



Children's Development in Early Reading and Writing

Guide for Parents

Adapted from a joint position statement of the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, July 1998

Continuum of Children’s Development in Early Reading and Writing

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**Phase 1
Awareness and exploration**

Goals for preschool

Children explore their environment and build the foundations for learning to read and write

Children can:

- Enjoy listening to and discussing story-books
- Understand that print carries a message
- Engage in reading and writing attempts
- Identify labels and signs in their environment
- Participate in rhyming games
- Identify some letters and make some letter-sound matches
- Use known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language (especially meaningful words like their name and phrases such as “I love you”)

Parents and family members can:

- Talk with children, engage them in conversation, gives names of things, show interest in what a child says
- Read and reread stories with predictable text to children
- Encourage children to recount experiences and describe ideas and events that are important to them
- Visit the library regularly
- Provide opportunities for children to draw and print, using markers, crayons, and pencils

Teachers will:

- Share books with children, including Big Books, and model reading behaviors
- Talk about letters by name and sounds
- Establish a literacy-rich environment
- Reread favorite stories
- Engage children in language games
- Promote literacy-related play activities
- Encourage children to experiment with writing

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Phase 2

Experimental reading and writing

Goals for kindergarten

Children develop basic concepts of print and begin to engage in and experiment with reading and writing

Kindergartners can:	Teachers will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy being read to and themselves retell simple narrative stories or informational texts • Use descriptive language to explain and explore • Recognize letters and letter-sound matches • Show familiarity with rhyming and beginning sounds • Understand left-to-right and top-to-bottom orientation and familiar concepts of print • Match spoken words with written ones • Begin to write letters of the alphabet and some high-frequency words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children to talk about reading and writing experiences • Provide many opportunities for children to explore and identify sound-symbol relationships in meaningful contexts • Help children to segment spoken words into individual sounds and blend the sounds into whole words (for example, by slowly writing a word and saying its sound) • Frequently read interesting and conceptually rich stories to children • Provide daily opportunities for children to write • Help children build a sight vocabulary • Create a literacy-rich environment for children to engage independently in reading and writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read daily and reread narrative and informational stories to children • Encourage children's attempts at reading and writing • Allow children to participate in activities that involve writing and reading (for example, cooking, making grocery lists) • Play games that involve specific directions (such as "Simon Says") • Have conversations with children during mealtimes and throughout the day 	

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Phase 3 Early reading and writing

Goals for first grade

Children begin to read simple stories and can write about a topic that is meaningful to them

First-graders can:

- Read and retell familiar stories
- Use strategies (rereading, predicting, questioning, contextualizing) when comprehension breaks down
- Use reading and writing for various purposes on their own initiative
- Orally read with reasonable fluency
- Use letter-sound associations, word parts, and context to identify new words
- Identify an increasing number of words by sight
- Sound out and represent all substantial sounds in spelling a word
- Write about topics that are personally meaningful
- Attempt to use some punctuation and capitalization

Parents and family members can:

- Talk about favorite storybooks
- Read to children and encourage them to read back
- Suggest that children write to friends and relatives
- Bring to a parent-teacher conference evidence of what a child can do in writing and reading
- Encourage children to share what they have learned about their writing and reading

Teachers will:

- Support the development of vocabulary by reading daily to the children, transcribing their language, and selecting materials that expand children's knowledge and language development
- Model strategies and provide practice of identifying unknown words
- Give children opportunities for independent reading and writing practice
- Read, write, and discuss a range of different text types (poems, informational books)
- Introduce new words and teach strategies for learning to spell new words
- Demonstrate and model strategies to use when comprehension breaks down
- Help children build lists of commonly used words from their reading and writing

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Phase 4

Transitional reading and writing

Goals for second grade

Children begin to read more fluently and write various text forms using simple and more complex sentences

Second-graders can:

- Read with greater fluency
- Use strategies more efficiently (rereading, questioning, and so on) when comprehension breaks down
- Use word identification strategies with greater facility to unlock unknown words
- Identify an increasing number of words by sight
- Write about a range of topics to suit different audiences
- Use common letter patterns and critical features to spell words
- Punctuate simple sentences correctly and proofread their own work
- Spend time reading daily and use reading to research topics

Parents and family members can:

- Continue to read to children and encourage them to read back
- Engage children in activities that require reading and writing
- Become involved in school activities
- Show children interest in their learning by displaying their written work
- Visit the library regularly
- Support children's specific hobby or interest with reading materials and references

Teachers will:

- Create a climate that fosters analytics, evaluative, and reflective thinking
- Teach children to write in multiple forms (stories, information, poems)
- Ensure that children read a range of texts for a variety of purposes
- Teach revising, editing, and proofreading skills
- Teach strategies for spelling new and difficult words
- Model enjoyment of reading

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**Phase 5
Independent and productive reading and writing**

Goals for third grade

Children continue to extend and refine their reading and writing to suit varying purposes and audiences

Third-graders can:

- Read fluently and enjoy reading
- Use a range of strategies when drawing meaning from the text
- Use word identification strategies appropriately and automatically when encountering unknown words
- Recognize and discuss elements of different text structures
- Make critical connections between texts
- Write expressively in many different forms (stories, poems, reports)
- Use a rich variety of vocabulary and sentences appropriate to text forms
- Revise and edit their own writing during and after composing
- Spell words correctly in final writing drafts

Parents and family members can:

- Continue to support children's learning and interest by visiting the library and bookstores with them
- Find ways to highlight children's progress in reading and writing
- Stay in regular contact with children's teachers about activities and progress in reading and writing
- Encourage children to use and enjoy print for many purposes (such as recipes, directions, games, and sports)
- Build a love of language in all its forms and engage children in conversation

Teachers will:

- Provide opportunities daily for children to read, examine, and critically evaluate narrative and expository texts
- Continue to create a climate that fosters critical reading and personal response
- Teach children to examine ideas in texts
- Encourage children to use writing as a tool for thinking and learning
- Extend children's knowledge of the correct use of writing conventions
- Emphasize the importance of correct spelling in finished written products
- Create a climate that engages all children as a community of literacy learners