the child to join in on these parts. Point, word by word, as he or she reads along with you.
5. Discuss new words. For example, "This big house is called a palace. Who do you think lives in a palace?"
6. Stop and ask about the pictures and about what is happening in the story.
7. Read from a variety of children's books, including fairy tales, song books, poems and information books.

# Grocery List

## Goal:

To help your child use writing in a meaningful way

## What You Will Need:

- Paper
- Pencil or pen
- Glue
- Pictures of food from newspaper or magazine



## Let's Go!

1. Let your child help you write a grocery list.
2. Take turns writing things you plan to buy.
3. If your child can't spell all items correctly, "phonetic" spelling is okay for now.
4. If your child can't write many words yet, have her/him cut out pictures of food items and glue them to the list.

## Quick Tip for Literacy:

**Literacy**-Includes all the activities involved in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and appreciating both spoken and written language.

**Print Awareness**-The knowledge that printed words carry meaning and that reading and writing are ways to obtain ideas and information. A young child's sensitivity to print is one of the first steps toward reading.

# Vocabulary

Vocabulary development is learning to use and understand many words, and to use them correctly in sentences.

Why does my child need this skill?  
Children will read and write better when they actively build and expand their knowledge of written and spoken words, what they mean and how they are used.

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## Describing What We See and Remember

### Goal:

To help your child describe objects in many places

### What You Will Need:

- Time with your child

### Let's Go!

1. Take short trips with your child, and talk about things you see. Describe things. Say their names, and point out features. Look for things that are the same and things that are different.



**At the Mall:** Describe how certain stores sell certain items. Help your child to understand where her/his clothes and toys come from.

**At the Park:** Talk about the play equipment and the people you see.

**At the Nature Center:** Talk about the woods and the plants. Listen to the sounds, and smell the smells. Look for little animals.

**At the Zoo:** Look at the animals, and talk about their names and how they look. Compare a zebra to a horse. Notice how many birds look almost the same. Talk about how others are different. Notice how lizards look a lot like dinosaurs.

### Let's Go On!

2. Talk about your past experiences. Have a "remember when" conversation while driving to the grocery store or while tucking your child into bed.

# Picture Album

## Goal:

To help your child become more aware of print as a source of information and to recognize familiar words

## What You Will Need:

- Photographs of family members or items your child likes
- An album or blank book
- Tape or glue, labels, markers

## Let's Go!

1. With your child, collect pictures of people or items that your child considers meaningful.
2. Paste them into a book or album and label them. Be sure that your child watches you write the names.
3. "Read" the book with your child and have her/him name the people or items in the book. Over time, s/he will see the print/picture connection and will be able to use it as a kind of dictionary answer to the question, "How do you write \_\_\_\_\_?"



## Quick Tip for Literacy:

Children who can pay attention have the most success in kindergarten. They will know how to listen when someone is speaking or reading.

Boost your child's attention span a little at a time:

1. Give your child short tasks, like putting together a small puzzle or building a 10-block shape. Say, "You did it!" when s/he is done.  
Make tasks a little longer each time as attention span increases.
2. Use a kitchen timer and tell your child what you expect. "I'm going to set the time for 10 minutes. I want you to make play dough shapes until you hear the timer go beep."

# Resources for More Ideas

## Workbooks to boost literacy skills:

Summer Bridge Activities. <http://www.summerbridgeactivities.org/> Various authors, Rainbow Bridge Publishing. Available for all preschool through elementary-school transitions. Lots of colorful worksheets, but may be boring for students who are already working at grade level. Better for the child who has struggled during the school year or a child who has not yet mastered basic skills.

Summer Smarts: *Activities and skills to Prepare your child for (various grade levels available)*  
<http://us.macmillan.com/series/SummerSmarts>. Available for all preschool and elementary school transitions. Less repetition of skills and more focus on reading real books.

## Books for Parents:

### Ask for the following books in your local library:

Calkins, LM. (1997) *Raising Lifelong Learners*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Copperman, P. (1986). *Taking Books to Heart: How to develop a love of reading in your child*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley

Cullinan, B. E. (1992). *Read to me: Raising kids who love to read*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Freeman, J. (1995). *More Books Kids Will Sit Still For: A read aloud guide*. New Providence, NJ: R.R. Bowker

Gross, J. (1986) *Make Your child a Lifelong Reader: A parent-guided program for children of all ages who can't, won't or haven't yet started to read*. Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher.

Hearne, B. (1990). *Choosing Books for Children: A common sense guide*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing.

Hunt, G (1989). *Honey For a Child's Heart: The imaginative use of books in family life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

Hydrick, J (1996) *Parent's Guide to Literacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Kimmel, M.M., & Segel, E. (1983). *For Reading Out Loud! A guide to sharing books with children*, New York, NY: Delacorte Press

Kropp, P. (1993, 1996). *Raising a Reader: Make your child a reader for life*. New York , NY: Doubleday.

Lamme, L.L. (1995). *Growing Up Reading: Sharing with your children the joys of reading*. Washington, DC: Acropolis Books Ltd.

O'Connor, K. (1995) *How to Hook your Kids on Books: Create a love for reading that will last a lifetime*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Trelease, J. (1995). *The Read Aloud Handbook*, New York, NY: Penguin Books.

White, V. (1994). *Choosing Your Children's Books: Preparing readers 2-5 years old*. Atlanta, GA: Bayley & Musgrave. (Also for readers ages five to eight and either to 12 years).

## **Web sites with information and free literacy activities**

Education Place

[www.eduplace.com](http://www.eduplace.com)

A wealth of worksheets and online activities

PBS Teacher Source and PBS Kids

[www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)

Resources for teachers, kids and parents, connected to your child's favorite PBS shows.

Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) Reading Planet

[www.rifreadingplanet.org](http://www.rifreadingplanet.org)

Games, articles, booklists and activities to keep you busy all summer.

U.S. Department of Education

<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/reader/index.html>

Print and Learn for Kids

[www.brobstsystems.com/kids/](http://www.brobstsystems.com/kids/)

Offers downloadable and printable worksheets, sorted by grade level.

Learning Disabilities Online

[www.ldonline.org](http://www.ldonline.org)

Many resources for parents whose children struggle with learning or learning disabilities.

Reading Adventure

[www.bookadventure.com/](http://www.bookadventure.com/)

A free reading motivation program for children in grades K-8.

Get Ready To Read

[www.getreadytoread.org/](http://www.getreadytoread.org/)

Information and resources on early child literacy, including a screening tool and skill-building activities for children.

Family FUNdamentals

<http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140--69358,00.html>

More activities for children PreK-3