

A Resource for Parents and Caring Adults of Children in Grades K-3

# Supporting Your Child’s Reading at Home

## Reading Starts at Home

Learning to read begins at home through everyday interactions between children and the adults who care for them—long before children start school. Playing, talking, listening, responding, sharing experiences, and reading together all help build early literacy. When parents and caregivers make the most of these everyday interactions, they support strong reading skills and set children up for success.



## Building Strong Readers

Learning to read takes time and practice. Children develop **foundational reading skills** in grades K-3, including:

- Developing Language
- Linking Sounds to Letters
- Blending Letters, Recognizing and Reading Words
- Reading for Understanding

These skills work together to help children become confident readers who understand and enjoy what they read.

## How to Use This Resource

This resource offers simple ways to support your child’s reading at home. It is organized around the four foundational reading skills. Each section describes what the skill is, why it matters, how it develops, and easy activities to try at home.

To get started, click on the foundational reading skill you want to learn more about.

Kindergarten

Grade 1

Grade 2

Grade 3

Developing Language

Linking Sounds to Letters

Blending Letters, Recognizing and Reading Words

Reading for Understanding

Children build these skills across K-3. Shading shows the shifts in focus for each skill.

This resource is based on the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide, [Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade](#). Information is drawn from [Supporting Your Child’s Reading at Home](#), a family-friendly website with hands-on activities and videos.

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## Supporting Your Child's Reading at Home

### References

- Foorman, B., Beyler, N., Borradaile, K., Coyne, M., Denton, C. A., Dimino, J., Furgeson, J., Hayes, L., Henke, J., Justice, L., Keating, B., Lewis, W., Sattar, S., Streke, A., Wagner, R., & Wissel, S. (2016). *Foundational skills to support reading for understanding in kindergarten through 3rd grade* (NCEE 2016-4008). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from the NCEE website: <http://whatworks.ed.gov>
- Kosanovich, M., Phillips, B., & Willis, K. (2020). *Professional Learning Community: Emergent literacy-modules 1- 4: Print knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and oral language* (REL 2020-021). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/use-work/resource-library/resource/other-resource/professional-learning-community-emergent-literacy-0>
- Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. (2020, January). *Supporting your child's reading at home*. Institute of Education Sciences. <https://ies.ed.gov/use-work/resource-library/resource/other-resource/supporting-your-childs-reading-home>

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### Additional Free Resources

For more activities and ideas to support your child's foundational reading skills at home, scan the QR codes or click on the links below to visit these websites:

**Florida Center for  
Reading Research  
Student Center  
Activities**

[https://tinyurl.com/  
FCRRSCA](https://tinyurl.com/FCRRSCA)



**Florida Center for  
Reading Research:  
The Academy Courses  
for Families**

[https://tinyurl.com/  
FCRRAcademyFam](https://tinyurl.com/FCRRAcademyFam)



**PBS Kids for Parents:  
Literacy**

[https://tinyurl.com/  
LiteracyPBS](https://tinyurl.com/LiteracyPBS)



**Reading Rockets  
Literacy at Home  
Resources**

[https://tinyurl.com/  
RocketsHome](https://tinyurl.com/RocketsHome)



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## Developing Language

### What is developing language?

Language is how we understand and use words to communicate—through speaking and listening. Language:

- Is the foundation that supports reading
- Allows us to express and understand information, ideas, and feelings
- Includes listening, rules for putting words and sentences together, and what you say and how you say it

### Why does developing language matter?

Strong language skills make learning to read easier. The more language children hear and use, the better they understand what is read to them and what they read. Strong language skills help children:

- Understand stories
- Learn new words
- Think and talk about ideas

### How does language develop?

Children build oral language by interacting with caring adults. The amount and quality of talk they hear and use matters. Talking and listening help your child build their vocabulary (the words they understand and use) and strong language skills support reading. Children develop language through:

- Conversations
- Listening to and talking about stories
- Talking about experiences



Simple, everyday conversations can make a big difference in your child's language and reading success.

Children build these skills across K-3.

Kindergarten

Grade 1

Grade 2

Grade 3

Developing Language

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# Developing Language - Everyday Activities

## Talking With Your Child

### Talk.

- Talk about your day, places you go, and things you do together.
- Talk **EVERYWHERE**—like when you take a walk, fold laundry, do chores, ride in the car, etc.

**Ask open-ended questions** (need more than a yes/no answer).

- *Adult:* "What was your favorite part of the day?"
- *Child:* "Recess was the best because I went down the slide!"

**Follow up on your child’s ideas** to keep the conversation going.

- *Adult:* "Who did you play with?" "What did you do?" "How do you play that game?"

**Use complete sentences and add details using advanced words.**

- *Child:* "Yellow car!"
- *Adult:* "That is a bright yellow car that is moving quickly! Where do you think that person is going?"
- *Child:* "Butterfly!"
- *Adult:* "Yes, that is a monarch butterfly! What do you notice about her colorful wings?"

**Write together** about everyday life.

- Make grocery lists, label drawings, and write notes, cards, and chore lists.

## Talking While You Read

Read stories, picture books, and informational texts—anything your child is interested in. Talk about what you read and use **“CROWD”** to guide your questions:

**C - Completion** Ask your child to finish a sentence or phrase.

*The four stages of a butterfly are egg, caterpillar, \_\_\_\_\_, and butterfly.*

**R - Recall** Ask about what happened in the text.

*How does the caterpillar build a chrysalis?*

**O - Open-ended** Ask questions with more than one possible answer.

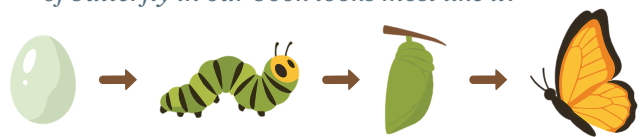
*What is happening in this picture?*

**W - Wh- questions** Ask who, what, where, when, and why questions.

*What does a caterpillar do after it hatches?*

**D - Distancing** Connect the text to your child’s life.

*Remember when we saw that butterfly? Which type of butterfly in our book looks most like it?*



## Watch and Try: Developing Language

Scan the QR codes or click on the links below to view these resources:

### CROWD Activity

<https://tinyurl.com/ActCROWD>



### CROWD Video

<https://tinyurl.com/ViCROWD>



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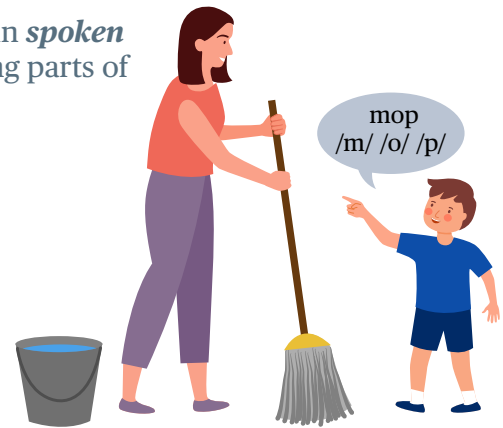
## Linking Sounds to Letters

### What is linking sounds to letters?

Linking sounds to letters means understanding that letters stand for sounds. For example, the letter *s* makes the /s/ sound. When a letter is between two forward slashes (/m/), say the letter’s sound, “mmmm”.

Children build this skill by hearing and playing with the sounds in *spoken* words before reading or writing. Sound awareness means hearing parts of words. For example:

- *Cupcake* → cup-cake (two words)
- *Picnic* → pic-nic (two parts, or syllables)
- *Fun* → /f/ /u/ /n/ (three sounds)
- *Mat* → first sound /m/, last sound /t/



### Why does linking sounds to letters matter?

Hearing individual sounds in words helps children connect those sounds to letters. If a child *hears* *sun* as /s/ /u/ /n/, then they can match those sounds to the letters **s-u-n** when they see the word in print. This helps children “sound out” words to read and use the same skills to spell.

- *f-i-n* → *fin*

### How does linking sounds to letters develop?

This skill grows in early childhood, kindergarten, and first grade—and it can be fun to practice!

Children build this skill through speaking and listening as they:

- Break apart compound words (*bathtub* → *bath-tub*)
- Hear parts of words (syllables: *ta-ble*)
- Notice rhyming words (*cat, bat, sat*)
- Hear individual sounds in words (*mud* → /m/ /u/ /d/)

As children *hear* individual sounds in *spoken* words, they begin to learn that letters stand for those sounds (like seeing *F* and saying /f/). All these skills work together to help children link sounds to letters for reading and writing.

Children build these skills across K-3. Shading shows the shifts in focus for each skill.

Kindergarten

Grade 1

Grade 2

Grade 3

Linking Sounds to Letters

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## Linking Sounds to Letters - Everyday Activities

### Play With Sounds

- Sing the ABC song while getting ready for your day.
- Sing silly songs during chores.
- Make silly sentences with words beginning with the same sound: *Leo the lion liked to lick a lot of lollipops.*
- Clap parts (syllables) of words (*nap - kin*).
- Make up rhymes using silly words (*fim, nim; sup, tup; ret, fet*).
- Take turns saying rhyming words (*snake, cake; bug, rug; goat, boat*).

- Ask for first and last sounds heard in a word (*short* → /sh/ ... /t/).
- Ask for each sound heard in a word (*pen* → /p/ /e/ /n/). Example words: *chair, cup, book, coat, road, sign, sky, light.*

### Practice Letters and Sounds

- Find letters on signs while in the car.
- Point to letters in print. Name the letter and its sound (use newspapers, magazines, or junk mail).
- Write letters while saying their sounds.

### Watch and Try: Linking Sounds to Letters

Scan the QR codes or click on the links below to view these resources:

**Letter-Naming and Letter-Sound Practice Using a Letter Arc Activity**

<https://tinyurl.com/LtrArcAct>



**Letter Naming Using a Letter Arc Video**

<https://tinyurl.com/NameArcVid>



**Letter-Sound Practice Using a Letter Arc Video**

<https://tinyurl.com/SoundArcVid>



**Step Up to Writing Words Activity**

<https://tinyurl.com/StepUpAct>



**Step Up to Writing Words Video**

<https://tinyurl.com/StepUpWrVid>



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## Blending Letters, Recognizing and Reading Words

### What is blending letters, recognizing and reading words?

Blending means putting letter sounds together to read a word.

**For example:** /f/ /i/ /sh/ → *fish*

Children start by blending sounds to read shorter words. As they grow, they use word parts and syllables to read longer words. Children also learn to recognize sound-spelling patterns in words, like:

- Word families (-at: *cat, bat, sat*)
- Common sound-spelling patterns (like *ch, sh, th*)
- Word parts (like *un-help-ful*)

### Why does blending letters, recognizing and reading words matter?

When children can blend, recognize word families, common sound-spelling patterns, and word parts, they can:

- Read new words using what they know
- Read words more quickly
- Spell words more easily
- Better understand what they read

### How does blending letters, recognizing and reading words develop?

Children build this skill over time as they:

- Learn letter sounds and blend them to read words
- Notice word families (like *-at, -an, -ig*)
- Recognize common sound-spelling patterns (like *ch, sh, th, ee, ai, ea*)
- Break words into syllables (part of a word with a vowel - a, e, i, o, u)
  - *cat* → (1)
  - *pic-nic* (2)
  - *yes-ter-day* (3)
- Break long words into meaningful parts (like *unhelpful* → *un - help - ful*)
- Practice common words often until they are automatic



Practice helps children read words quickly and confidently so they can focus on understanding.

Children build these skills across K-3. Shading shows the shifts in focus for each skill.

Kindergarten

Grade 1

Grade 2

Grade 3

Blending Letters, Recognizing and Reading Words

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## Blending Letters, Recognizing and Reading Words - Everyday Activities

### Practice Reading Words

- Read words in lists, flashcards, sentences, and books.
- Point to words while reading, if needed.

### When Your Child Gets Stuck

- Say the individual sounds in the word and blend them together.
- Break long words into parts, then put the parts together.
- Read the word or sentence, then have your child read what you read.

### Practice Common (High-Frequency) Words

- Show the word to your child: Ask your child to → read it → write it → read it again.

- Use flashcards and time how many words your child can read. Set aside tricky words to practice again. Aim to read more words correctly each time.

### Before Reading a Book

- Teach a few tricky words ahead of time: Say the word, explain it, then have your child read it.

### Break Longer Words Into Parts

- Circle parts you know (prefixes, suffixes, or other familiar parts).
- Underline the other vowels.
- Say each part.
- Blend the parts.
- Check that it makes sense by reading the whole sentence.
- **Example:** *undemanding* → unde-manding → *undemanding*

### Watch and Try: Blending Letters, Recognizing and Reading Words

Scan the QR codes or click on the links below to view these resources:

#### Blending With Letter Puzzles (Level 3) Activity

<https://tinyurl.com/BlendLetter>



#### Word Puzzles Video

<https://tinyurl.com/WordPuzVid>



#### Short and Long Vowel Sort Activity

<https://tinyurl.com/SLVowel>



#### Let's Read! Activity

<https://tinyurl.com/LetsReadAct>



#### Let's Read! Video

<https://tinyurl.com/LetsReadVid>



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## Reading for Understanding

### What is reading for understanding?

Reading for understanding means reading words correctly, smoothly, and with expression so your child can focus on meaning—not just figuring out each word.

### Why does reading for understanding matter?

When children read words correctly, smoothly, and with expression, they can:

- Focus on understanding the story or information
- Notice and fix mistakes when reading
- Enjoy what they read
- Become more confident readers



### How does reading for understanding develop?

Children build this skill over time with practice and support as they:

- Read out loud often to build accuracy, speed, and expression
- Listen to good reading (you model how reading should sound)
- Get help with tricky words by sounding them out or breaking them into parts
- Reread when something doesn't make sense
- Practice with books that are just right (not too easy or too hard)

With practice and support, children read more smoothly and can focus on understanding what they read.

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Children build these skills across K-3.

Kindergarten

| Grade 1

| Grade 2

| Grade 3

**Reading for Understanding**

A Resource for Parents and Caring Adults of Children in Grades K-3

## Reading for Understanding – Everyday Activities

### Reading With Your Child

**Read together every day.**

- Read aloud to your child.
- Show how reading sounds (smooth and with expression).
- Make reading a fun, shared time.

**Choose the right books**

- Pick books your child enjoys.
- Choose books that are not too easy or too hard.
- Connect books to your child’s interests.

**Support your child while reading.**

- Listen as your child reads out loud.
- Have your child point to words while reading.
- Help with tricky words by sounding them out or breaking them into parts.

**Encourage and support.**

- Praise effort and progress.
- Remind your child reading takes practice.
- Be patient and positive.

### Echo Reading

- Share a book (or use two copies).
- Read a sentence out loud.
- Have your child read the same sentence.
- Point to the words while reading (whoever is reading points).
- Repeat throughout the book.

### Read Together

- Sit together and share a book.
- Read the words out loud at the same time while your child points to the words.
- Use expression—match your voice to the story and punctuation.
- Encourage your child and celebrate their effort.

### How does my reading sound?

Record your child reading a short passage. Then listen together and ask:

- Did my reading sound smooth?
- Did I read at a talking pace?
- Did I use expression?

### Watch and Try: Reading For Understanding

Scan the QR codes or click on the links below to view these resources:

**When I Read to You,  
When You Read to Me  
Bookmark**

[https://tinyurl.com/  
ReadBookMar](https://tinyurl.com/ReadBookMar)



**Practice Reading Out  
Loud Video**

[https://tinyurl.com/  
ReadOLVid](https://tinyurl.com/ReadOLVid)



**Monitoring for  
Understanding  
Bookmark**

[https://tinyurl.com/  
MonBookMar](https://tinyurl.com/MonBookMar)



**Echo Reading Video**

[https://tinyurl.com/  
EchoRdVid](https://tinyurl.com/EchoRdVid)

