“Good reading instruction is the single most powerful tool in the prevention of reading difficulties.”

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Improving Reading Performance: A Guide For K-3 Oregon Educators
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Improving Reading Performance: A Guide for K-3 Oregon Educators

"Good reading instruction is the single most powerful tool in the prevention of reading difficulties."

Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children
National Research Council Report

Introduction

Oregon’s children are our greatest commodity and most valuable resource. Hence, we are bound to do everything in our power to maximize their opportunities for success in school and ultimately, in life. Given that reading is the foundation for learning, our responsibility is to ensure that all students can read and read well. Teaching children to read is a priority that must be pursued aggressively. This means making sure that pre-service and in-service teachers have the training and professional development required to meet this great challenge.

The Oregon Department of Education is providing this document as guidance for schools to:

1. Support every child in meeting or exceeding benchmarks in reading and to help them become independent and motivated readers;
2. Inform partners about the most current knowledge and research on reading, how reading develops, and how reading instruction should proceed;
3. Support individual schools and local districts as they work to focus efforts on improving the reading performance of all students through the consolidated district improvement planning process.

The plan is designed to meet the needs of Oregon’s diverse student population, including those who are gifted, those whose native language is other than English, those who are members of English-speaking ethnic minority groups, those in need of special education services, and those from all socioeconomic levels. The Oregon Department of Education is committed to include the voices, experiences and perspectives of Oregon’s diverse populations. The Department is actively and aggressively working to meet the challenge presented by the National Research Council’s 1998 Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children: "Reading problems occur disproportionately among certain groups of children, particularly those growing up in poverty, those attending schools in large urban systems, those who arrive at school speaking languages other than English, and members of English-speaking ethnic minority groups. Nationally, as many as two-thirds of all black and Hispanic fourth-graders read below acceptable standards, perpetuating social inequities. Given the high
levels of immigration and increasing numbers of children entering U.S. schools, it is
even more imperative that we focus attention on reading." (p. v)

The K-3 Reading Guidelines have three parts and provides an integrated picture of how
reading develops by addressing the specific literacy needs of three age groups. Part I
addresses the literacy needs of students in the primary grades (K-3) and includes
transition into Kindergarten; Part II will address the literacy needs of students in the
middle grades (4-8), and Part III will address the needs of students in the secondary
grades (9-12). Each of the parts is grounded in five basic principles. Descriptions of
the principles are not meant to be exhaustive in content or analysis. Instead, they offer
an explanation of the importance of and context for each principle.

Guiding Principles

1. **Reading instruction** is matched to each child's needs, abilities and interests,
   and is research-based; practices and strategies integrate reading and
   writing instruction into all content areas to support student learning through
   research, problem solving, and student reflections.

2. **Ongoing diagnosis** informs the teaching process and the corresponding
   assessments to ensure accountability in the facilitation of continued student
   growth.

3. **Professional development** is focused, continuous, and is based on
   research.

4. The **roles of parents and the greater community** in the development of
   early literacy are specific and clearly identified.

5. The **evaluation** of the effectiveness of each component of the school's
   reading plan and program is ongoing with formal evaluation occurring at least
   biannually.

Part I
The Primary Grades

The way in which reading is defined influences the way reading is taught. In *Preventing
Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, reading is defined as a process of getting
meaning from print. Such a process requires using knowledge about the written
alphabet, assumes knowledge about the sound structure of oral language for purposes
of achieving understanding, includes direct teaching of information about sound-symbol
relationships to children who do not know about them, and assumes that reading
instruction must maintain a focus on the communicative purposes and personal value of
reading (p. vi).
Basic Principle 1

Reading instruction is matched to each child’s needs, abilities and interests, and is research-based; practices and strategies integrate reading and writing instruction into all content area reading to support student learning through research, problem solving, and student reflections.

Reading Instruction, Practices, and Strategies

The scientific community is now in agreement about the components of effective beginning reading instruction. According to research findings, the following are essential components for primary reading programs:

- Development of phonological awareness
- Development of phonemic awareness
- Teaching of the alphabet
- Teaching the connection of sounds to letters
- Explicit instruction of printed language and the writing system (spelling, morphology and writing conventions)
- Teaching how to sound out words, or phonics
- Teaching how to spell words
- Development of fluent, reflective reading
- Explicit instruction in literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension
- Explicit instruction in comprehension-monitoring strategies, as decoding becomes automatic.
- Fostering appreciation for the written word and providing ample opportunities to practice reading from a variety of decodable texts, content area, and other informational texts,

The key components of early reading instruction can be grouped into three major categories that are grade level specific.

a) Kindergarten: Phonemic awareness, letter recognition, development of the alphabetic principle, and concepts of print;
b) Grade 1: Established skills in the alphabetic principle i.e., accurate and fluent with letter-sound correspondences, decoding, reading connected text, and word identification;
c) Grade 2: Fluency and advanced decoding;

Some concepts are key for all grade levels, K-12:

d) Vocabulary development or word knowledge and;
e) Listening and reading comprehension,
(a) **Phonemic Awareness** (See Reading Instructional Framework)

Reading requires an ability to connect the printed symbols with particular sounds in alphabetic languages such as English. Phonemic awareness is the bridge between spoken and written language and is dependent on the strength of a child's early language skills. In order to successfully apply phonemic awareness to the "learning to read" process, children need to understand the purposes and conventions of reading and writing. Children, who "have" phonemic awareness, know that words are made up of smaller sounds of speech and are able to focus on and manipulate sounds in spoken words.

Correlational studies have identified phonemic awareness and letter knowledge as the two most important predictors of how well children will learn to read and write during their first two years in school. Development of phonemic awareness should begin as early as the pre-school years through a variety of stimulating oral language activities. (Yopp: *Developing Phonemic Awareness in Young Children*, p. 703). Marilyn Jager Adams asserts that "Phonemic awareness is a more potent predictor of reading achievement than nonverbal intelligence, vocabulary, and listening comprehension, and that it often correlates more highly with reading acquisition than tests of general intelligence." (Jager Adams, 1990.) Early spelling proficiency has also been linked to analytic phonological skills. (Liberman: *The Alphabetic Principle and Learning to Read*, pp.12-13). It should be noted that mastery of phonemic awareness might not be fully evident until children are exposed to formal reading and spelling instruction late in first grade.

Phonemic awareness is a hierarchy of skills that develops gradually. Research indicates that instruction in phonemic awareness must be explicit and that it must be sequenced carefully. Marilyn Jager Adams identifies levels of phonemic awareness according to level of difficulty:

1. Appreciation of sounds in spoken language as evidenced by recitation of nursery rhymes.
2. The ability to compare and contrast sounds in words by grouping words with similar or dissimilar sounds at the beginning, middle, or end of a word.
3. The ability to blend and split syllables.
4. The ability to manipulate phonemes by omitting and deleting phonemes to make new words.

   *(Snider: A Primer on Phonemic Awareness)*

Teacher modeling prior to student practice must be an integral part of instruction in phonemic awareness. While classroom practice is not intended to serve as a diagnostic tool it does provide information about student progress. "Practice activities should not be evaluative but rather fun and informal." (Yopp: *Developing Phonemic Awareness in Young Children*, p 702.) Instruction in phonemic awareness must include the following skills:
| **Rhyming:** | Requires saying words that contain the same ending sound. For example: Tell me as many words as you can that rhyme with the word cat? |
| **Syllabication:** | Requires putting two words together to make a new word or identifying the two words that make a compound word. |
| **Blending:** | sun + shine; What word do you get if put "sun" and "shine" together? |
| **Segmenting:** | sun/shine; What two smaller words make the word "sunshine"? |
| **Deleting:** | Say sunshine without the “sun”. |
| **Phoneme Manipulation:** | |
| **Isolation:** | Requires recognizing individual initial/final sounds in words for example: What is the first/last sound in "cat"? |
| **Identity:** | Requires recognizing the common sound in different words. For example, Tell me the sound that is the same in bike, boy, and bell. |
| **Categorization:** | Requires recognizing the word with the odd sound in a sequence of three or four words, for example, Which word does not belong? bus, bun, rug |
| **Substitution:** | Requires replacing one sound with another, for example, what word do we have if you change the /k/ sound in the word "cat" for the /p/ sound? Can you change the /k/ sound in "cat" to the /r/ sound? |
| **Blending:** | Requires listening to a sequence of separately spoken sounds and combining them to form a recognizable word. What word would you have if you put these together: /s/ /a/ /t/? or What am I saying? /c/a/t/ |
| **Deletion:** | Requires recognizing what word remains when a specified phoneme is removed. For example:  
What word would be left if the /k/ sound were taken away from cat?  
What is smile without the /s/?  
Say "ca" without the /c/.  
Say "meat" without the /m/.  
Say "meat" without the /t/.  
Say "slap" without the /s/.  
Say "slap" without the /l/. |
Counting: Requires identifying the numbers of sounds in a word. For example: How many sounds do you hear in the word "hot"?

Segmenting: Requires breaking a word into its sounds by tapping out or counting the sounds or by pronouncing and positioning a marker for each sound. For example: What sounds do you hear in the word h-o-t? What word is /s/k/u/l/?

Transposing: Requires changing the initial sound of a word for the ending sound of a second word. For example, "stop - spot" - What is changing?

Word-to-word matching: Requires the identification of initial sounds of two or more words. For example: Do "pen" and "pipe" begin with the same sound?

Providing for Individual Differences in Phonemic Awareness

It is extremely important that teachers understand the need to provide for individual differences in phonemic abilities required for reading in an alphabetic system. This includes understanding how children learn about the segmental nature of speech and its relationship to print. Many children will make that connection on their own, by playing oral language games, such as rhyming, by repeated opportunities to connect printed and spoken words when being read to, and through opportunities to write. There are many other children, however, who will not discover the connections between print and speech through informal experiences and will require more explicit instruction. This is a most critical element as we now know that lack of phonological awareness is related to failure in reading and writing and often leads to the misidentification of children as learning disabled. Because success in reading builds on the same skills for all children, those who run into difficulty need more focused, more intense, and more individualized application of the same instructional principles. Training in phonemic awareness can improve reading achievement even for students in the upper elementary grades who have a history of reading difficulties. Additionally, any student receiving special services who experiences difficulties in reading, should have access to reading programs of high-quality that include phonemic awareness as a component.

For students whose primary language is not English, developing literacy skills in the native language supports the development of literacy skills in the second language. Phonemic awareness is transferable to other languages that use an alphabetic writing system. For this reason, progress in learning to read and write in English, for ESL students, is more rapid for those who have learned to read and write in their first language.
This finding is strongly supported by studies in a number of languages such as, in Swedish, Spanish, French, and Italian. The study by Durgunoglu, Nagy, and Hancin-Bhatt on Cross-Language Transfer of Phonological Awareness states:

"However, the critical finding in our study is the cross-language transfer of phonological awareness. We have demonstrated the relationship between phonological awareness in Spanish and word recognition in English. Children who could perform well on Spanish phonological awareness tests were more likely to be able to read English words and English-like pseudowords than were children who performed poorly on phonological awareness tests. In short, phonological awareness was a significant predictor of performance on word recognition tests both within and across languages."

Teachers must also remember that native speakers of languages other than English are in the precarious position of having to learn to understand, read, and write two languages simultaneously. These students will require additional time before attaining literacy levels equivalent to their English-speaking peers. Unless English language learners have access to additional, enriched, and/or accelerated curriculum, it becomes very difficult to close the gap.

(b) Alphabetic Understanding (See Reading Instructional Framework)

Alphabetic understanding means comprehending the idea that letters represent spoken sounds and that whole words embody a sound structure of individual sounds and sound patterns. "Reliable and efficient letter-sound grapheme-phoneme correspondence is a critical building block for efficient word recognition." (Good: Effective Academic Intervention in the United States: Evaluating and Enhancing the Acquisition of Early Reading Skills.) Alphabetic understanding should begin to develop in kindergarten when children are able to identify a number of letter-sound correspondences. By the middle of first grade, children should have established skills in the alphabetic principle, that is, they should be accurate and fluent with letter-sound correspondences and should be able to recode and decode words. This includes decoding unknown words in text as well as demonstration of accurate and fluent reading of connected text. (Good: Effective Academic Intervention in the United States: Evaluating and Enhancing the Acquisition of Early Reading Skills.) According to the National Reading Panel Report "The goal is to enable learners to acquire sufficient knowledge and use of the alphabetic code so that they can make progress in learning to read and comprehend written language". (National Reading Panel Report, Ch 2, p 99.)

The primary focus of phonics instruction is to reveal the alphabetic principle. (Becoming a Nation of Readers, p 38.) Systematic phonics instruction teaches beginning readers the alphabetic code, which consists of a large set of grapho-phonemic correspondences, and larger sub-units of words. The goal is for children to understand how letters are linked to sounds to form letter-sound relationships and spelling patterns, and to apply this knowledge to read words. Learning about letter-sound associations helps beginners "break the code".
However, the English writing system has other higher level, word-based regularities as well, so, although phonics instruction contributes, it is not the complete solution to word identification that is in other written languages that are more fully phonemic, e.g., Spanish. (*National Reading Panel Report*, p.100.) Even if a student, native English speaker or not, can sound out a word more or less accurately, the word may not be recognized because it is not part of the student's oral vocabulary. Also, speakers of a language other than English may base their pronunciation on the same or similar phonemes found in their native language.

According to the *Report of the National Reading Panel*, phonics instruction may be taught *systematically* or *incidentally*. Systematic phonics instruction uses an approach that teaches phonics in a sequential delineated set of phonics elements. These phonics elements are taught along a dimension of explicitness depending on the type of phonics method employed. **Synthetic** phonics, for example, teaches students to convert letters into sounds and then blend the sounds to form recognizable words. Students then apply their skills through reading decodable text, that is, text containing words with the specific letter-sound correspondences that have been learned. Systematic synthetic phonics has been found to have a significant effect on the reading ability of students who are learning disabled, students who are identified as low achievers, and students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The *Report of the National Reading Panel*, however, does not indicate whether or not systematic phonics instruction is either needed or beneficial for students in kindergarten and first grade who have entered school already able to read. In fact, **incidental** phonics instruction appears to be more effective with this group of children.

The incidental approach does not employ a planned sequence of phonics elements to guide instruction, but highlights particular elements opportunistically when they appear in the text. The texts children read are chosen for reasons other than to provide practice in decoding. (*National Reading Panel Report*, Ch.2, p.92.) Given that advanced readers typically learn alphabetic and phonic skills at a faster speed, and require less practice, incidental phonics would be more appropriate in keeping up with the phonics skills of advanced readers. No matter what the skill level of the individual child, according to L. S. Vygotsky, teachers have the greatest teaching impact when they address each child's zone of proximal development - the point between the child's level of independent performance and the child's performance when provided assistance with the task. (Vygotsky: *Mind and Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*).

Most primary level children need to have opportunities to practice reading decodable stories that emphasize the sound-letter relationships they are learning. Although many predictable, patterned books provide children with engaging language and print experience, they may not be based on the sound-letter links that are part of the students' current repertoire and instructional plan. There should be a match between the child's reading ability and the level of text they read. Beginning readers should be able to read easily 90% or more of the words in a story, and after practice, should be able to do so quickly, accurately, and effortlessly. It should also be noted that phonics instruction does not constitute a reading program. Phonics instruction is a component
that should be integrated with phonemic awareness, fluency, the alphabetic principle, and comprehension.

**Spelling and the Alphabetic Principle**

Developing the connection between beginning reading and writing is critical. A child's ability to spell is closely related to their understanding of phonology and the alphabetic principle. The National Reading Council in *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* reports: "Children's independent spellings yield direct evidence of their level of phonological sensitivity and orthographic knowledge, enabling the knowledgeable teacher to tailor instruction and respond to individual difficulties", (p 188), and that "Children use phonological knowledge to figure out how to spell words". (p 321)

Given the connection between phonology and spelling, primary level students must be provided with opportunities to practice writing through activities that are related to the words they are learning to read. In the early grades, spelling instruction must be coordinated with reading instruction. As soon as children begin to identify letters, they should be encouraged to write them and use them to begin writing words or parts of words, and eventually, sentences. This develops an awareness of how words are spelled and develops knowledge of spelling patterns, hastening progress in both reading and writing. Children in the primary grades should be expected to spell previously learned words correctly and follow the corresponding, conventional spelling patterns in their final written products. Writing should take place regularly and frequently to develop a level of comfort and familiarity.

Writing has been found to be a particularly important medium in literacy development for English language learners. When given multiple opportunities for writing using phonetic spelling as a bridge to conventional spelling, English language learners can, over time, perform at levels comparable to native English speakers.

While most assessments related to writing skills are considered to be informal measures for primary level students, there are established norms for performance expectations at each grade level. The use of frequent writing samples that are scored with a scoring guide provide information about student progress over time and provide opportunities for students to practice. This implies that ongoing diagnostic assessment through the examination of a student's spelling patterns can be used to inform instruction in the areas of phonology and the alphabetic principle.

**Implications for Teachers**

As children have varying levels of skills and experiences related to literacy development upon entering school, it is important that teachers assess the needs of individual students and adapt instruction accordingly. For example, children who have already acquired phonics skills will not require the same level of instruction as those who are at the initial stages of learning to read.
Fluency is defined as the ability to read a text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression. The Report of the National Reading Panel has identified that there is a close relationship between fluency and reading comprehension and that less fluent readers may have difficulty getting meaning from text. The National Research Council Report of 1998 states: "Adequate progress in learning to read English, or any alphabetic language, beyond the initial level, depends on sufficient practice in reading to achieve fluency with different texts", (Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, p 223). Because fluency, like phonemic awareness, plays such an important role in reading acquisition, the NRC Report strongly suggests that fluency, like phonemic awareness, be assessed regularly in the classroom, permitting timely and effective instructional response when difficulty or delay is apparent (Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, p 7). Children who do not develop reading fluency, no matter how bright they are, will continue to read slowly and with great effort. (National Reading Panel Report, p.3-3.). Since approximately 300 words account for 65% of the words appearing with great frequency in texts, rapid recognition of these words during the primary grades form a strong foundation of fluent reading.

Fluency represents a level of expertise beyond word recognition and accuracy. Proficient readers recognize the vast majority of words in texts quickly allowing them to focus on the meaning of the text. Recent studies indicate that fluency includes the ability to group words appropriately into meaningful grammatical units for interpretation. Fluency also requires the automatic use of punctuation cues to determine where to place emphasis or where to pause in order to make sense of a text. Effective readers apply these skills quickly, and usually without conscious attention.

There is a common agreement among researchers that fluency develops from reading practice and that fluency can be taught through explicit procedures by having students read passages orally multiple times while receiving guidance or feedback from peers, parents, or teachers. The most commonly used instructional methods include repeated reading, paired reading, shared reading, and assisted or guided reading. (See Glossary) These instructional approaches have a positive impact on word recognition and comprehension. Procedures for these approaches are effective in a variety of settings and require minimal specialized training and instructional materials. The NRP report suggests that explicit instruction in fluency is effective at least through grade 5, and helps improve the reading skills for students with learning disabilities and for students with reading difficulties beyond the fifth grade level.

It is important to note that speakers of a language other than English benefit from instruction in reading fluency. However, reading lessons should not become pronunciation lessons in which comprehension is either neglected or postponed. Such instruction would be counterproductive to teaching for fluency and comprehension.
Vocabulary or Word Knowledge  (See Reading Instructional Framework)

The National Reading Council cited that vocabulary development is a fundamental goal for students in the early grades and is an important component of the reading acquisition process. In the early years, vocabulary development is a key factor for making the transition from oral to written language and is crucial to reading comprehension.

Vocabulary development as it relates to the reading process, initially develops through interactive reading, which requires that the reader and the child engage in a dialogue about what has been read. Dickinson and Smith, in 1994, examined the effects of storybook readings for preschool children and teacher and/or parent talk. They concluded that children who initiate and engage in analytic talk, had positive gains in vocabulary development. Senechal, in 1997, found that repeated readings of the same text yielded gains in vocabulary. While studying kindergarten and first grade students, Lueng, in 1992, found that the frequency of a target word appearing in the text influences the child's use of the word in oral and written language, and that retelling events from the text seemed to help children to learn new words. Reading a book once can significantly affect the expressive vocabulary of children as they attempt to integrate new words with the existing "word bank". A later study by Roebbuns and Ehri, in 1994, found that storybook readings helped teach children meanings of unfamiliar words. The same study found that children with larger vocabularies have a greater aptitude to learn more new words. In 1982, Kame'enui, Carnine, and Freschi found that substitution of easier vocabulary words with more difficult ones, or the use of synonyms, facilitated comprehension as well. Through shared readings of big books, English language learners also attend to English vocabulary for concepts.

In the early grades, vocabulary is taught with texts that generally do not go beyond that which is decodable. However, as content reading is introduced, students need to learn vocabulary specific to that content, giving rise to the need for more explicit vocabulary instruction. The importance of the school's responsibility in building oral vocabulary is highlighted by Baker, Simmons, and Kame'enui who state that: "Children who enter school with limited vocabulary knowledge grow more discrepant over time from their peers who have rich vocabulary knowledge." (Baker et al, 1997).

Studies in vocabulary instruction emphasize the need to consider the impact of various instructional techniques. The current literature on vocabulary instruction offers four methods for teaching vocabulary. These methods include explicit, indirect, multimedia, capacity, and association. (See Glossary)

Methodology is dependent upon age, ability, and developmental needs. The NRP reports that vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly using both definition and context. Vocabulary study should be incorporated into reading instruction as there is a need to learn vocabulary as it relates to a specific text. Pre-instruction of vocabulary in reading lessons can have significant effects on learning outcomes. At least, it guarantees that there will be fewer unfamiliar concepts and helps make the transition from speech to print meaningful as the new vocabulary words become part of the reader's repertoire.
**(e) Comprehension** (See Reading Instructional Framework)

Comprehension is considered by many to be the very essence of reading and is essential for both academic and life-long learning. (Durking, 1993) Durking defines reading as an intentional thinking process during which meaning is constructed through interactions between the text and the reader. Meaning is influenced by the connection of the text to the reader’s prior knowledge.

Reading comprehension involves a complex, cognitive process that integrates knowledge of vocabulary and an ability to read fluently and strategically. It is important for all children to have explicit instruction in comprehension at the literal, interpretive, and evaluative levels as per the Oregon Content Standards.

Current literature favors using a variety of instructional methods, leading to increased learning through metacognitive strategies, meaning that students are aware of how well they are comprehending what they read and write and are able to transfer these skills across content areas. This is also referred to as "self-monitoring" in the comprehension process.

While some children acquire comprehension strategies informally, explicit formal instruction is believed to lead to improvement in text understanding and application to text that is new. Comprehension strategies should be taught through teacher modeling, and demonstration, as the reader is guided through the process. The NRP reports that the four required interactive techniques between teacher and students include question generation, summarization, clarification, and prediction. (See Glossary) As comprehension develops, the reader can effectively interact with the text without assistance. Readers who are not explicitly taught how to monitor their own comprehension are unlikely to learn, develop, or apply these skills spontaneously.

It is important to provide reading opportunities for primary grade students that extend beyond storybooks and fantasy. Research on early reading urges primary grade teachers to engage their students in content area reading. This includes the use of trade books, textbooks, realistic and historical fiction, and other sources of print such as newspapers, magazines, and informational text. Content area texts such as those related to science, social sciences, mathematics, and the arts provide valuable practice in comprehension strategies. Dr. Andrea M. Guillaume, Co-chair for the N. Orange County Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment, California State University states: “even young children can learn through text...for this reason, content area reading should begin in the primary grades.” Rich, early experiences help students in understanding more complicated texts in later years. Integration of reading and writing within the "language" of specific content areas encourages the understanding and use of content-specific vocabulary within a context and develops critical thinking about abstract concepts. Exposure to abundant informational resources provides young students with valuable opportunities to read for the purpose of learning about their worlds and to answer their questions. Dr. Guillaume also suggests that primary teachers can provide potent content area reading instruction by supporting the following ten big ideas:
1. Access and build upon prior knowledge
2. Provide hands-on experiences prior to reading
3. Read aloud,
4. Read for a purpose,
5. Provide access to content area materials,
6. Encourage different responses that are both cognitive and affective
7. Encourage discussion,
8. Connect reading and writing.
9. Use general reading strategies,
10. Include pre, and post reading activities in reading instruction.

Content area reading experiences encourage children to use reading as a powerful tool to gain information and enriches the literacy experience.

**Comprehension and English Language Learners**

Teaching beginning reading skills to speakers of languages other than English requires special attention and planning. For schools with significant numbers of English Language Learners who speak the same primary language, a comprehensive language arts program in the primary language will ensure that students have equal access to the same quality reading experiences as their English-speaking peers. Substantial research exists indicating that this approach is one of the most effective ways to provide initial reading instruction. (*Taking a Reading*, Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center).

Dr. Alfredo Schifini of California State University, Los Angeles suggests that the following points should be considered when providing reading instruction in the home language:

- A sufficient amount of time per day is allocated to primary language reading and writing.
- Reading time is to be used effectively
- Students read from several sources
- The environment is rich with native language print and books
- Students' prior knowledge and language is valued and utilized
- The school fosters high expectations regarding literacy attainment in the home language
- The school promotes a substantive home-school connection with target language speaking parents (*Taking a Reading*, Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center)

To provide a successful beginning reading experience in English as a second language, educators must understand second language acquisition, create curriculum and instructional approaches that support language and literacy development specifically designed for English language learners. Schifini suggests that the following principles foster second language literacy:
• Teachers capitalize on personal experience that second language learners bring to school and these form the basis for literacy and future learning.
• English instruction always includes strategies, techniques, and materials that provide comprehensible input, such as visual support, modifications of language, props, realia, etc.
• Teachers must be prepared to support second language learners as they acquire English proficiency, understanding that some will acquire fluency in a few months and some may take up to five years or more.
• English language learners should be integrated into mainstream classes as appropriate.
• Instruction for English language learners should be integrated with content that is appropriate for their age and cognitive level.

Talented and Gifted Students

While much of the discussion on reading instruction has centered around students who are traditionally considered to be at risk for reading failure, attention must also be given to provide appropriate learning opportunities for gifted students that will allow them to experience continued progress and growth in the reading acquisition process. Research studies indicate that children who enter Kindergarten already knowing how to read, not as a result of preschool instruction, but rather as a result of intellectual giftedness, will very likely either stop showing growth or will actually regress toward becoming a non-reader, within six weeks of arriving at the classroom door. Many of these students have the ability to "norm-reference", in other words they quickly learn that less advanced reading behaviors such as recognition of letter-sound correspondences, for example, as opposed to reading text, are accepted, praised by the teacher and are normal learning behaviors for the other children in the class. The result is that the learning behaviors of the gifted child adjust to that which is perceived to please the teacher and that which is perceived to be acceptable within the peer group. For instance, an advanced reader who reverts to earlier steps in the learning process, i.e., phonics, will actually regress. This can have a detrimental effect on a student's attitude toward learning as something that challenges one's abilities, as they are able to meet the expectations of the teacher with little or no effort, resulting in underachievement if one examines performance versus the abilities of the individual child.
Basic Principle 2

**Ongoing diagnosis** informs the teaching process and the corresponding assessments to ensure accountability in the facilitation of continued student growth.

Primary reading assessment plays an integral part in the instructional process in any student-centered reading program. The two most common types of instruments are diagnostic measures and prescriptive measures, which can occur both formally and informally. (See Glossary) Diagnostic information helps teachers plan instruction on a daily basis and is an ongoing part of the teaching and learning process. Multiple measures of reading progress assist the teacher, school, or district in reporting data and in making informed decisions about student progress over a longer period of time. Multiple measurements also provides a means through which educators can make informed judgments about program effectiveness at the classroom, school, and district levels, as well as provide county, state and national profiles after an adequate period of implementation. (Adria F. Klein, California State University, 1997)

Klein has also found that diagnosing and assessing students' needs is an integral part of the literacy instructional process for all children. It is not an outcome of instruction, but is rather a tool to inform daily instructional practice. Diagnostic tools include teacher-made and program-embedded assessments, as well as sophisticated instruments that require specialized training. Additionally, many diagnostic tools are computer-assisted, and include assessments such as spelling and vocabulary programs that keep track of the individual student progress and can monitor the growth of an entire class by providing a class record. (*Taking a Reading*, Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center). The information provided by the diagnostic tool needs to be easily obtained and quickly evaluated in order for the teacher to begin appropriate instructional interventions immediately. "When assessment results are received long after the assessment was conducted, they are no longer useful because the child has developed other needs. Thus assessments should neither take too long to administer nor too long to process. The feedback teachers receive about the children who are assessed should be informative. It should have a direct relationship to what is being taught and what can be taught. (Reprinted with permission. Copyright 2000 McREL: *Characteristics of Developmentally Appropriate Early Literacy Assessment*, 1999, pp 1-2 http://www.mcrel.org/resources/literacy/ela/assessment.asp).

Having a range of standardized diagnostic tools is important for monitoring each student's progress in reading and writing. According to McREL, to be standardized, means that there is a uniform way to administer and interpret assessment results. "This means that the same tasks, materials, and questions are used with each child, and each child's responses are evaluated using the same criteria. Standardized assessments also help the teacher identify which children need the same type and level of instruction. Standardized measures also reduce subjectivity and facilitate communication among teachers as results are interpreted uniformly.
Teachers and administrators, who regard assessment as informative, select and administer assessments according to the needs of individual students. They conduct ongoing evaluations of student progress to help plan instruction. As a result, parents, teachers, and administrators are kept abreast of every child's reading progress. For this reason, informal assessments should be conducted on a regular basis to determine whether or not children are making progress as defined by assessment results. These assessments can include measures of reading rate and accuracy and story retellings and are used as a basis for adjusting instruction to the needs of each child.

In Kindergarten and first grade, most assessments are administered orally and individually to every student. The results indicate the specific abilities and progress of students in the components of early reading and writing. These include measures of phonemic awareness, letter knowledge including the alphabetic principle, concepts of print, fluency, listening, and reading comprehension, writing, and spelling, and basic language concepts. Children, whose assessment results indicate that they may have reading difficulties, often need further assessment to obtain more specific information. Some may need to be assessed on a daily basis, while others may require weekly, monthly or bi-monthly evaluations. According to the US Department of Education, "The ultimate goal of reading assessment is to gather information on students; skills and abilities so that instruction can be specifically targeted to improve student learning." (A Practical Guide to Reading Assessments, USDOE, http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html)

It is critical that those responsible for choosing measurement tools to assess early literacy development make selections that are valid and reliable for the student populations in individual classrooms and schools within the district. The following criteria is based on the 2000 Reading Instruments Guide for Texas Public School Districts and Charter Schools:

Criteria for the Evaluation of Early Reading Instruments

English

1. The instrument is intended for use in grades K, 1, and/or 2.
2. The length of time needed to administer the instrument must be reasonable.
3. The sub-tests in the instrument must address early reading skills, letter recognition, letter sounds, phonemic awareness, word recognition, passage comprehension, etc.
4. The instrument must be individually administered.
5. Administration of the instrument by a classroom teacher must be allowable.
6. Norm-referenced tests must have an appropriate norming sample as evidenced by the size of the sample and groups represented. Criterion-referenced instruments can also be used.
7. The instrument must have adequate reliability as evidenced by internal consistency, alternate forms and/or test-retest reliability data.
8. The instrument must have adequate validity as evidenced by any reported criterion validity (either concurrent or predictive), construct and content validity data.
9. Reliability and validity data may be established by independent research.
10. The instrument should have a scoring structure, which yields a separate score for each reading skill included, allowing for instructional planning.
11. The instrument will be evaluated for use in determining students at-risk for reading difficulties.

Criteria for the Evaluation of Early Reading Instruments
English Language Learners

1. The instrument is intended for use in grades K, 1, and/or 2.
2. The length of time needed to administer the instrument is reasonable.
3. The instrument must be individually administered.
4. Qualifications for those who developed the instrument should be specified by the publisher. Developers should have completed coursework and/or obtained licenses typically completed by teachers with bilingual education or ESOL certification.
5. Administration and interpretation of the instrument should not require extensive training beyond that which is required for teachers with bilingual education or ESOL certification.
6. The sub-tests in the instrument represent individual early reading skills, letter recognition, letter sounds, phonological awareness, word recognition, and passage comprehension.
7. There is evidence that the instrument's purpose is to assess reading skills rather than language proficiency.
8. The instrument must have adequate reliability as evidenced by internal consistency alternate forms and/or test-retest reliability data.
9. The instrument must have adequate validity as evidenced by any reported criterion validity, either concurrent or predictive, construct and/or content validity data.
10. If the assessment is a translation of an English instrument, reliability and validity data for the translated instrument must be available and adequate.
11. If the instrument is norm-referenced, it must have an appropriate norming sample as evidenced by the size of the sample and groups represented. The norming sample must represent major demographic variables. Criterion referenced instruments can be used.
12. If normative data were collected in countries outside the United States separate norms for the Continental US must be available.
13. Normative and technical data for the instrument must be no more than 15 years old.
14. To the extent possible, the instrument should be free of regional content and lexical variations.
15. The instrument should have a scoring structure that yields a separate score for each reading skill included, allowing for instructional planning. *(2000 Reading Instruments Guide for Texas Public Schools Districts and Charter Schools)*

While accuracy and fluency are strong indicators of comprehension, it is important to note that regular monitoring of student comprehension is a key element of an ongoing assessment plan. In the early grades, such assessments may take the form of recalling an incident from a story, talking about a favorite part, summarizing the main idea, predicting outcomes, drawing inferences, or explaining what happened at the beginning, middle or end of the story. One example of an informal reading inventory is the oral retelling, which would include the reading of passages followed by a retelling of the events by the student. It is also important to encourage critical thinking about what has been read through the use of higher level questioning that extends beyond the levels of knowledge and comprehension. *(See Bloom's Taxonomy, Appendix)*

Managing the classroom to allow for normal instructional activities to continue while conducting individual or small-group assessments is challenging and requires careful planning. Effective teachers have explicit procedures for continual assessment of each student’s progress toward becoming skilled readers. Given the variance in the skill levels of students, it is logical and purposeful to have different assessment schedules for different children. Struggling readers need more frequent assessment and evaluation. While there are many commercial programs and assessments available, it is important to select those that can best be tailored to the students in the classroom, the school, and the district. *(Taking a Reading, Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center)*

In some cases, individual schools or entire school districts have adopted assessment procedures to insure that assessments cause minimal disruption to the educational process. In one instance, Title 1 teachers and all instructional assistants have been trained to administer assessments and follow a protocol developed by the district for quality assurance. Because the assessments used are standardized, the classroom teachers are able to interpret the data and determine the instructional interventions needed for individual students. *(Douglas County SD 4, Roseburg, OR)* It should be noted, however, that classroom teachers may be directly involved with administering assessments for struggling readers whose progress requires frequent monitoring.
Basic Principle 3

Professional development is focused and continuous and is based on research.

"A successful teacher of beginning reading enables children to comprehend and produce written language, exposes them to a side variety of texts to build their background knowledge and whet their appetite for more, generates enthusiasm and appreciation for reading and writing, and expertly teaches children how to decode, interpret, and spell new words from a foundation of linguistic awareness. The teacher's choices are guided by knowledge of the critical skills and attitudes needed by students at each stage of reading." (Every Child Reading: A Professional Guide, copyright 2000 by the Learning First Alliance). A key factor to the success of any early literacy program is ongoing professional development that supports teachers in the development of the knowledge and skills required for effective literacy instruction. Focused professional development responds to the needs identified by all teachers in a school or district and is based on research. It also responds to the school/district philosophy of reading instruction and prepares teachers regarding the integration of subject matter knowledge from other content areas with the literacy curriculum.

The following tables taken from Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide, Learning First Alliance, 2000) represent the content of professional development as it relates to teaching beginning reading.
Table 1: Phonemic Awareness, Letter Knowledge, and Concepts of Print
(From Every Child Reading: A Professional Guide, copyright 2000 by the Learning First Alliance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Knowledge</th>
<th>Teacher Skills</th>
<th>Possible Professional Development Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know the speech sounds in English (consonants and vowels) and the pronunciation of phonemes for instruction.</td>
<td>Select and use a range of activities representing a developmental progression of phonological skill (rhyming; word identification; syllable counting; onset-rime segmentation and blending; phoneme identification, segmentation, and blending).</td>
<td>Practice phoneme matching, identification, segmentation, blending, substitution, and deletion. Order phonological awareness activities by difficulty level and developmental sequence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know the progression of development of phonological skill.</td>
<td>Plan lessons in which phoneme awareness, letter knowledge, and invented spelling activities are complementary.</td>
<td>Practice and analyze letter-sound matching activities (identifying how letters and letter groups are used for representing speech sounds).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the difference between speech sounds and the letters that represent them.</td>
<td>Use techniques for teaching letter naming, matching, and formation.</td>
<td>Observe and critique live or videotaped student-teacher interactions during phonological awareness and alphabet instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the causal links between early decoding, spelling, word knowledge, and phoneme awareness.</td>
<td>Teach concepts of print during shared reading of big books.</td>
<td>Role-play the teaching of print concepts during interactive reading aloud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the print concepts young children must develop.</td>
<td>Have ability to monitor every child’s progress and identify those who are falling behind.</td>
<td>Discuss children’s progress, using informal assessments, to obtain early help for those in need of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how critical the foundation skills are for later reading success.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2:  
Phonics and Decoding  
(From Every Child Reading: A Professional Guide, copyright 2000 by the Learning First Alliance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Knowledge</th>
<th>Teacher Skills</th>
<th>Possible Professional Development Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand speech-to-print correspondence of the sound, syllable pattern, and morphological levels.</td>
<td>Choose examples of words that illustrate sound-symbol, syllable, and morpheme patterns.</td>
<td>Practice various active techniques including sound blending, structural word analysis, word building, and word sorting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and describe the developmental progression in which orthographic knowledge is generally acquired.</td>
<td>Select and deliver appropriate lessons according to students’ levels of spelling, phonics, and word identification skills.</td>
<td>Identify, on the basis of student reading and writing, the appropriate level at which to instruct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand and recognize how beginner texts are linguistically organized—by spelling pattern, word frequency, and language pattern.</td>
<td>Explicitly teach the sequential blending of individual sounds into a whole word.</td>
<td>Observe, demonstrate, and practice error correction strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize the differences among approaches to teaching word attack (implicit, explicit, analytic, synthetic, etc.).</td>
<td>Teach active exploration of word structure with a variety of techniques.</td>
<td>Search a text for examples of words that exemplify an orthographic concept; lead discussions about words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand why instruction in word attack should be active and interactive.</td>
<td>Enable students to use word attack strategies as they read connected text.</td>
<td>Review beginner texts to discuss their varying uses in reading instruction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3:
**Fluent, Automatic Reading of Text**
*(From *Every Child Reading: A Professional Guide*, copyright 2000 by the Learning First Alliance)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Knowledge</th>
<th>Teacher Skills</th>
<th>Possible Professional Development Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand how word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension are related to one another.</td>
<td>Determine reasonable expectations for reading fluency at various stages of reading development, using research-based guidelines and appropriate state and local standards and benchmarks.</td>
<td>Practice assessing and recording text-reading fluency of students in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand text features that are related to text difficulty.</td>
<td>Help children select appropriate texts, of sufficiently easy levels, to promote ample independent as well as oral reading.</td>
<td>Organize classroom library and other support materials by topic and text difficulty; code for easy access to students, and track how much children are reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand who in the class should receive extra practice with fluency development and why.</td>
<td>Use techniques for increasing speed of word recognition.</td>
<td>Use informal assessment results to identify who needs to work on fluency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Devise a system for recording student progress toward reasonable goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct fluency-building activities with a mentor teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 4: Vocabulary**

*(From *Every Child Reading: A Professional Guide*, copyright 2000 by the Learning First Alliance)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Knowledge</th>
<th>Teacher Skills</th>
<th>Possible Professional Development Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand the role of vocabulary development and vocabulary knowledge in comprehension.</td>
<td>Select material for reading aloud that will expand students’ vocabulary.</td>
<td>Collaborate with team to select best read-aloud books and share rationales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a rationale for selecting words for direct teaching before, during, and after reading.</td>
<td>Select words for instruction before a passage is read.</td>
<td>Select words from text for direct teaching and give rationale for the choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the role and characteristics of direct and contextual methods of vocabulary instruction.</td>
<td>Teach word meanings directly through explanation of meanings and example uses, associations to know words, and word relationships.</td>
<td>Devise exercises to involve students in constructing meanings of words, in developing example uses of words, in understanding relationships among words, and in using and noticing uses of words beyond the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know reasonable goals and expectations for learners at various stages of reading development; appreciate the wide differences in students’ vocabularies.</td>
<td>Provide for repeated encounters with new words and multiple opportunities to use new words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand why books themselves are a good source for word learning.</td>
<td>Explicitly teach how and when to use context to figure out word meanings.</td>
<td>Devise activities to help children understand the various ways that context can give clues to meaning, including that often clues are very sparse and sometimes even misleading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help children understand how word meanings apply to various contexts by talking about words they encounter in reading.</td>
<td>Use a series of contexts to show how clues can accumulate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5
Text Comprehension
(From *Every Child Reading: A Professional Guide*, copyright 2000 by the Learning First Alliance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Knowledge</th>
<th>Teacher Skills</th>
<th>Possible Professional Development Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know the cognitive processes involved in comprehension; know the techniques and strategies that are most effective, for what types of students, with what content.</td>
<td>Help children engage texts and consider ideas deeply.</td>
<td>Role-play and rehearse key research-supported strategies, such as questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and using graphic organizers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the typical structure of common narrative and expository text genres.</td>
<td>Choose and implement instruction appropriate for specific students and texts.</td>
<td>Discuss and plan to teach characteristics of both narrative and expository texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize the characteristics of “reader friendly” text.</td>
<td>Facilitate comprehension of academic language such as connecting words, figures of speech, idioms, humor, and embedded sentences.</td>
<td>Consider student work and reading behavior (written responses, oral summaries, retellings, cloze tasks, recorded discussions) to determine where miscomprehension occurred and plan how to repair it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciate that reading strategies vary for specific purposes.</td>
<td>Communicate directly to children the value of reading for various purposes.</td>
<td>Interpret the effectiveness of instruction with video and examples of student work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the similarities and differences between written composition and text comprehension.</td>
<td>Help students use written responses and discussion to process meaning more fully.</td>
<td>Practice leading, scaffolding, and observing discussions in which students collaborate to form joint interpretations of text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the role of background knowledge in text comprehension.</td>
<td>Preview text and identify the background experiences and concepts that are important for comprehension of that text and that help students call on or acquire that knowledge.</td>
<td>Discuss and plan to teach ways of helping students call on or acquire relevant knowledge through defining concepts, presenting examples, and eliciting students’ reactions to the concepts in ways that assess their understanding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 6:
**Written Expression**
*(From *Every Child Reading: A Professional Guide*, copyright 2000 by the Learning First Alliance)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Knowledge</th>
<th>Teacher Skills</th>
<th>Possible Professional Development Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand that composition is a recursive process of planning, drafting, and revising.</td>
<td>Organize writing program to support planning, drafting, and revising stages before publication.</td>
<td>Examine student work at various stages of the writing process and identify strengths and weaknesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know the value and purpose of teacher-directed and student-directed assignments.</td>
<td>Include writing daily as part of the classroom routine, employing a variety of tasks and modes.</td>
<td>Participate in shared writing and personal writing in response to various assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the role of grammar, sentence composition, and paragraphing in building composition skill.</td>
<td>Teach sentence and paragraph awareness, construction, and manipulation as a tool for fluent communication of ideas.</td>
<td>Practice several approaches for building sentence and paragraph-level mastery, such as sentence combining, analysis, and elaboration, and coherent linking of sentences in paragraphs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know benchmarks and standards for students at various stages of growth.</td>
<td>Generate and use rubrics to guide and evaluate student work.</td>
<td>Work with a team to achieve reliability in evaluating student work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand that different kinds of writing require different organizational approaches.</td>
<td>Teach several genres through the year, such as personal narratives, fictional narratives, descriptions, explanations, reports, and poetry.</td>
<td>As a team, teach each genre and evaluate the results with peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the value of meaningful writing for a specific audience and purpose.</td>
<td>Promote student sharing and publication of student writing for a suitable audience.</td>
<td>Host an author’s conference.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7: Spelling and Handwriting
(From *Every Child Reading: A Professional Guide*, copyright 2000 by the Learning First Alliance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Knowledge</th>
<th>Teacher Skills</th>
<th>Possible Professional Development Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe and identify the progression in which spelling knowledge is gained.</td>
<td>Tailor instruction to students' developmental levels in spelling.</td>
<td>Give and analyze the results of a developmental spelling inventory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the similarities and differences between learning to read and learning to spell.</td>
<td>Coordinate the timing and sequence of spelling lessons to complement instruction in word recognition.</td>
<td>Develop time line, scope, and sequence for teaching spelling in relation to the reading program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the organizing principles of the English spelling system at the sound, syllable, and morpheme levels.</td>
<td>In instruction, emphasize concepts and principles of the spelling system.</td>
<td>Practice explaining, illustrating, and providing meaningful practice with spelling concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the relationship between transcription skills and spelling and writing fluency.</td>
<td>Use techniques to build fluency, accuracy, and automatically in transcription to support composition.</td>
<td>Practice teaching self-correction, dictation, think aloud, proofreading, and other strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8: Assessment to Inform Instruction
*(From Every Child Reading: A Professional Guide, copyright 2000 by the Learning First Alliance)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Knowledge</th>
<th>Teacher Skills</th>
<th>Possible Professional Development Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand that assessments are used for various purposes, including determining strengths and needs of students in order to plan for instruction and flexible grouping; monitoring of progress in relation to stages of reading, spelling, and writing; assessing curriculum-specific learning; and using norm-referenced or diagnostic tests appropriately for program placement.</td>
<td>Use efficient, informal, validated strategies for assessing phoneme awareness, letter knowledge, sound-symbol knowledge, application of skills to fluent reading, passage reading accuracy and fluency, passage comprehension, level of spelling development, and written composition.</td>
<td>Participate in role-play of assessment after modeling and demonstration with surrogate subjects. Receive feedback in role-play until skills of administration and scoring are reliable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select a program of assessment that includes validated tools for measuring important components of reading and writing.</td>
<td>Screen all children briefly; assess children with reading and language weaknesses of regular intervals.</td>
<td>Administer assessments and review results with team for purpose of instructional grouping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know the benchmarks and standards of performance.</td>
<td>Interpret results for the purpose of helping children achieve the standards.</td>
<td>Evaluate the outcomes of instruction and present to team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand importance of student self-assessment.</td>
<td>Communicate assessment results to parents and students.</td>
<td>Develop or select record-keeping tools for parents and students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory suggests five phases of professional development.

- **Building a knowledge base**: Learn how to interpret and apply research in improving educational practices.
- **Observing models and examples**: Identify elementary schools that can serve as models and provide opportunities to visit model schools.
- **Reflecting on your practice**: Provide opportunities for teachers to develop individual action plans and to reflect on current practice. Coordinate web sites, online mentoring opportunities, and demonstration projects.
- **Changing teachers’ current practices**: Carry out a plan for change and evaluate how well it is working.
- **Gaining and sharing expertise**: Focus on institutionalizing what has been learned about reading throughout the school.

*Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* also identifies basic principles for professional development programs that contribute to successful early literacy development.

- Professional development is more effective when it is based on the needs of the educators and their school.
- Teachers are more likely to incorporate what they have learned into their practices if professional development includes in-class coaching.
- Teacher research, discussion groups, and study groups that connect pre-school-through grade 12 educators to university researchers are professional development options that create a deeper commitment to literacy goals.

According to the Learning First Alliance, while more extensive research regarding the methodologies that will best serve our English language learners is needed, teachers who provide reading instruction for those students need additional professional development in second language acquisition, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and syntactic development. “These teachers should also be given training in specific instructional strategies that are most beneficial for different populations of students, including very young English language learners who have not yet learned to read, older children with limited formal schooling who struggle to read in any language, and older students who read proficiently in their native language.” (*Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide*, copyright 2000 by the Learning First Alliance)

The National Commission Report emphasizes the need for teachers, administrators, and any one else involved in literacy development of young children to review the research related to identifying and preventing reading difficulties. “Just about all children can be taught to read and deserve no less from their teachers. Teachers, in turn deserve no less than the knowledge, skills, and supported practice that will enable their teaching to succeed.” (Excerpt from *Teaching Reading Is Rocket Science* by Louisa Moats, Copyright 1999 by the American Federation of Teachers)
Basic Principle 4

The roles of parents and the greater community in the development of early literacy are specific and clearly identified.

Parent involvement is defined by the national PTA as the participation of parents in every facet of the education and development of children from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents are the primary influence in their children's lives. Parent involvement takes many forms, including parents' shared responsibilities in decisions about their children's education, health and well-being, as well as participation in organizations that reflect the community's collaborative aspirations for all children.

Research on parent involvement during the past twenty years has shown that there is a direct correlation to student achievement and the self-esteem of not only the students, but of parents, and teachers as well. The National PTA reports that "One of the most important things we see happening is that not only do parents become more effective as parents but they become more effective as people. It's a matter of higher self-esteem. Once they saw they could do something about their child's education, they saw they could also do something about housing, their community and their jobs." This is true at all grade levels, for large and small communities, in both poor and affluent areas, and in urban, rural, and suburban settings.

Parent involvement requires teamwork. To be effective all stakeholders must believe in the potential of parent involvement efforts and participate to the fullest. Every parent involvement plan should include the following key players:

KEY PLAYERS IN A SUCCESSFUL PARENT INVOLVEMENT PLAN

• Strong school administrative leaders who understand, encourage, and fully support parent involvement.

• Teachers who are committed to working closely with parents in a variety of ways.

• Parents and family members who understand their potential influence and are ready to contribute actively to their children's education.

• Community members including businesses and other community organizations who are willing to support the role of parents and families in education.

Adapted from *Parent Involvement and Community Empowerment*, Texas Education Agency
Basic Principle 5

The evaluation of the effectiveness of each component of the school's reading plan is ongoing and occurs at least biannually. Both formal and informal evaluations are conducted.

"In schools that are successful in fostering high levels of reading achievement, all adults in the school work together on the reading program, build systematic program links across the grades, accept responsibility for all children, and closely monitor students' progress." Reprinted with permission from E. H. Hiebert et al., Every Child a Reader: Applying Reading Research in the Classroom (Topic 8). (Copyright 1998 by the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement.)

The primary reason for the evaluation of any program is to find out how things are going. Program evaluations are more comprehensive than reporting student performance. It is a way to collect information that informs instructional decision making and is based not only on student achievement scores, but also on observations, and level of implementation. Program evaluations are descriptive assessments that identify program components worth strengthening as well as components that either need to be modified, improved, or eliminated. (Adapted from A Guide for Evaluating a Reading or Language Arts Program, 1998, by Roger Farr and Beth Greene for the Center for Innovation in Assessment, Indiana University)

Schools in Oregon are required to engage in a self-evaluation process during which statewide assessment and other data are reviewed and analyzed to set goals and formulate an action plan for school improvement. The Quality Indicator Scoring Guide for the Evaluation of Reading/Literacy Programs excerpted below (See Appendix) serves as a guide for making such decisions and can serve as the basis for school improvement and program planning. By using the quality indicators on the scoring guide, educators can then generate questions that would lead to the development of an action plan. Given the indicator:

Primary Literacy Instruction: Leadership that facilitates student learning, Criterion B:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership that facilitates student learning</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. The school has a clear, realistic literacy plan to enable progressively more students to meet or exceed literacy standards over time</td>
<td>• The school lacks a literacy plan to identify and assist students not meeting or exceeding literacy standards</td>
<td>• The school lacks a comprehensive plan to identify and assist students who are not meeting or exceeding all of the standards but some teachers have plans to address the needs of such students</td>
<td>• There is a comprehensive plan to identify and assist students who are not meeting or exceeding all of the standards</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Through a review and analysis of their three-year trend data, a school might find that the percentage of students meeting the third grade benchmarks in reading has remained static during the course of the last three years.

While reviewing Criterion B of the scoring guide, the school leaders determine that the school is at a level 2. While they know that teachers make an effort to support all students, there has never been a formal plan to identify and support students. In the process, they also realize that there has not been a consistent effort or plan to support students who exceed the standards. The following questions might be raised in the pre-planning stage to determine "where the school is" in terms of the support they provide:

- What are the schoolwide processes for identifying students who are not meeting or who are exceeding the standards?
- What are the instructional plans currently being implemented in each classroom?
- Are they consistent within and across grade levels?
- Are they research-based?
- Do literacy basals have plans that could inform us?
- What resources will we need to develop a plan? Including personnel, time, fiscal?
- What resources including teacher expertise do we already have?
- What ongoing professional development components will be needed?

Specific gaps within the program or within the program design can be identified and examined to serve as the basis for an action plan. Developing an action plan would begin with identification of goals and objectives, followed by the steps or strategies, those who are responsible, a timeline, needed resources, and means of assessment. The following template could serve as a visual organizer for planning.
### ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Objectives</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>General and Federal Funds</th>
<th>Means of Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Action Plan for Learners Who Need Strategic Intervention**

**Instructional Period:**

**Directions:** Please meet as a team and document your proposed/current plan to address the needs of your children who need strategic intervention. Include in your summary all instructional opportunities (whole group and small group) that comprise the beginning reading program for your students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of Strategic Children (groupings, if appropriate)</th>
<th>Programs/Materials Used</th>
<th>Time Allocated (# minutes per day; #days per week)</th>
<th>Interventionist (Who delivers the special intervention?)</th>
<th>Organization/Delivery (How many students in group? Where is intervention delivered?)</th>
<th>Assessment System (Frequency and measures used to monitor progress)</th>
</tr>
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</table>
Conclusion

Literacy is perhaps the greatest gift that we can give to Oregon's children. To be successful in this great endeavor, will require the commitment of the Oregon Department of Education, institutions of higher education, administrators, teachers, community members, and families, working together toward a common vision. The futures of our young children are depending on this, and our young children are counting on us to see them through.

"The key to attaining and using literacy, even when sustained effort and attention are needed, is the sense of personal pride that children feel when they succeed. The ultimate goal of any reading program is to inspire children to use their literacy skills throughout their lives as tools for enjoyment, learning, and communication." Reprinted with permission from E. H. Hiebert et al., *Every Child a Reader: Applying Reading Research in the Classroom (Topic 8).* (Copyright 1998 by the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement.)

"The relentless pursuit of each student's success is the vision of the Oregon Department of Education. Oregon can truly put kids first by assuring that schools follow the best practices in education and cutting-edge research."

Stan Bunn, Superintendent of Public Instruction
APPENDIX
DEVELOPMENTAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF LITERACY ACQUISITION

Reprinted with permission from Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children. (Copyright 1998 by the National Academy of Sciences. Courtesy of the National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.)

Birth to 3-Year-Old Accomplishments

- Recognizes specific books by cover.
- Pretends to read books.
- Understands that books are handled in particular ways.
- Enters into a book sharing routine with primary caregivers.
- Vocalization play in crib gives way to enjoyment of rhyming language, nonsense word play, etc.
- Labels objects in books.
- Comments on characters in books.
- Looks at picture in book and realizes it is a symbol for real object.
- Listens to stories.
- Requests/command adult to read or write.
- May begin attending to specific print such as letters in names.
- Uses increasingly purposive scribbling.
- Occasionally seems to distinguish between drawing and writing.
- Produces some letter-like forms and scribbles with some features of English writing.

Three to 4-Year-Old Accomplishments

- Knows that alphabet letters are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named.
- Recognizes local environmental print.
- Knows that it is the print that is read in stories.
- Understands that different text forms are used for different functions of print (e.g., list for groceries).
- Pays attention to separable and repeating sounds in language (e.g., Peter, Pumpkin Easter, Peter Eater).
- Uses new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in own speech.
- Understands and follows oral directions.
- Is sensitive to some sequences of events in stories.
- Shows an interest in books and reading.
- When being read a story, connects information and events to life experiences.
- Questions and comments demonstrate understanding of literal meaning of story being told.
- Displays reading and writing attempts, calling attention to self: “Look at my story.”
- Can identify ten alphabet letters, especially those from own name.
- “Writes” (scribbles) message as part of playful activity.
- May begin to attend to beginning or rhyming sound in salient words.
Kindergarten Accomplishments

- Knows the parts of a book and their functions.
- Begins to track print when listening to a familiar text being read or when rereading own writing.
- “Reads” familiar texts emergently, i.e., not necessarily verbatim from the print alone.
- Recognizes and can name all uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Understands that the sequence of letters in a written word represents the sequence of sounds (phonemes) in a spoken word (alphabetic principle).
- Learns many, though not all, one-to-one letter-sound correspondences.
- Recognizes some words by sight, including a few very common ones (“a,” “the,” “I,” “my,” “you,” “is,” “are”).
- Uses new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in own speech.
- Makes appropriate switches from oral to written language styles.
- Notices when simple sentences fail to make sense.
- Connects information and events in texts to life and life experiences to text.
- Retells, re-enacts, or dramatizes stories or parts of stories.
- Listens attentively to books teacher reads to class.
- Can name some book titles and authors.
- Demonstrates familiarity with a number of types or genres of text (e.g., storybooks, expository texts, poems, newspapers, and everyday print such as signs, notices, labels).
- Correctly answers questions about stories read aloud.
- Makes predictions based on illustrations or portions of stories.
- Demonstrates understanding that spoken words consist of sequences of phonemes.
- Given spoken sets like “dan, dan, den” can identify the first two as being the same and the third as different.
- Given spoken sets like “dak, pat, zen,” can identify the first two as sharing a same sound.
- Given spoken segments, can merge them into a meaningful target word.
- Given a spoken word, can produce another word that rhymes with it.
- Independently writes many uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Uses phonemic awareness and letter knowledge to spell independently (invented or creative spelling).
- Writes (unconventionally) to express own meaning.
- Builds a repertoire of some conventionally spelled words.
- Shows awareness of distinction between “kid writing” and conventional orthography.
- Writes own name (first and last) and first names of some friends or classmates.
- Can write most letters and some words when they are dictated.
1st Grade Accomplishments

- Makes a transition from emergent to “real” reading.
- Reads aloud with accuracy and comprehension any text that is appropriately designed for the first half of grade 1.
- Accurately decodes orthographically regular, one-syllable words and nonsense words (e.g., “sit,” “zot”), using print-sound mappings to sound out unknown words.
- Uses letter-sound correspondence knowledge to sound out unknown words when reading text.
- Recognizes common, irregularly spelled words by sight (“have,” “said,” “where,” “two”).
- Has a reading vocabulary of 300 to 500 sight words and easily sounded-out words.
- Monitors own reading and self-corrects when an incorrectly identified word does not fit with cues provided by the letters in the word or the context surrounding the word.
- Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction that are appropriately designed for the grade level.
- Shows evidence of expanding language repertoire, including increasing appropriate use of standard, more formal language.
- Creates own written texts for others to read.
- Notices when difficulties are encountered in understanding text.
- Reads and understands simple written instructions.
- Predicts and justifies what will happen next in stories.
- Discusses prior knowledge of topics in expository texts.
- Uses, how, why, and what-if questions to discuss nonfiction texts.
- Describes new information gained from texts in own words.
- Distinguishes whether simple sentences are incomplete or fail to make sense; notices when simple texts fail to make sense.
- Can answer simple written comprehension questions based on the material read.
- Can count the number of syllables in a word.
- Can blend or segment the phonemes of most one-syllable words.
- Spells correctly three- and four-letter short-vowel words.
- Composes fairly readable first drafts using appropriate parts of the writing process (some attention to planning, drafting, rereading for meaning, and some self-correction).
- Uses invented spelling or phonics-based knowledge to spell independently, when necessary.
- Shows spelling consciousness or sensitivity to conventional spelling.
- Uses basic punctuation and capitalization.
- Produces a variety of types of compositions (e.g., stories, descriptions, journal entries) showing appropriate relationships between printed text, illustrations, and other graphics.
- Engages in a variety of literary activities voluntarily (e.g., choosing books and stories to read, writing a note to a friend).
2nd Grade Accomplishments

- Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction that are appropriately designed for grade level.
- Accurately decodes orthographically regular, multisyllable words and nonsense words (e.g., capital, Kalamazoo).
- Uses knowledge of print-sound mappings to sound out unknown words.
- Accurately reads many irregularly spelled words and such spelling patterns as diphthongs, special vowel spellings, and common word endings.
- Reads aloud with fluency and comprehension any text that is appropriately designed for grade level.
- Shows evidence of expanding language repertory, including increasing use of more formal language registers.
- Reads voluntarily for interest and own purposes.
- Rereads sentences when meaning is not clear.
- Interprets information from diagrams, charts, and graphs.
- Recalls facts and details of texts.
- Reads nonfiction materials for answers to specific questions or for specific purposes.
- Takes part in creative responses to texts such as dramatizations, oral presentations, fantasy play, etc.
- Discusses similarities in characters and events across stories.
- Connects and compares information across nonfiction selections.
- Poses possible answers to how, why, and what-if questions.
- Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing.
- Represents the complete sound of a word when spelling independently.
- Shows sensitivity to using formal language patterns in place of oral language patterns at appropriate spots in own writing (e.g., de-contextualizing sentences, conventions for quoted speech, literary language forms, proper verb forms).
- Makes reasonable judgments about what to include in written products.
- Productively discusses ways to clarify and refine own writing and that of others.
- With assistance, adds use of conferencing, revision, and editing processes to clarify and refine own writing to the steps of the expected parts of the writing process.
- Given organizational help, writes informative, well-structured reports.
- Attends to spelling, mechanics, and presentation for final products.
- Produces a variety of types of compositions (e.g., stories, reports, correspondence).
3rd Grade Accomplishments

- Reads aloud with fluency and comprehension any text that is appropriately designed for grade level.
- Uses letter-sound correspondence knowledge and structural analysis to decode words.
- Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction that are appropriately designed for grade level.
- Reads longer fictional selections and chapter books independently.
- Takes part in creative responses to texts such as dramatizations, oral presentations, fantasy play, etc.
- Can point to or clearly identify specific words or wordings that are causing comprehension difficulties.
- Summarizes major points from fiction and nonfiction texts.
- In interpreting fiction, discusses underlying theme or message.
- Asks how, why, and what-if questions in interpreting nonfiction texts.
- In interpreting nonfiction, distinguishes cause and effect, fact and opinion, main idea, and supporting details.
- Uses information and reasoning to examine bases of hypotheses and opinions.
- Infers word meaning from taught roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
- Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing.
- Begins to incorporate literacy words and language patterns in own writing (e.g., elaborate descriptions; uses figurative wording).
- With some guidance, uses all aspects of the writing process in producing own compositions and reports.
- Combines information from multiple sources in writing reports.
- With assistance, suggests and implements editing and revision to clarify and refine own writing.
- Presents and discusses own writing with other students and responds helpfully to other students’ compositions.
- Independently reviews work for spelling, mechanics, and presentation.
- Produces a variety of written works (e.g., literature responses, reports, “published” books, semantic maps) in a variety of formats, including multimedia forms.
GLOSSARY

(Adapted from *Every Child Reading: A Professional Guide*, copyright 2000 by the Learning First Alliance)

**Accuracy**: The ability to recognize words correctly.

**Automaticity**: Fluent performance without the conscious deployment of attention.

**Blend**: A consonant sequence before or after a vowel within a syllable, such as cl, br, or st; the written language equivalent of *consonant cluster*.

**Decoding**: Ability to translate a word from print to speech, usually by employing knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences; also, the act of deciphering a new word by sounding it out.

**Fluency**: Achieving speed and accuracy in recognizing words and comprehending connected text, and coordinating the two.

**Grapheme**: A letter or letter combination that spells a single phoneme; in English, a grapheme may be one, two, three, or four letters, such as *e*, *ei*, *igh*, or *eigh*.

**Literacy**: This includes reading, writing, and the creative and analytical acts involved in producing and comprehending texts.

**Morpheme**: The smallest meaningful unit of language.

**Morphology**: The aspects of language structure related to the ways words are formed from prefixes, roots, and suffixes (e.g., “mis-spell-ing”), and are related to each other.

**Onset-Rime Segmentation**: Separating a word into the onset, the consonant(s) at the start of a syllable, and the rime, the remainder of the syllable. For example, in “swift”, *sw*” is the onset and “ift” is the rime.

**Orthographic Knowledge**: Knowing that letters and diacritics represent the spoken language; attending to predictable and frequent spelling patterns. (A diacritic is a mark, such as the cedilla in façade or the acute accents of résumé, added to a letter to indicate a special phonetic value or to distinguish words that are otherwise graphically identical.)

**Phoneme Awareness**: The conscious awareness that words are made up of segments of our own speech that are represented with letters in an alphabetic orthography; also called *phonemic awareness*.
**Phonemes**: The speech phonological units that make a difference to meaning. Thus, the spoken word rope consists of three phonemes: /r/, /o/, and /p/. It differs by only one phoneme from each of the spoken words, *soap*, *rode*, and *rip*.

**Phonics**: The study of the relationships between letters and the sounds they represent; also used to describe reading instruction that teaches sound-symbol correspondences, such as “the phonics approach” or “phonic reading”.

Phonics instruction can vary with respect to the explicitness by which the phonic elements are taught and practiced in the reading of text. Synthetic and systematic phonics instruction includes the planned isolation, pronunciation, and blending of individual speech sounds (phonemes) represented by letters and letter groups (graphemes), and usually provides opportunities for children to practice using known sound-symbol associations while reading decodable text. Conversely, embedded and incidental phonics are characterized by an implicit approach in which teachers do use phonics elements in a planned sequence to guide instruction but instead find opportunities to highlight particular phonics elements when they appear in text.

**Embedded Phonics**: Teaching students phonics skills by embedding phonics instruction in text reading. This is a more implicit approach that relies to some extent on incidental learning.

**Incidental Phonics**: Capitalizing on opportunities to highlight particular elements of phonics as they appear in text.

**Synthetic Phonics**: Teaching students explicitly to convert letters into sounds (phonemes) and then blend the sounds to form recognizable words.

**Systematic Phonics**: Sequential set of phonics elements delineated and taught along a dimension of explicitness, depending on the type of phonics method employed.

**Phonological Awareness**: A more inclusive term than phonemic awareness—it refers to the general ability to attend to the sounds of language as distinct from its meaning. Phonemic awareness generally develops through other, less subtle levels of phonological awareness. Noticing similarities between words in their sounds, enjoying rhymes, counting syllables, and so forth are indications of such “metaphonological” skill.

**Reading Comprehension**: The ability to understand written language. Comprehension includes both getting the gist of the meaning and interpreting the meaning by relating it to other ideas, drawing inferences, making comparisons and asking questions about it.

**Self-Monitoring**: The mental act of knowing when one does and does not understand what one is reading.
**Syllabication**: Breaking words into syllables.

**Word Attack**: An aspect of reading instruction that includes intentional strategies for learning to decode, sight read, and recognize written words.

**Glossary Sources**


Resources for Early Literacy, a National Perspective

This list has been adapted from the original that was collected by The Northeast & Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University and its content partners for its online professional development resource The Knowledge Loom http://knowledgeloom.org. The Knowledge Loom is an online professional development resource that offers research-based best practices, stories about the practices in action in schools/districts, resource links, and interactive tools.

America Goes Back to School
http://www.ed.gov/Family/agbts/
"America Goes Back to School" encourages families and communities to make the most of the back-to-school time by launching or expanding family-school-community partnerships.

America Reads Challenge
http://www.ed.gov/inits/americareads
An Early Literacy initiative of the U.S. Department of Education

America Reads Resource Kit
http://www.ed.gov/americareads/resourcekit/
Resources for starting a community-based tutoring program and training tutors to teach young children to read

American Federation of Teachers
http://www.aft.org/
The American Federation of Teachers website includes policy briefs, publications, journals, and related links.

A Practical Guide to Reading Assessments, US Department of Education
Summarizes key points on various assessments in both English and Spanish for early literacy including the purpose of the assessment, length of administration, linking to instruction, cost, contact information, and special considerations for selection, etc. Assessments for concepts about print, phonemic awareness, alphabetic understanding, spelling, vocabulary, reading connected text, and comprehensive reading achievement.

Balanced Reading Instruction: Review of Literature
http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/timely/briiss.htm
Discusses skills-based and meaning-based approaches for early reading instruction.
Beginning Reading

http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed418515

This Digest, also published in LD Online, discusses phonological awareness and word recognition as essential to the early reading development of children who are at risk for reading difficulties.

Booklet published in 1999 that describes high quality interventions for children at risk of reading difficulties.

http://www.aft.org/edissues/whatworks/wwreading.htm

Booklet published in 1999 that describes high quality interventions for children at risk of reading difficulties.

Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA)

http://www.ciera.org/

CIERA is one of the National Research Centers funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).

Center on English Learning and Achievement (CELA)

http://cela.albany.edu

CELA is one of the National Research Centers funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).

Checkpoints for Progress in Reading and Writing (for families)

http://www.ed.gov/pubs/CheckFamilies/

Booklets on developmental milestones in reading and writing (for families).

Checkpoints for Progress in Reading and Writing (for teachers)

http://www.ed.gov/pubs/CheckTeachers/

Booklets on developmental milestones in reading and writing (for teachers).

CIERA #1-001: Text Matters in Learning to Read


Argues that children need exposure to a wide variety of text that includes phonemically regular and language patterns, high frequency words, high quality fiction and informational texts.

CIERA #1-002: Orchestrating the Thought and Learning of Struggling Writers

Argues that the quality of the teacher’s questions and comments during a cooperative writing activity helps the students engage in higher-level thinking that, in turn, results in compositions that reveal substantive content and technical expertise. Note: Other reports are available in pdf format.

**CIERA - Position Statement on Early Literacy**

http://www.ciera.org/ciera/information/principles/principles.html

Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement presents is position statement, "Improving the Reading Achievement of America's Children: 10 Research-Based Principles."

**Class Size Reduction and Teacher Quality Initiative**

http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/ClassSize/

Professional Development initiative of the U.S. Department of Education to support Early Literacy.

**Compact for Reading**

http://www.ed.gov/pubs/CompactforReading/

Includes information on creating compacts among families and educators to help K-3 children improve their reading skills; includes a guide for creating community and family-school partnerships. The site also includes a link to School-Home Links Readings Kits -- research-based activities for families to do with K-3 children to help them improve their reading abilities.

**Continuum of Children's Development in Early Reading and Writing**

http://www.naeyc.org/about/position/psread4.html

Continuum of Children's Development in Early Reading and Writing from 'Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children, part 4' publication by NAEYC.

**Early learning, later success: The Abecedarian Study**

http://www.naeyc.org/public_affairs/champions/abecedarian.html

Recent report of a longitudinal study of the long-lasting benefits of early education. Researchers followed 57 children who had been enrolled in a high-quality early childhood program from infancy through age 5 until they were 21 years old and compared their abilities and achievements with a control group.

**Educating Language-Minority Children**

http://www.nap.edu/catalog/6025.html

Documents research on teaching English language learners to read English and includes studies of school and classroom effectiveness. The book is available in "open book" format only.
Effective Schools/Accomplished Teachers

Reports a national study of effective schools and accomplished teachers from a sample of 14 schools. Findings indicate that the amount of time allotted to small group instruction in which teachers directed instruction in phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension distinguished the most effective schools from others.

Emergent Literacy: Synthesis of the Research
http://idea.uoregon.edu/~ncite/documents/techrep/tech19.html

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and discuss areas of emerging evidence on the relationship between early childhood literacy experiences and subsequent reading acquisition. We do not wish to minimize the role of oral language in early literacy development, for it serves as a companion to the development of reading and writing. However, our focus is on aspects of literacy acquisition that are related to awareness and knowledge of print. First, dimensions of literacy knowledge and literacy experiences are discussed, based on data from recent primary studies and reviews of emergent literacy research. Then areas of emerging evidence are examined for instructional implications for children entering school with diverse literacy experiences.

ERIC Digests
http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/

Recent ERIC Digests address early literacy topics.

Every Child Reading: An Action Plan
http://www.learningfirst.org/readingaction.html

An action paper from the Learning First Alliance.

Family Involvement
http://www.pfie.ed.gov/

The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education is committed to increasing family participation in children's learning through a variety of activities and efforts, such as before-and after-school programs, tutoring and mentoring initiatives, and donations of facilities and technologies.

Helping Your Child Become A Reader

This book tells how you can use all your language skills to build those of your child. It is designed for helping children from infancy to age 6 the most important years for learning the skills they will need to become readers.
Ideas At Work
   http://www.ciera.org/ciera/ideas-at-work/
A best practices site developed by the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) in which practitioners can share research-based lessons.

Ideas at Work: How to Help Every Child Become a Reader
   http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ideasatwork/
Directory of 100 ideas, projects, and programs at the federal, state, and local levels that help K-3 children learn to read.

International Reading Association
   http://www.reading.org/
The International Reading Association is the nation's largest teacher organization advocating for early literacy educators. Its professional journals include The Reading Teacher, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, and Reading Research Quarterly. Abstracts of Reading Research Quarterly articles are available for download.

International Reading Association - Position Statements on Early Literacy Practices
   http://www.reading.org/advocacy/policies/
The International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children present a joint position statement on helping young children learn to read and write.

Language and Literacy Environments in Preschools
This Digest, written by the authors of Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, discusses the research on preschool literacy environments and their contributions to early reading development.

Learning First Alliance
   http://www.learningfirst.org/
Twelve organizations advocating for education have formed this alliance to improve student learning.

Learning to Be Literate: A Comparison of Five Urban Early Childhood
   http://cela.albany.edu/learn/learn.html
A description of literacy development in five urban preschools. Classroom observations show discrepancies in the resources available to children from low-income families who attend private not-for-profit preschools and those who attend publicly funded preschools. Authors explore the literacy that many poor children are socialized to practice, citing limited
experiences with books and disconnection from personal and community identity. Findings of the study challenge the assumptions that publicly funded early childhood programs necessarily provide a more equitable foundation for literacy and schooling for children of low-income families.

**Learning to Read and Write**
http://www.nwrel.org/cfc/publications/LearningReadWrite.html
An article published by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) that summarizes research on learning to speak, read, and write; offers activities to support the development of these competencies during preschool and the early grades; and profiles five Northwest schools.

**Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children**
http://www.naeyc.org/about/position/psread0.htm
An Overview of the 'Learning to Read and Write' recommendations from NAEYC.

**Literacy Best Practice in a Kindergarten Classroom**
http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/content/cntareas/reading/li1lk68.htm
An illustration of best practices in the teaching of literacy skills including video clips of exemplary literacy practice at Centralized Kindergarten North School, Indianapolis, IN.

**Literacy Plus**
A language arts framework for kindergarten through eighth grade integrating reading, writing, vocabulary, and reasoning developed by MCREL.

**Making a Difference Means Making It Different: Honoring Children's Rights to Excellent Reading Instruction**
http://www.reading.org/advocacy/policies/MADMMID.html
An advocacy statement on the need to focus educational reform on the rights of the child to have the best possible literacy instruction including 10 rights.

**Making Standards Matter 1999: An update on state activity**
http://aft.org/edissues/policybriefs/index.htm
A recent policy brief on state efforts to implement standards-based reforms including English language arts standards and assessments.

**Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (MCREL)**
http://www.mcrel.org/
MCREL is one of the 12 regional educational laboratories funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).

**NAEYC Guidelines for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs**

http://www.naeyc.org/about/position/psprep98.htm

Guidelines designed to help institutions develop programs and provide guidance to states in setting standards for licensing early childhood teachers.

**National Academy Press**

http://www.nap.edu/

The National Academy Press publishes research conducted by the National Research Council, a division of the National Academy of Sciences.

**National Reading Panel Final Report**

http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Documents/default.htm

Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature - Under the auspice of the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, the National Reading Panel was charged by Congress with assessing the status of research-based knowledge in reading. Its report is available in PDF and HTML formats.

**North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL)**

http://www.ncrel.org/

NCREL is one of the 12 Regional Educational Laboratories funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).

**Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL)**

http://www.nwrel.org/

NWREL is one of the 12 regional educational laboratories funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)

**One Down and 80,000 to Go: Word Recognition Instruction in the Primary Grades**

http://www.ciera.org/ciera/publications/online-at-ciera/inquiry-1/online-inquiry1.html

Examined the word recognition instructional approaches in four classrooms and found that an early emphasis on phonics followed by application of word reading skills to reading whole texts, vocabulary development, and discussion of text meaning results in the greatest gains in student achievement.

**Preventing Reading Difficulties**

Recommendations for Practice and Research from the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children.

**Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children**
http://stills.nap.edu/html/prdyc/
Synthesis of 20 years of reading research on effective prevention and intervention strategies for pre-kindergarten to grade 3 children.

**Putting Reading Front and Center: A Resource Guide for Union Advocacy**
http://www.aft.org/edissues/readingflyer.htm
Recently published resource guide on improving beginning reading instruction. Copies may be ordered.

**READ*WRITE*NOW!**
http://www.ed.gov/Family/RWN/Activ97/
Activities that parents can do with their children from birth to grade 6 to help them learn to read and write.

**READ*WRITE*NOW! Partners Tutoring Program**
http://www.ed.gov/americareads/Pubs/Tutorman.html
Training guide that includes guidelines for effective tutoring strategies.

**Reading Coherence Initiative**
http://www.sedl.org/pitl/rci/objectives.html
The Reading Coherence Initiative provides site-based professional development in reading in five sites in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Researchers at these sites are collaborating with teachers to develop products that support coherent reading instruction including a conceptual framework, a reading assessment database, resources for supporting early literacy, and a literacy profile. These products can be downloaded from the site.

**Reading Excellence Act**
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/REA/
An Early Literacy initiative of the U.S. Department of Education. Legislation is available at:

**Reading Excellence Act Legislation**
Recommendations for Practice Pre-K-Grade 3 from NAEYC
http://www.naeyc.org/about/position/psread2.htm
Recommendations for Practice Pre-K-Grade 3 from the 'Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children' publication by NAEYC.

References for Improving the Reading Achievement of America’s Children: 10 Research-Based Principles
http://www.ciera.org/ciera/information/principles/references.html
Cites references in support of the 10 research-based principles.

SEDL Follow Through Program
A comprehensive program for language-minority children in kindergarten through grade three.

Seeking Common Ground
http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/fall_98/article2.html
NWREL publishes the Northwest Education online. In this article the nature of balanced early literacy instruction is discussed.

Seven Promising Programs for Reading and English Language Arts
http://www.aft.org/edissues/whatworks/seven/index.htm
Booklet published in 1999 that describes high quality instructional programs for reading and language arts.

Seven promising programs for reading and language arts
http://www.aft.org/edissues/whatworks/wwenglish.htm
Booklet published in 1999 that describes high quality instructional programs for reading and language arts.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)
http://www.sedl.org/
SEDL is one of the 12 regional educational laboratories funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).

Start Early, Finish Strong
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/startearly/
Summarizes children's language and literacy development milestones pre-kindergarten-grade 3 and offers research-based practices that help children acquire language and literacy skills at home, in the community, and at school.

**Starting Out Right**

http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/sor/

Summarizes key findings about language and literacy experiences in preschools and childcare settings, initial reading instruction K-3, and interventions that help prevent reading difficulties in pre-kindergarten to grade 3 children.

**Successful Early Childhood Education in an Imperfect World**

http://www.nwrel.org/cfc/publications/imperfect.html

Case reports of exemplary early literacy teaching in four Northwest schools.

**Summer Reading Fun!**

http://www.ed.gov/americareads/summer.html

A new America Reads Challenge website, "Summer Reading Fun!" offers a number of reading resources and related activities for summer.

**Taking Responsibility for Ending Social Promotion: A Guide for Educators and State and Local Leaders**


To prepare students to meet high standards, we must start early. From years of experience in observing, studying, and teaching young children, we have learned of the importance of the early childhood years. We know that young children learn by having a range of frequent, positive early learning experiences. Early childhood education can help children develop broad knowledge and higher-level skills, as well as help educators identify children at risk of school failure and take steps to ensure their readiness for school and successful learning in the early grades.

**Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts**

http://www.tenet.edu/

The Texas Education Network at the University of Texas, Austin links to the Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts for information on language arts standards and effective practices.

**The 1998 Reading Report Card for the Nation and States**

http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/

The National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as "the Nation's Report Card", has assessed the academic performance of fourth, eighth, and twelfth graders in a range of subjects.
The Early Literacy Advisor: An assessment system that shapes instruction
http://www.mcrel.org/resources/literacy/ela/index.asp
Developmentally appropriate practice is a matter of applying the right technique at the right time, and for the right length of time, based on a child’s unique strengths and weaknesses. The ELA helps a teacher make these determinations.

The Nature of Effective First-Grade Literacy Instruction
http://cela.albany.edu/1stgradelit/main.html
Case studies of literacy instruction in 30 first-grade classrooms in diverse settings across five states; discusses instructional practices of the most effective teachers and the academic performance of low achieving students in these classrooms in contrast with their peers in more typical classrooms.

Tips for Schools
http://www.learningfirst.org/reading_tips_schools.html
Tips for schools from the Learning First Alliance

Tips for Teachers
http://www.learningfirst.org/reading_tips_teachers.html
Tips for Teachers from the Learning First Alliance

Tools for Schools
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ToolsforSchools/
This is a report that describes school reform models supported by the National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students. Comprehensive School Reform Models that focus on early literacy such as Success For ALL and teaching English language learners to read English such as the Three-Year Transition Program for Native Spanish-Speaking Elementary Students are included.

Top Ten Tips for Parents
http://www.learningfirst.org/reading_tips.html
Top Ten Tips for Parents from the Learning First Alliance

Topics in Early Reading Coherence
http://www.sedl.org/pitl/rci/topics.html
Short papers on reading topics are available at this site; e.g. "Understanding the brain and reading", Phonics rules," and "Reading by sight".
Transitioning Second Language Learners to English reading: What research tells us
http://www.tenet.edu/teks/language_arts/professional/trans_second/main.html
Strategies for transitioning students from reading Spanish to reading English

U.S. Department of Education
http://www.ed.gov/
Access to the presidential priorities, federal initiatives in support of the priorities including America Reads and the Reading Excellence Act, legislation, education publications, and links to the federal offices responsible for education policy.

What Expert Teachers of Reading Should Know and Be Able To Do
http://www.aft.org/edissues/rocketscience.htm
A report that describes the knowledge base which teachers of reading must have if they are to be successful in teaching children to read well.
Instruction of High-Frequency Words and Fluency

Reprinted with permission from E. H. Hiebert et al., *Every Child a Reader: Applying Reading Research in the Classroom* (adapted from p 3 of Topic 4). Copyright 1998 by the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement

Word walls

Children’s fluency with high-frequency words reflects instruction that highlights particular words. Clusters of words from a list, such as the 100 most frequent words in written English, can be presented in lessons and activities. One effective way of presenting these words is the word wall. A handful of high-frequency words are presented weekly. Each addition is mounted on the word wall, where first letter categorizes words alphabetically.

One word wall activity is a daily warm-up where children practice new and old words by saying them quickly or writing the words. In some classes, children write the words on their own cards, adding them to their word banks along with personal words such as favorite toys or pets’ names. Small-group lessons in which specific words are found and studied in books and where sentences are made with word cards will help some children to integrate high-frequency words into their recognition vocabulary. The word wall is a focal point in a classroom as children refer to the words in independent spelling and reading.
### 100 Most Frequent Words in Written English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the</th>
<th>he</th>
<th>be</th>
<th>but</th>
<th>which</th>
<th>out</th>
<th>into</th>
<th>no</th>
<th>made</th>
<th>long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>of</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>this</td>
<td>what</td>
<td>their</td>
<td>them</td>
<td>has</td>
<td>make</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>little</td>
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<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>was</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>said</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>more</td>
<td>than</td>
<td>did</td>
<td>very</td>
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<td>a</td>
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<td>first</td>
<td>down</td>
<td>after</td>
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<td>to</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>when</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>many</td>
<td>two</td>
<td>been</td>
<td>only</td>
<td>words</td>
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<tr>
<td>in</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>or</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>will</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>its</td>
<td>way</td>
<td>called</td>
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<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>there</td>
<td>each</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>him</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>find</td>
<td>just</td>
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<tr>
<td>your</td>
<td>his</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>can</td>
<td>bout</td>
<td>these</td>
<td>see</td>
<td>now</td>
<td>use</td>
<td>where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that</td>
<td>they</td>
<td>had</td>
<td>an</td>
<td>how</td>
<td>would</td>
<td>time</td>
<td>people</td>
<td>may</td>
<td>meet</td>
</tr>
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<td>it</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>your</td>
<td>up</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>could</td>
<td>my</td>
<td>water</td>
<td>know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Special Education Resources

Coalition in Oregon for Parent Education (COPE)
999 Locust Street NE
Salem, OR 97303
(Toll-free telephone number: 1-888-505-COPE)
COPE is Oregon’s federally mandated parent information center, providing free education, training and resources to parent of children with disabilities.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191
http://www.cec.sped.org/
An international organization, CEC provides information on improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities and exceptionalities.

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)
381 Park Avenue S, Suite 1401
New York, NY 10016
http://www.ncild.org/
The Center supports improvements for those affected by learning disabilities.

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
PO Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013
Http://www.nichcy.org/clc.htm
NICHCY provides information and links for children and youth with disabilities.

Oregon Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities (OACLD)
4475 SW Scholls Ferry Road #170
Portland OR 97225
This state association supports children and adults with learning disabilities.

Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Office of Special Education (OSE)
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97302
http://www.ode.state.or.us/
The Department provides information, resources, and support on all aspects of education policy and procedure in Oregon. The Office of Special Education supports and oversees special education programming in the state.

Special Education Resources on the Internet
http://www.hood.edu/seri/serihome.htm
This site is a collection of special education information links available on the Internet.
References for Reading Instruction for Children with Reading Difficulties


“Early Interventions for Children’s Reading Problems: Clinical Applications of the Research in Phonological Awareness.” Blachman, B.A. Topics in Language Disorders, 12 (1) 51-65.


Action Plan for Learners Who Need Strategic Intervention

**Instructional Period:**

**Directions:** Please meet as a team and document your proposed/current plan to address the needs of your children who need strategic intervention. Include in your summary all instructional opportunities (whole group and small group) that comprise the beginning reading program for your students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of Strategic Children (groupings, if appropriate)</th>
<th>Programs/ Materials Used</th>
<th>Time Allocated (# minutes per day; #days per week)</th>
<th>Interventionist (Who delivers the special intervention?)</th>
<th>Organization/ Delivery (How many students in group? Where is intervention delivered?)</th>
<th>Assessment System (Frequency and measures used to monitor progress)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
Bloom's Taxonomy *

Benjamin Bloom created this taxonomy for categorizing levels of abstraction for questions that commonly occur in educational settings. The taxonomy provides a framework in which to categorize questions. Please note that categories are not always absolute and sometimes overlap. The three levels of reading comprehension in the Oregon Content Standards, literal, inferential, and evaluative, can be mapped to the taxonomy as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oregon Standards</th>
<th>Taxonomy Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literal</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td>Comprehension, Application, Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluative</td>
<td>Synthesis, Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Skills Demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>• observation and recall of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• knowledge of dates, events, places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• knowledge of major ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• mastery of subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Question Cues:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>list, define, tell, describe, identify, show, label, collect, examine, tabulate, quote, name, who, when, where, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>• understanding information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• grasp meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• translate knowledge into new context</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• interpret facts, compare, contrast</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• order, group, infer causes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• predict consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Question Cues:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>summarize, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, distinguish, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Counseling Services - University of Victoria, 1996)
### Application
- use information
- use methods, concepts, theories in new situations
- solve problems using required skills or knowledge
- **Questions Cues:**
  - apply, demonstrate, calculate, complete, illustrate, show, solve, examine, modify, relate, change, classify, experiment, discover

### Analysis
- seeing patterns
- organization of parts
- recognition of hidden meanings
- identification of components
- **Questions Cues:**
  - analyze, separate, order, explain, connect, classify, arrange, divide, compare, select, explain, infer

### Synthesis
- use old ideas to create new ones
- generalize from given facts
- relate knowledge from several areas
- predict, draw conclusions
- **Questions Cues:**
  - combine, integrate, modify, rearrange, substitute, plan, create, design, invent, what it?, compose, formulate, prepare, generalize, rewrite

### Evaluation
- compare and discriminate between ideas
- assess value of theories, presentations
- make choices based on reasoned argument
- verify value of evidence
- recognize subjectivity
- **Questions Cues**
  - assess, decide, rank, grade, test, measure, recommend, convince, select, judge, explain, discriminate, support, conclude, compare, summarize

(Adapted from Counseling Services - University of Victoria, 1996)

* Adapted by the University of Victoria from: Bloom, B.S. (Ed.) (1956) Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals: Handbook I, cognitive domain. New York; Toronto: Longmans, Green.)
## TAXONOMY OF CREATIVE THINKING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>Generate many ideas</td>
<td>Free association; brainstorming</td>
<td>Children name different ways animals can help people</td>
<td>An abundance of ideas for creative work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Think of alternatives to the conventional</td>
<td>Imagining; integrating subjects</td>
<td>Children imagine some other unusual ways animals can help people</td>
<td>Alternative, divergent ideas; limitations overcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originality</td>
<td>Conceive innovations unique to context</td>
<td>Reviewing alternatives; imagining; combining</td>
<td>Children use their ideas to create a unique solution for a species (wild or tame) that is in need</td>
<td>Highly novel, unique ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaboration</td>
<td>Extend new ideas; provide details for application</td>
<td>Testing; analyzing; synthesizing</td>
<td>Children expand on their idea, explore whether/how it might work</td>
<td>Ideas tailored to fit new contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Assess performance; examine gaps; exercise judgment</td>
<td>Analyzing; comparing; experimenting; fine-tuning</td>
<td>Children compare their idea with actual current practices; they analyze strengths and weaknesses, anticipate problems, make adjustments</td>
<td>New perspectives on idea and application</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TAXONOMY OF IMAGINATIVE THINKING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative response</td>
<td>Free response to catalysts</td>
<td>Exposure to art, music, film, theater, photos, and interpretation</td>
<td>Children listen to or read a fairy tale</td>
<td>Awareness and expression of creative ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative divergence</td>
<td>Variation of an existing creation</td>
<td>Changes made to stories, myths, and art to create new pieces, embellishments</td>
<td>Children create an alternative ending or add another ending to the existing one</td>
<td>Adaptations of existing works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative exploration</td>
<td>Discovery of many dimensions to an idea; intuitive insights</td>
<td>Development of an idea in depth through structured imaginative activities</td>
<td>Children consider aspects of the tale in new ways; they experiment with meaning, delve into plot to re-imagine what might happen</td>
<td>Interpretive expression (theatrical productions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative composition</td>
<td>Unusual, novel invention</td>
<td>Creation of unique images and perspectives</td>
<td>Based on the fairy tale, children create a dramatization to illustrate it, compose a poem, write a new story, dramatize new story</td>
<td>Original composition (poems, stories, theater, songs, and art)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TRAITS OF AN EFFECTIVE READER
(Reprinted with permission from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory)

Reading Across Content Areas
Good Readers Across the Content Areas...

Language Arts
- willingness to read a variety of texts
- enjoy reading
- read actively; use skills fluidly
- read above grade level
- understand and interpret

Math
- grasp concepts-abstract
- decode symbols, use symbols
- translate concepts into symbols
- clearly understand sequence
- distinguish essential patterns
- understand process-have a plan

Science
- read for information
- evaluate information
- compare/contrast
- hypothesize
- draw conclusions
- use clues and strategies
- understand bigger picture
- ask more questions
- discuss what they have read

Social Studies
- understand organizational structures and features
- synthesize
- make connections
- sequence historical events
- evaluate sources, issues, trends in context

3 Main Barriers to Content Area Reading Comprehension

1. Understanding of text features and construction of informational texts
2. Prior knowledge, content knowledge and thematic knowledge of content area subjects
3. Content-specific vocabulary
What is the difference between Narrative and Informational Vocabulary

**NARRATIVE:**
- The gist of story is more important than a single vocabulary word.
- Vocabulary is contextual and relational—we understand its context and relate what we know to prior experience.
- Narrative text vocabulary terms are usually not related.

**INFORMATIONAL:**
- The meaning of the word is closely tied to the lesson in the text.
- Specialized content has focused connotations. We often cannot rely on context or prior experience to provide meaning.
- Vocabulary terms are often closely related or define one another.
Beginning Reading Instruction: A Practical Guide for Parents

(From the Texas Education Agency)

http://www.tea.state.tx.us/reading/parents.html
Beginning Reading Instruction:  
A Practical Guide for Parents

(From the Texas Education Agency)
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/reading/parents.html

Index of Topics

- Introduction
- One: Children have opportunities to expand their use and appreciation of spoken language
- Two: Children have opportunities to expand their use and appreciation of printed language
- Three: Children have opportunities to hear good stories and informational books read aloud daily
- Four: Children have opportunities to understand and use the building blocks of spoken language
- Five: Children have opportunities to learn about and use the building blocks of written language
- Six: Children have opportunities to learn the relationship between the sounds of spoken language and the letters of written language
- Seven: Children have opportunities to learn decoding strategies
- Eight: Children have opportunities to write and relate their writing to spelling and reading
- Nine: Children have opportunities to practice accurate and fluent reading in decodable stories
- Ten: Children have opportunities to read and comprehend a wide assortment of books and other texts
- Eleven: Children have opportunities to develop and comprehend new vocabulary through wide reading and direct vocabulary instruction
- Twelve: Children have opportunities to learn and apply comprehension strategies as they reflect upon and think critically about what they read
Introduction:

Parents, your children’s success as learners rests on their ability to read well. Learning to read is a process that takes time and effort. At first children hear stories and poems, learn the alphabet, understand how speech and print go together, and learn that printed words mean something. After much practice, children soon read and understand many books and stories. In their growth as readers, children move from "learning to read" in the early grades to "reading to learn" in the upper elementary grades and beyond.

You are your children's first and most influential teachers. Teaching and learning happen when you and your young children do simple, fun things at home. Reading books with your children for just a few minutes each day can make a big difference in how easily and how well they learn to read. Trips to a grocery store or a shopping mall can be used to help your children understand why we have print and how we use it.

Practical Ideas for Parents provides information about learning to read and includes activities for you to use in helping your children become readers. Twelve essential components of research-based reading programs are discussed. Components One through Five list activities that can be used with all children but particularly with preschoolers. Components Six through Twelve include activities that can be used primarily with children as they are learning to read at school.

All learning activities should be enjoyable. At no time should your children be made to feel pressured or discouraged. If an activity is not going well, stop it and try it again later. Working with your children in a positive manner can build their interest in reading.

As your children are learning to read, keep in touch with their teachers. They can help you monitor your children's reading progress and can tell you ways to help at home. If your children's first language is not English, you can start working with them using their primary language. The primary language serves as a basis for learning to read and write in English.

To learn more about beginning reading programs, access Beginning Reading Instruction: Components and Features of a Research-Based Reading Program here or order by calling the Texas Reading Initiative Hotline at (800) 819-5713.
Twelve Essential Components of Research-Based Programs for Teaching Beginning Reading

One: Children have opportunities to expand their use and appreciation of spoken language.

Listening begins before speaking. Children learn the sounds of language by listening to people talk. As children learn to talk with others, they ask questions, learn the meanings of words, and find out interesting and important things about the world around them. Many experiences of listening and talking prepare children to read.

Helping your children at home . . .

Talking and Listening

• Begin talking, singing, and reading frequently to your children when they are babies.

• When giving directions to your younger children, use short sentences and explain clearly what you want them to do. As they grow older, increase the length of the directions using words that describe (for example, instead of saying, "Get the book," you can say, "Please bring me your favorite storybook. It is on the desk in your room.").

• Ask your children questions that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer. Some questions that help them to talk more openly are "Why do you think that happened?" "What do we do next?" "What would happen if we did it this way?" "What can we do about that?" "How can we make this better?"

• Listen carefully as your children talk to you. Answer their questions and take time to explain things to them.

• Teach your children songs and poems that are fun to sing and say (for example, songs like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" and poems like "Wee Willie Winkie" or "Little Miss Muffet").

• Play games such as "Red-Light Green-Light," "Mama, Puedo," and "Simon Says" that require talking, listening, following directions, and giving directions.

• Begin talking, singing, and reading frequently to your children when they are babies.

Reading Aloud

• Set aside a special time each day to read aloud to your children.
• Read stories and informational books aloud for as long as you can read and your
children can listen. If your children become restless, lay the book aside and
come back to it at another time.

• Read stories to your children and have them tell the stories back to you.

• Record yourself reading a book and give the tape to your children. Let them play
the tape and read along in the book on their own.

• Have your children "read" to you from a picture book by making up their own
stories about the pictures.

Other Activities

• Take nature walks in the neighborhood or at local parks. Spend time talking in
detail with your children about things you can see, hear, or touch such as leaves,
rain, and caterpillars.

• When possible, take your children on trips to zoos, museums, nature trails, and
historical sites. Talk about the interesting and unusual things you see.

• Draw pictures with your children and take turns telling stories about the pictures.

• Pick a topic of interest to your children and have them learn new things about it.
Ask them to tell you and other family members what they have learned.

• Watch educational television programs with your children and talk with them
about those programs.

Two: Children have opportunities to expand their use and appreciation of
printed language.

Spoken language that is written down becomes printed language that can be read
and understood. Print is everywhere---on signs, billboards, labels, and computer
screens, in television ads, games, books, magazines, and newspapers. Children
learn that print is important to daily life and that it is used in many ways for different
reasons.

Helping your children at home . . .

• Let your children see you read every day. When they see you read newspapers,
catalogs, magazines, books, and labels, they will learn that reading is important.
Read for enjoyment. Your children will copy what you do.

• Make sure your children have books and other printed materials.
• Point out the letters and words that you see everywhere. Read aloud traffic signs, street signs, store signs, billboards, and maps as you travel to and from home and elsewhere.

• While working at home, read aloud grocery labels, notices, invitations, phone numbers, and calendar dates.

• Put messages to family members under a magnet on the refrigerator or pin them on a home bulletin board.

• Give your children supplies for writing, such as a chalkboard, chalk, markers, highlighters, a marker board, paper, pencils, and crayons.

• Give your children books as gifts on birthdays and on special holidays.

Three: Children have opportunities to hear good stories and informational books read aloud daily.

When children hear books read aloud, they come to understand why learning to read is important. They learn that people read for different reasons---books that tell a story can be read for pleasure; books full of facts and information can be read in order to learn new things. Children learn a great deal when they listen to books read aloud---they hear new words, learn new ways of saying things, and are introduced to new ideas, different people, and faraway places.

Helping your children at home . . .

• When reading a book with your children, you can:

• Let them hold the book and turn the pages.

• Talk about different parts of the book such as the front, back, title page, first page, and last page.

• Take your time reading. Do not rush.

• Point to the words as you read. Help them to see that there are spaces between words, which you read from the top of the page to the bottom, and that you read from left to right.

• Ask them to think about the story as you read it.

• Point to the pictures and talk about them.
• Read expressively: talk the way the story’s characters would talk; make sound effects and funny faces; and vary the pitch of your voice throughout the story to make it more interesting.

• Encourage them to ask questions about the story’s characters and events.

• Talk about the story and relate it to their personal experiences.

• Get library cards for your children and let them choose books to check out.

• Let your children participate in community literacy programs. Enroll them in library-sponsored summer reading programs.

• Ask local bookstores if they sponsor a children’s story hour where good books, stories, and poems are read aloud.

• Start a neighborhood reading club where children get together regularly to read and share books.

• Swap books with family and friends so that your children will have more books to read.

• Encourage your older children to read with your younger children.

• Remember to keep reading aloud to your children even after they read on their own!

Four: Children have opportunities to understand and use the building blocks of spoken language.

Children can learn that spoken sentences are made up of words and that words are made up of separate sounds. They can learn that many words can be separated into syllables (for example, /bu/ /cket/ in “bucket” and /te/ /le/ /phone/ in telephone”). Children can also learn that syllables can be separated into sounds (for example, /b/ /u/ and /k/ /e/ /t/ in “bucket”) and that words can be separated into sounds (for example, /k/ /a/ /t/ in “cat”). Later children will be able to connect the sounds in spoken words with the letters in printed words. Most children will benefit from much practice at playing with the sounds of words.
Helping your children at home . . .

Beginning and Ending Sounds

- Help your children learn to identify the sounds at the beginning of words (for example, the sound /t/ in "top" and the sound /b/ in "big"). Practice with other words and their beginning sounds.

- Help your children learn to separate sounds at the beginning of words (for example, ask what would be left if you took the /r/ sound out of "run" or if you took the /s/ sound away from "sat"). Continue with other sounds and words.

- Help your children learn to blend the separated sounds of spoken words. Ask your children to tell you what they would have if they put these sounds together: /m/ and /other/ (mother); /k/ and /andy/ (candy); and /s/, /a/, and /t/ (sat). Continue with other words.

- Ask your children which one of these words---"bag," "cat," "bike" "boat"---starts with a different sound. Practice with other words.

- Say four words that have the same beginning sound. Ask your children to listen and say the beginning sound (for example, the beginning sound is /h/ in "hat," "hop," "hit," "hand").

- Say four words that have the same ending sound. Ask your children to listen and tell you what the ending sound is (for example, the ending sound is /p/ in "stop," "pop," "cop," and "top").

- Have your children take an imaginary shopping trip. Give each child a paper sack and an old magazine. Point out pictures of objects in their magazines. If your children can tell you what sounds the names of the objects begin with, let them cut out the pictures and put them into their sack. After the shopping trip is over, look at the pictures with your children and let them say the beginning sound of each object's name.

Rhyming

- Teach your children to pick out rhyming words. Have your children find household objects, which have names that rhyme, such as "bread" and "thread".

- Sing songs and read rhyming books with your children.

- Using old magazines, have your children look for pictures that have names that rhyme. For example, choose a picture of a cat and find other pictures with names that rhyme with "cat" such as "hat," "mat," and "bat." Have your children cut out the pictures and paste them on a sheet of paper. Have them say all the rhyming words on their sheet of paper.
Sentences, Words, and Syllables

• Say a sentence and have your children clap out the number of words in the sentence (for example, they will clap five times after hearing the sentence, "The boy ran very fast," and only four times after hearing "The boy ran fast").

• Choose a word that is made up of two words (for example, "sunshine" is made up of "sun" and "shine"). Tell your children that you are going to say the word and then you will say it again, leaving off part of the word (for example, say "sunshine" and then say "shine"). Ask what part of the word was left off. (The "sun" was left off.) Practice with many different two-part words.

• Say a word and have your children clap out the number of syllables (for example, the word "personal" has three syllables: per - son - al. Your children will clap three times). You may want to use a dictionary for help with syllables.

Five: Children have opportunities to learn about and use the building blocks of written language.

Children who enter school able to name and identify the letters of the alphabet usually have an easier time learning to read. Being able to call out letter names quickly and easily is important. Children will also learn to use letters to write their names, other words, and simple messages.

Helping your children at home . . .

• Sing the alphabet song with your children as they play with alphabet books, blocks, and magnetic letters.

• Help your children learn to identify the letters in alphabet books.

• Play alphabet games: Take turns with your children in naming a favorite food for letters of the alphabet. Have them tell you girls’ names that begin with certain letters in the alphabet (for example, "Jennifer" begins with the letter "J"). Do the same with boys’ names.

• Have your children say the alphabet as they jump a rope, ride a seesaw, push back and forth on a swing, or go up and down the stairs.

• Encourage your children to cut out letters from the headlines of newspapers and put the letters in alphabetical order.

• Ask your children to take a page from a magazine, newspaper, or catalog and draw a circle around a letter. Have them identify the letter and circle some matching letters on the page.
• Put cornmeal or sand in a cake pan or on a cookie sheet. Say a letter and have your children draw the letter in the cornmeal or sand.

• Provide your children with pencils, crayons, and paper so that they can learn to write individual letters and gradually learn to write their names.

Six: Children have opportunities to learn the relationship between the sounds of spoken language and the letters of written language.

Children learn that written words are made up of letters that match the sounds in spoken words (for example, the letter "n" matches the /n/ sound in "nurse"). Children can be taught to match the sounds with letters in an orderly and direct way. But, be prepared for them to figure some matches on their own. As they learn letter-sound matches, children can practice using them in words.

Helping your children at home . . .

• Make letter-sounds and have your children write the letter or letters that match the sounds.

• Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words (for example, if the letters "p-e-n" spell "pen," how do you spell "hen"?).

• Write letters on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your children say the sounds (for example, the /d/ sound for the letter "d").

• Teach your children to match the letters in their names with the sounds in their names.

• Point out words that begin with the same letter as your children's names (for example, "John" and "jump"). Talk about how the beginning sounds of the words are alike.

• Use alphabet books and guessing games to give your children practice in matching letters and sounds. A good example is the game, "I am thinking of something that starts with /t/.

• Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your children reach into the bag and take out letters. Have them say the sounds that match the letters.

• Take a letter and hide it in your hand. Let your children guess in which hand is the letter. Then show the letter and have your children say the letter name and make the sound (for example, the letter "m" matches the /m/ sound as in "man").
• Make letter-sounds and ask your children to draw the matching letters in cornmeal or sand.

• Take egg cartons and put a paper letter in each slot until you have all the letters of the alphabet in order. Say letter-sounds and ask your children to pick out the letters that match those sounds.

Seven: Children have opportunities to learn decoding strategies.

Children can use what they know about letter-sound matches to decode (figure out) written words. They can do this by saying the sounds of the letters and by smoothly putting the sounds together (blending) to make words. Being able to decode words helps children to read new words on their own. Good readers learn to decode so quickly and easily that they do not have to use pictures to help them figure out words and what they mean.

Helping your children at home . . .

• As you and your children look at a new word, touch each letter, and say the sound, moving from left to right through the word (for example, say the sounds /s/ /u/ /n/ and blend the sounds to make "sun"). Begin with short, easy words such as "hop," "mat," or "cat."

• Play games: Write words on cards and place the cards upside down in a stack. Take turns choosing a card and blending the sounds to form the word seen on the card. Use the word in a sentence.

• Write words on pieces of paper and hide them throughout the house. Have your children go on a treasure hunt looking for the words. As they find the pieces of paper, have them blend the sounds of the words. Reward your children with a treat.

• Take packaged and canned goods from the kitchen and have your children sound out words on the labels, such as "corn," "bread," and "beans."

• Have your children sound out words on your grocery list.

Eight: Children have opportunities to write and relate their writing to spelling and reading.

As children learn some letter-sound matches and start to read, they begin to write words and sentences. Seeing how words are spelled helps children in reading and
writing. In the early grades, reading and spelling are learned together. As children become better readers, formal spelling lessons are helpful.

**Helping your children at home . . .**

- Children can learn to spell some words by sounding out each letter. Short, simple words are best to learn in the beginning. Encourage your children to write stories and to spell words using the sounds the letters make.

- Make a puzzle word by writing a word on paper and cutting the letters apart. Magnetic and felt letters can also be used for this activity. Mix the letters and have your children spell the word by putting the letters in order.

- Say a word and have your children repeat the word. Then have them write the letters that match the sounds in the word.

- Point out that some words are similar. Talk about how "hop" is similar to "top," "cop," and "mop." Ask your children to say words that are similar to "fun," "man," "pay," and "pin."

- Ask your children to draw a picture of a family activity. Have them write a sentence about it below the picture. Encourage your children to say the sentence and write letters to match the sounds in each word. Then have them read what they wrote.

- Have your children cut a picture from an old magazine and write a story about the picture.

- Tell your children a story and have them write their own ending for it.

- Have your children write letters and thank-you notes to friends and relatives.

- As your children progress, help them learn the correct spelling of the words they write.

- Say a word and have your children repeat the word. Then have them write the letters that match the sounds in the word.

**Nine: Children have opportunities to practice accurate and fluent reading in decodable stories.**

Stories that have words made up of the letter-sound matches children are learning are called decodable stories. These stories can give children practice in what they are learning about letters and sounds. As children learn to read fluently, they are more easily able to comprehend (understand) what they are reading.
**Helping your children at home . . .**

**Practice**

- Ask your children’s teachers how you can help your children practice at home what they are learning at school.

- As you read with your children, show them that reading aloud should sound like talking.

- If your children are decoding the words in a sentence slowly, word by word, have them reread the sentence to make the reading sound like talking. This gives them practice in reading the new words and helps them understand the meaning of the sentence.

- If your children make a mistake in reading a word, stop their reading and point out the word they missed. You may want to help them read the word correctly. When they come to the end of the sentence, have them reread it to make the reading sound like talking. If they make many mistakes, the book they are reading may be too difficult. Try another book.

**Other Activities**

- As you listen to your children read, give them praise and encouragement.

- Post on the refrigerator or home bulletin board a list of the books and stories your children have read.

- When your children have finished reading a book, have them read it to another family member or friend.

- Make audio or video tapes of your children reading and send them to their grandparents or other family members.

**Ten: Children have opportunities to read and comprehend a wide assortment of books and other texts.**

As children become fluent readers, they will begin to read and comprehend more complex books and stories. Children become excited about reading. They enjoy reading all kinds of books, stories, newspapers, and magazines by themselves. Having books at home for children to read is important. Classroom and school libraries must offer children many kinds of reading materials; some should be easy to read while others should be more difficult. Children should be able to bring books home for reading with family members.
Helping your children at home . . .

- Encourage your children to read books and other materials related to their interests or hobbies.

- Have your children read game instructions, recipe directions, comic books, catalogs, toy advertisements, and children's magazines.

- Make sure each of your children has a comfortable, quiet spot for reading.

- When your children finish reading a book or story, find time for them to tell you and other family members about it.

- Set aside a special time during the week for everyone in the family to read. Turn off the television and enjoy the quiet. This lets your children know that reading is important and pleasurable for everyone in the family.

Eleven: Children have opportunities to develop and comprehend new vocabulary through wide reading and direct vocabulary instruction.

Learning the meanings of new words (vocabulary) helps children to read more complex books and stories and to learn wonderful new things. Children learn new words by being read to and by reading on their own; the more children read, the more words they are likely to know. Children also learn words through lessons that focus on the meanings of words and how the words are used in written materials. When children write stories, they often use their new words.

Helping your children at home...

- Select many kinds of books, stories, and other printed material to read to your children. Also, help them choose different types of books and stories to read on their own.

- Talk with your children about daily events, about events that have happened in the past, and about plans for the future. Every once in a while, use a "hard" word and discuss the meaning of that word.

- Have your children keep a list of new words they have learned. Ask them to listen for new words as people talk. Have your children find new words in newspapers, books, catalogs, and magazines. Discuss the meanings of the new words with your children and have them add these words to their list.

- Give your children a word that is found in other words (for example, "grow" is found in "growing" and "growth"). Ask them to name other words that are related. You can call this group of words a "word family." Have your children make a
book of word families by writing words from the same family on a page and by
drawing pictures about the words. Clip or staple together several pages of word
families and pictures to form a book.

• After talking about a new word and its meaning, ask your children to write their
own sentences using the word.

Twelve: Children have opportunities to learn and apply comprehension
strategies as they reflect upon and think critically about what they read.

Children who identify quickly and correctly most of the words in the books that they
are reading usually comprehend what they are reading. However, comprehension
involves more than just reading the words; it involves understanding, thinking, and
often learning something new. The more children know about what they are reading,
the more likely they are to comprehend what they are reading.

New information, ideas, and vocabulary learned from reading are added to children’s
store of knowledge. Children benefit from comprehension activities such as talking
about what they have read, discussing the meanings of new words, and comparing
one story with another. As children start reading more complex books in science and
social studies, they may learn some specific comprehension strategies.

Helping your children at home . . .

• As you read a book with your children, ask them questions about the book’s
characters, places, and events.

• When returning to a story, have your children talk about what they have already
read.

• Have your children read a new story; then ask them to tell you the story in their
own words. Have them tell the story in the order in which it happened.

• Talk about any new words your children have read in a story. Ask them to make
up sentences with the new words and have them write out the sentences. Then
post the best sentences on the refrigerator or on a bulletin board. Encourage
your children to use the words in other situations.

• As you read together, but before you come to the end of the story, ask your
children to tell how they think the story will end or how they think the problems in
the story could be solved.

• Talk with your children about how the books they are reading are similar to other
books they have read. Ask your children to tell you things they have done that
are similar to the events in the story.