



LITERACY SKILLS FOR TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Preschool Literacy Skills

Literacy development starts before children enter primary school, with preschool being a key time for building foundational skills. These early literacy skills prepare children for reading once they begin school. This includes:

- Understanding the structure of words (syllables and sounds)
- Knowing how books are organized and their various features (front cover, title, text)
- Recognizing the alphabet and the sounds associated with each letter

School Aged Literacy Skills

Children begin learning to read, write, and spell when they start primary school. Reading helps them recognize words (decode) and understand what they are reading (comprehend). Research shows that explicit teaching is essential for children to learn the following:

- Letters represent different sounds and letter-sound patterns, which is called phonics.
- How to identify sounds in words (for example, the first sound in “dog” is /d/), blend sounds together (“d-o-g” spells “dog”), break words into individual sounds (“jump” is spelled “j-u-m-p”), and manipulate sounds in words (changing “bed” to “bad”). This is known as phonemic awareness.
- How to read accurately and fluently.
- How to use a broad range of words.
- Grammar and sentence structure.
- How to understand and interpret what they read.
- Background knowledge about a topic.



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Early Literacy Skills to practice for transition to school

- Phonological Awareness - The ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken words, including rhyming, syllables, and individual sounds (phonemes).
- Phonemic Awareness - A more specific subset of phonological awareness, focusing on the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in words.
- Letter Recognition - The ability to identify and name letters of the alphabet, as well as understanding the relationship between letters and their corresponding sounds (letter-sound correspondence).
- Print Awareness - Understanding how print works, including recognizing that print carries meaning, reading from left to right, and understanding the concepts of a word, sentence, and paragraph.
- Vocabulary Development - Learning and understanding words, their meanings, and how to use them in different contexts.
- Listening Comprehension - The ability to understand and make sense of spoken language, which is crucial for understanding stories, instructions, and conversations.
- Storytelling and Narrative Skills - The ability to understand the structure of stories (beginning, middle, end) and to retell stories or events in a coherent manner.
- Writing Skills - Early writing skills, such as holding a pencil, drawing shapes, writing letters, and eventually forming words and sentences.
- Reading Comprehension - The ability to understand and interpret the meaning of texts, starting with simple stories and progressing to more complex ideas as children grow.
- Engagement with Books - Developing an interest in books, understanding the role of reading for enjoyment and learning, and recognizing the various parts of a book (cover, title, pages).



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Tips for practicing literacy skills at home:

- Read together daily – Make reading a regular activity, choosing a variety of books to build vocabulary and comprehension skills.
- Talk about stories – After reading, discuss the story, characters, and events to enhance understanding and encourage critical thinking.
- Point out words in the environment – Label objects around the house or look for words outside (e.g., street signs, store names) to practice recognizing words.
- Play with sounds – Engage in fun activities that focus on rhyming, identifying the first sound in words, and blending sounds together.
- Use alphabet games – Incorporate games or apps that teach letter names and sounds through playful activities.
- Encourage writing – Let children practice writing letters, their name, or simple words using paper, chalk, or a whiteboard.
- Tell stories – Encourage children to create and tell their own stories, which helps build language and narrative skills.
- Read aloud to them – Reading aloud helps develop listening, vocabulary, and comprehension skills.
- Make a reading routine – Set aside a quiet time each day for reading and writing activities.
- Use interactive books – Choose books with flaps, textures, or pictures that children can touch and explore to make reading more engaging.

Information sourced from the resources below:

- Literacy and communication. (n.d.). Available at: <https://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/CommunicationHub/Fact-Sheets/Literacy%20and%20communication%20FINAL.pdf>
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- Share, D.L., 2008. *Phonological awareness and the acquisition of literacy: A review of the literature*. *Educational Psychology Review*, 20(2), pp. 175-194.