

K-3 At-Home Activities to Support Students' Reading Development

The National Reading Panel (2000) identified five key critical areas for effective reading instruction. This guide will help you help your child get better at each of the literacy skills so they can become great readers and writers. You have an important role in this process. This guide gives you some ideas for activities to do with your child at home to help them become better readers. The ideas include detailed descriptions for evidence-based activities and supports as well as a template for practice at home. *In addition, to learn more about the critical areas of reading instruction, use the QR codes.*



Phonemic Awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate the individual sounds within words. This skill falls under the larger umbrella of **phonological awareness**, which is the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of spoken words.



Syllable Awareness

- **Use toys or objects around the house** or what you see while driving to sort the number of syllables in words. Count using chin drops or by clapping.
- **Clap syllables in multisyllabic, or longer, words** as you read a book.

Word Family Awareness

- **Read books that rhyme** and ask for additional rhyming words.

Speech Sound (Phoneme) Awareness

- **Count the number of and say the sounds in words.** Use your fingers to count the number of sounds. If using objects around the house, then sort them by the number of sounds. For example, a toy train has four sounds (t-r-ai-n), and a toy boat has three sounds (b-oa-t). They would be in two different piles.
- **Sort toys, food items, or objects that have the same beginning, middle, and ending sounds.** Ask your child to play I Spy and bring you items around the house with the sound /t/. They might bring you or point to trains, toothbrushes, etc.

Language develops in authentic contexts when families discuss processes, describe steps, and use precise and specific vocabulary. Examples of how talking is teaching in the following contexts are linked:

- **Cooking or Baking**
 - **Ask your child to bring you specific ingredients.** Ask how many syllables are in each ingredient. Break apart the sounds in the words. For example, there are six sounds in brownies: b-r-ow-n-ie-s.
- **Shopping**
 - **As you shop, ask your child to find items** that begin with a certain letter or sound. Turn shopping into a fun game of I Spy. For example, I spy a yellow fruit that starts with the letter or I spy a meat that starts with the /ch/ sound.
 - **Ask how many sounds are in the items you buy.**



Phonics is the ability to read, spell, and write because one can distinguish and apply letter-sound correspondences to read and sound out words.



Linking letter sounds and names is important for reading and spelling.

- **Ask your child to point to a specific letters in the books and tell you the sounds.**
- **Lay out the letter tiles.** Ask your child to show you the letter that says a sound. For example, hand me the letter that sounds like /p/.

Word chains or ladders help your child listen for a single sound that changes in each word.

- An example of a chain is: Say bat. Let's write bat.
- Now say pat. What sound did I change? I changed the /b/ sound to a /p/ sound. Change the letter to letter <p>.
- Now, change the /p/ sound to the /m/ sound. What is my new word? Mat. Change the letter <p> to the letter <m>.

Sound out words by touching under the letters and asking your child to tell you the sound they make. Alternatively, you can say the sound and your child can echo the sound back to you. Next, ask your child to repeat the sounds you just read by touching under the letters and saying the sounds. Blend the sounds together and repeat the word. Reread the sentence the word fell within.

Spelling with sound boxes

- **Say the word.** Your child should repeat the word. (Say wet. Wet.)
- **Tap the sounds** in the word together. Touch the dots under each sound box for every sound you repeat. (/w/ /e/ /t/ How many sounds? 3.)
- **Repeat each sound** and replace it with its corresponding letter. (What's the first sound in wet? /w/. What spells /w/? <w>. Yes, touch the /w/ dot and write <w> in the box above it. Repeat for each remaining letter-sound correspondence.)
- **Ask your child** to tap out the sounds then reread the whole word to you.



Fluency is the ability to read accurately with expression at a pace that is easily understood and allows the reader to make meaning.



- **Rereading books helps support building fluency and automaticity.**
- **Model fluent reading with your child.** Read with expression. Read at a pace they can understand. Be sure to read engaging books across genres.
- **Echo reading occurs when you read a sentence or small segment of the book and your child repeats that same sentence or segment back to you.** Gently correct your child if they make a mistake. Ask them to repeat the word and reread the sentence.
- **Partner reading occurs when you take turns reading with you child.** Gently correct your child if they make a mistake. Ask them to repeat the word and reread the sentence.



Comprehension is the ability to make meaning from the text.



- **Before you read a book, talk to your child about the topic to build background knowledge.** Brief videos about the topic and quickly showing few images or pictures can help visualize and activate prior learning and knowledge. Ask what they already know about the topic of the book.
- **Talking about the events or information in a book helps your child recall the story or new facts.** Pause while reading to ask questions and check for understanding.
 - In fiction books, stop after each page, event, or chapter. Ask them to retell.
 - In nonfiction books, ask questions after each heading or page. Ask them to share the gist or main idea.
- **While you cook or bake, use sequence words** like first, next, then, and last as you cook or bake. Write the recipe and sequence together.



Vocabulary can be described as the words one either knows when heard and/or read. Vocabulary develops on a continuum, becoming more precise and descriptive.



- **Use precise and interesting vocabulary.** Use synonyms or words with similar meanings to expand their vocabulary. For example, you may compliment your child for their clean room. Consider calling their room tidy, neat, or spotless, all of which share the meaning of clean.
- **Language develops in authentic contexts** when families discuss processes, describe steps, and use precise and specific vocabulary.

Cooking or Baking

- **While cooking or baking, use the precise names** for the ingredients. Ask your child to use their senses to describe the ingredients.
- **While eating, use descriptive words** to ask how their food tastes.

Shopping

- **Make a list with your child.** Sort and write the items by category. As you shop, your child can read the list or predict based on the aisle what is next to find.
- **While shopping, use descriptive words** to describe the ingredients.

- **Talking about new words while reading helps your child relate the meaning to the context of the text.**
 - **Choose a book to read with your child.** Read through the book on your own and pick out 5-10 new words. Explain them to your child before reading. Use simple definitions that are relatable to your child. Use the pictures in the book to explain the word. Read the book to your child. Briefly explain the meanings of the words again while you read.



National Reading Panel (U.S.) & National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (U.S.). (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read : an evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

