



Integrating Play Into Literacy Instruction Strategies for Your Classroom

About the Video

This video shows how to implement research-based literacy practices through play-based learning. In the video, preschool and kindergarten teachers use play-based learning in their classrooms to teach phonics, reading comprehension, and more. Teachers also address common barriers to implementing play-based learning. In addition, the video includes an overview of play-based learning; a discussion of the benefits of play-based learning; and interviews with teachers, researchers, and literacy experts.

Intended Audience

This video is intended for both novice and experienced teachers interested in developing their capacity to implement play-based learning, as well as for teachers interested in integrating play-based learning into their literacy curriculum even if their classroom is not a fully play-based program. The video also is intended for education leaders who would like to learn more about how to implement play-based learning in their state, district, or school.

Expert and Teacher Tips for Integrating Play-Based Learning Into Literacy

- Model how to do the play-based activity for your students.
- Use the resources available in your classroom.
- Check out what other teachers are doing and share ideas.
- Anchor play-based learning in state learning standards.
- Assess student progress toward meeting learning objectives.
- Start slow.
- Take chances, trust your students, and follow their lead.

Glossary

- **Play-based learning:** Learning in which students construct knowledge as they explore, experiment, discover, and solve problems.¹ This learning is intentional, standards aligned, and developmentally appropriate.
- **Social-emotional learning:** The process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.²

Play-based learning helps bring literacy concepts to life through having children engage and tell their own stories and connecting it to their community, their families, their own experiences.

– Sarah Caverly, PhD, Principal Researcher,
American Institutes for Research



Scan the QR code to
watch the video.

1 Ebbeck, M., Yim, H. Y. B., & Lee, L. W. M. (2013). [Teaching early years: Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment](#). In D. Pendergast & S. Garvis (Eds.), *Play-based learning*. Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

2 Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (n.d.). [SEL resources during COVID-19](#)

Referenced in the video: Research-based recommendations from the What Works Clearinghouse practice guides

[Institute of Education Sciences \[IES\] Educator's Practice Guide—Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#)

[IES Educator's Practice Guide—Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#)

Develop students' awareness of the segments of sound in speech and how they link to letters:

- Teach students to recognize and manipulate segments of sound in speech.
- Teach students letter–sound relations.
- Use word-building and other activities to link students' knowledge of letter–sound relationships with phonemic awareness.

Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words:

- Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound–spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation.
- Instruct students in common sound–spelling patterns.
- Teach students to recognize common word parts.
- Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.
- Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.
- Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.

Teach students to identify and use the organizational structure of the text to comprehend, learn, and remember content:

- Explain how to identify and connect the parts of narrative texts.
- Provide instruction on common structures of informational texts.

Teach students how to use reading comprehension strategies:

- Teach students how to use several research-based reading comprehension strategies.
- Teach reading comprehension strategies individually or in combination.
- Teach reading comprehension strategies by using a gradual release of responsibility.

For More Information

- To learn more about the practices shown in this video, review the IES What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Educator's Practice Guides: [Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#) and [Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#).
- To learn more about research-based practices for literacy, visit the [WWC website](#).
- To learn more about play-based learning, watch the REL Midwest documentary [Kindergarten: Where Play and Learning Can Meet](#).

About REL Midwest

REL Midwest is part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. REL Midwest works in partnership with practitioners in seven Midwest states to conduct applied research and provide training, coaching, and technical support to create a more evidence-based education system. To learn more, visit the [REL Midwest website](#) and follow [@RELMidwest on Twitter](#).

Foundational Skills to Support Reading



Improving Reading Comprehension



WWC website



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