

Six Early Literacy Skills

Children need a variety of skills in order to become successful readers. The National Research Council recommends that children enter school with six specific "early literacy skills" that serve as the foundation for learning to read and write. Children who enter school with more of these skills are better able to benefit from the reading instruction they receive when they arrive at school.

* Letter Knowledge

Letter Knowledge includes learning that letters have names and are different from each other, and that specific sounds go with specific letters. An example of letter knowledge is a child's ability to tell the **name of a letter** and what **sound** it makes.

* Phonological Awareness

Phonological Awareness is the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words. This includes to break a word into its sounds, and the ability to blend sounds together to make a word. An incoming kindergartener is in good shape if they can **play with rhymes**, and say the **first sound** in a word.

Vocabulary

Knowing the names of things, vocabulary is an extremely important skill for children to have when they are learning to read. Most children enter school knowing between 3,000 and 5,000 words. **Reading to your child** is a great way to build vocabulary. Doing things together is another good way to learn new words.

Print Motivation

Print Motivation is a child's interest in and enjoyment of books. A child with print motivation enjoys being read to, plays with books, pretends to write, asks to be read to and likes trips to the library. **Reading is fun!**

Print Awareness

Print Awareness includes learning that writing in English follows basic rules such as flowing from top-to-bottom and left-to-right, and that **the print on the page is what is being said while being read to**.

Narrative Skills

Narrative Skills, being able to understand and tell stories, and describe things, are important for children being able to understand what they are learning to read. An example of a narrative skill is a child's ability to tell what happened at a birthday party or on a trip to the zoo.

