Parent Guide to Early Reading Skills

Kindergarten to Grade 3
Help Your Child Master Sounds, Letters and Smooth Reading

This parent guide of sample ideas was designed to help you grow your child into a strong reader. You don’t have to be a teacher or a reading specialist. But start as early as you can, even before kindergarten begins, and practice often. And don’t hold back from making it fun.

If you want help or more ideas, visit Readby4th.org and ask your child’s teacher to partner directly with you to support your child’s reading adventure.

Kindergarten

**Sounds**  **“Phonological Awareness”**

**CHILD CAN:**
2. Say words that rhyme. Hears “hop” and says words like: stop, shop, cop. Hears “day” and says words like: say, play, sleigh.
3. Hear a word and make just the first sound of that word. Hears “pup” and then makes the sound /p/. Hears “hamburger” and makes the sound /h/.
4. Hear a word and make just the last sound of that word. Hears “bad” and then makes the sound of /d/. Hears “drum” and then makes the sound of /m/.
5. Hear a simple three-letter word, and make just the middle sound. Hears “bad” and then makes the sound of /a/. Hears “hop” and then makes the sound of /o/.

**Letters and Words**  **“Phonics”**

**CHILD CAN:**
1. Recognize and name all of the letters.
2. Write all of the capital and lower-case letters.
3. Read and spell simple three-letter, short-vowel words (by the end of the kindergarten school year). Reads and spells words, like: cat, met, sip, hop, and hug.
4. Read and spell simple long-vowel words (by the end of the kindergarten school year). Reads and spells words like: rake, bite, and cute.
5. Say the sound each letter makes. Adult points to, or writes, a letter and child makes the sound of the letter (including short and long vowel sounds).
6. Read kindergarten-level high-frequency sight words that may not follow rules like: I, the, and was.

Grade 1

**Sounds**  **“Phonological Awareness”**

**CHILD CAN:**
2. Hear the difference between short- and long-vowel sounds. Child can say:
   - Short “a” vowel sound in cap and the long “a” vowel sound in cape
   - Short “e” vowel sound in pet and the long “e” vowel sound in meat
   - Short “i” vowel sound in bit and the long “i” vowel sound in light
   - Short “o” vowel sound in hop and the long “o” vowel sound in snow
   - Short “u” vowel sound in up and the long “u” vowel sound in cube
3. Put sounds together to make a word. Child can hear:
   - Three separate sounds, /p/ /i/ /g/, and says “pig.”
   - Three separate sounds, /ch/ /o/ /p/, and says “chop.”
   - Four separate sounds, /s/ /l/ /i/ /p/, and says “slip.”
4. Make the middle sound in words with three sounds. Hears “lap”, and then says the short-vowel sound /a/. Hears “rope” and says the long-vowel sound /o/.

**Letters and Words**  **“Phonics”**

**CHILD CAN:**
1. Read and spell words with digraphs (two letters with one sound), such as: wh, th, sh, ch, ck. Sample words with digraphs: chin, check, thud, thick, ship, which.
2. Read and spell words with initial blends (two consonants next to each other that make two sounds), such as: slip, drag, flop, step, trip, grin, stun.
3. Read and spell long-vowel words with digraphs and initial blends, such as: plate, chime, spoke, shine, she, cry, and fly.
4. Read words with double vowels, such as: rain, meet, meat, read, and heat.
5. Read and spell two-syllable words with short-vowel sounds, such as: rabbit, bandit, and suntan.
6. Read first-grade-level, high-frequency sight words that may not follow rules like: what, could, and said.
Grade 2

**Letters and Words**

**“Phonics”**

**CHILD CAN:**

1. Use a final “e” to make the vowel sound long, adding a final “e” to change words, such as: cap/cape; fin/fine; cut/cute; and not/note.
2. Read two-syllable words with long vowels, such as: baby, pancake, happy, combine, and refine.
3. Read and write common contractions, for example in rewriting the following words as contractions: “can not” to “can’t” and “I have” to “I’ve.”
4. Read words with common prefixes (beginning of word) and suffixes (end of word), such as:
   - Prefixes: re (recycle, replay, remind); dis (dislike, disrupt, disappoint); un (unpack, unhappy, undo); and pre (preheat, preview, premade)
   - Suffixes: s, es (rabbits, boxes, brushes); ed (jumped, cried, folded); and ing (ringing, reminding, standing)
5. Read second-grade-level, high-frequency sight words that may not follow rules like: know, through, and because.

**Smooth Reading**

**“Fluency”**

**CHILD CAN:**

1. Read two-syllable words with long vowels, such as: baby, pancake, happy, combine, and refine.
2. Read and write common contractions, for example in rewriting the following words as contractions: “can not” to “can’t” and “I have” to “I’ve.”
3. Read words with common prefixes (beginning of word) and suffixes (end of word), such as:
   - Prefixes: re (recycle, replay, remind); dis (dislike, disrupt, disappoint); un (unpack, unhappy, undo); and pre (preheat, preview, premade)
   - Suffixes: s, es (rabbits, boxes, brushes); ed (jumped, cried, folded); and ing (ringing, reminding, standing)
4. Read second-grade-level, high-frequency sight words that may not follow rules like: know, through, and because.

Grade 3

**Letters and Words**

**“Phonics”**

**CHILD CAN:**

1. Read and understand words with common prefixes (beginning of word) and suffixes (end of word), such as:
   - Prefixes: im (impossible, impression, immature); mis (mistake, misrepresent, misread) and il (illustrate, illogical).
   - Suffixes: ly (lovely, happily, gladly); er, or (player, writer, visitor); ion (champion, action, vacation); able (dependable, readable, reasonable); ible (visible, audible); and ment (department, amazement, compartment).
2. Read multisyllable words that increase in length, such as:
   - Compound words: playground, handshake, snowman, and highway.
   - Two-syllable words: rabbit, tiger, and donkey.
   - Three-syllable words: misconduct, rectangle, and gentleman.
3. Read third-grade-level, high-frequency sight words that may not follow rules like: thought, enough, and together.

**ALL CHILDREN AT EVERY GRADE LEVEL CAN:**

- Find a book that they enjoy and can easily read most (95%) of the words.
- Practice reading aloud the same book with expression, and saying the words correctly.
- Read aloud with a speaking voice.
- Read a lot of books on different topics.
- Enjoy adults reading books to them.

For more playful learning ideas and family resources that encourage early literacy, visit ReadingPromise.org.

YOUR CHILD’S LOVE OF READING BEGINS WITH YOU.

- Team up with teachers. Bring this flyer to your parent meeting.
- Help your child get to school every day on time. Reading is taught in the morning.