

Areas of Reading Development Parent Guide

Use this guide to track your child's reading progress and help provide clear, practical language to discuss your child's reading intervention at school.

Pre-Reading Skills



Area focus:

Early literacy foundations that prepare children to read.

Skills your child may be working on:

- Recognizing letter names
- Recognizing letter sounds
- Playing with sounds in words (for example, identifying the first, middle, or last sound in "cat")

This is called "phonemic awareness." A "phoneme" is an individual sound.

Signs of progress:

- Quicker recognition of letters and their sounds
- More confidence with sound-based activities
- Better ability to hear and talk about sounds in words

Example: What are the sounds in the word, "fun?"

 These skills often develop before reading words on the page, so while your child may not look like they're "reading" yet, it's still important.

Word Reading Skills



Area focus:

Decoding, or "sounding out" words accurately.

Skills your child may be working on:

- Blending letter sounds together to read words
- Reading common spelling patterns
- Reading common, high-frequency words accurately
- Using phonics rules to read unfamiliar words

Signs of progress:

- Sounding out longer or more complex words correctly
- Reading common words quickly
- Making fewer guesses when reading

 Slowing down to sound out words (instead of guessing) is a positive sign that your child is developing good reading habits for the future.

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Oral Reading Fluency



Area focus:

Reading smoothly, accurately, and with expression.

Skills your child may be working on:

- Reading text without stopping at every word
- Improving accuracy while maintaining reading speed
- Reading phrases instead of word by word
- Using punctuation to guide expression

Signs of progress:

- Reading that sounds less choppy
- Increased reading speed without losing accuracy
- Better expression when reading aloud

 Fluency develops after children can decode words accurately, so improvement often signals that earlier skills are becoming automatic.

Reading Comprehension



Area focus:

Understanding and thinking about what they read.

Skills your child may be working on:

- Answering questions about what they've read
- Retelling stories or summarizing key information
- Identifying main ideas and important details
- Making connections between texts or to background knowledge

Signs of progress:

- Pulling out facts from nonfiction texts
- Recalling important events or details from stories
- Making thoughtful connections across texts

 When comprehension is the focus, growth is evident in conversations—in what your child can explain, retell, or connect after reading.