

Steps to Literacy

First Step

[Literacy Skills Checklist](#)

Building a Foundation

Child demonstrates some of the following skills:

- Demonstrates little or no interest in people around him/her
- Uses behavior as communication
- Seems reluctant to engage in the environment
- Engages in self-stimulating behavior for a significant part of the day
- Demonstrates behaviors that are difficult to interpret
- Demonstrates passive behavior
- Disengages when invited to participate in a learning activity
- Has little or no experience with rhythm activities
- Has little or no experience with books or stories
- Has little or no experience with literacy learning activities

STRATEGIES - READING

- [Develop a trusting relationship with the child.](#)
- [Embed opportunities for communication throughout the day.](#)
- [Design learning experiences that are meaningful to the child.](#)

STRATEGIES-WRITING

- [Teach children to use written language for self-expression, recreation, and leisure.](#)

Early Emergent Literacy

Child demonstrates some of the following skills:

- Attends to a communication partner
- Participates in turn-taking activities
- Attends to objects and/or pictures in a familiar routine or activity
- Is beginning to use consistent objects/symbols/signs for communication
- Child is beginning to understand that people and objects have names/labels/signs
- Enjoys and/or participates in music and rhythm activities
- Shows interest in books, stories and/or others engaged in literacy activities
- Handles, mouths or explores books (even in non-traditional ways)
- Attends to pictures (or objects) in traditional or adapted books
- Shows interest in writing materials

STRATEGIES - READING

- [Model reading and writing behaviors.](#)
- [Embed the use of objects, symbols or words throughout the child's day.](#)
- [Incorporate rhythm, music, finger plays and mime games.](#)
- [Provide opportunities for handling and exploring reading and writing materials.](#)
- [Teach print and book awareness.](#)
- [Teach name, name sign and/or personal identifier of child and those the child interacts with on a regular basis.](#)
- [Embed literacy learning activities into routines.](#)

STRATEGIES - WRITING

- [Provide opportunities for children to experiment with a variety of writing materials and methods.](#)
- [Make writing a part of daily routines and activities.](#)
- [Engage children in writing activities for identifying and remembering objects, tasks, and events.](#)

Emergent Literacy

Child demonstrates some of the following skills:

- Holds, carries and/or turns pages of a book
- Lets someone know he/she wants to look at a book/be read to
- Searches for favorite pictures/objects
- "Reads" to self
- Participates in story reading using child's preferred communication method(s)
- Begins to prefer certain stories
- Shows interest in print, Braille and/or tactile representations
- Notices and/or protests when adult leaves or changes part of the story

- Repeats familiar parts of stories using his/her preferred communication method(s)
- Scribbles, stamps, finger -paints, places stickers or uses alternative pencils
- Points to and/or names (or signs) objects
- Understands that text/pictures convey meaning
- Makes the connection between signed or spoken language and print, Braille or tactile representations
- Recognizes and begins to read familiar logos and signs in the environment
- Begins to recognize and read familiar words

STRATEGIES - READING

- Expand awareness of books, print and writing.
- Establish reading and writing procedures that follow a prescribed sequence.
- Connect real-life experiences to literacy activities.
- Create books adapted to individual child preferences, abilities and interests.
- Teach concepts using child's preferred communication method(s).
- Provide multiple opportunities to interact with text through shared storybook reading.
- Teach letters and familiar words.

STRATEGIES - WRITING

- Teach children to write personal information.
- Teach writing skills for organization, record keeping and finances.
- Teach children to communicate their thoughts and feelings through writing.
- Teach children to use written language for self-expression, recreation, and leisure.
- Use writing to expand a child's vocabulary.
- Incorporate writing into activities used to check reading comprehension.

Expanding Literacy

- Provide access to the general education curriculum using individualized reading and writing materials.
- Use consistent methods to evaluate how well a student understands what he or she is learning.
- Provide opportunities to use new vocabulary in a variety of situations.
- Provide ongoing support for new reading tasks
- Provide opportunities for students to read for the purpose of gaining information or knowledge.
- Provide opportunities for students to read for the purpose of experiencing new feelings and attitudes.
- Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate critical thinking skills and understanding of content.

STRATEGIES IMPORTANT FOR ALL LITERACY LEVELS

STRATEGIES – COMPREHENSION

- Conduct a symbol assessment to ensure symbols in literacy materials are understood by and accessible to student.
- Design the environment and develop or adapt literacy materials, including related communication symbols, based on child's needs, skills, and learning objectives.
- Implement comprehension strategies **before** reading, **during** reading, and **after** reading
- Align to the general education curriculum using adapted reading materials.

STRATEGIES - VOCABULARY

- Teach vocabulary using the representation mode(s) most familiar to the child (e.g. objects, pictures, tactile symbols, print, braille).
- Introduce vocabulary in a meaningful context.
- Teach new vocabulary within a variety of activities.
- Teach vocabulary by matching objects to words.
- Use pairing and fading to move children along a hierarchy toward recognizing words in print and braille.
- Take time to teach vocabulary in preparation for an activity (pre-teach) and review vocabulary following the activity.

STRATEGIES – INCREASING FLUENCY

- Engage children in multiple re-readings of stories.
- Engage children in reading activities with peers.
- Engage children in presentation activities in the classroom and community.