Early Literacy Strategies: A Recipe for Reading Success

By Vanessa Levin
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Objectives of this session:

1. Identify the 3 most important factors that determine future reading success.

2. Name the components of Phonological Awareness.

2. Describe the difference between Phonics and Phonological Awareness.

Advances in cognitive science make it clear that very young children are capable of much more academically than was previously imagined.

As progress is made we must change and adapt to what we now know is best for young children, even if it’s different from what we were taught in school or have become comfortable teaching.

The following skills have been identified as the most important factors that determine future reading success:

1. Phonological Awareness
2. Alphabet Knowledge
3. Language Proficiency

“The children most at-risk for reading difficulties in the primary grades are those who began school with less verbal skills, less phonological awareness, less letter knowledge, and less familiarity with the basic purposes and mechanisms of reading”
(Burns, Griffin, and Snow, 1999, p.15)

Components of a Successful Early Literacy Program:

- Phonological Awareness
- Alphabet Knowledge
- Concepts of Print
- Environmental Print
- Visual Discrimination Skills
- Oral Language

**Phonics vs. Phonological Awareness:**

*Phonics* = Connecting letters to sounds

*Phonological Awareness* = Rhyming, syllables, onset-rime, segmenting phonemes and sentences.

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What is Phonological Awareness:

The ability to manipulate sounds

- Rhyming (pair & bear)
- Alliteration (pair & pear)
- Syllable blending and segmenting
- Onset-rime segmenting and blending (word families- c/at)
- Segmenting phonemes (c-a-t)
- Sentence segmenting (I see a cat)

The most common misconception about Phonological Awareness is that students must learn to identify letters before they can be introduced to Phonological Awareness skills. The skills that encompass Phonological Awareness are comprised completely of auditory skills and therefore can be introduced at any time.

Phonological Awareness: Rhyming

Nursery Rhymes
Reading nursery rhymes daily helps the student’s brain segment words into syllables and hear similarities between words that rhyme or start with the same sound.

TEA Pre-K Guidelines:
B.6. Child can produce a word that rhymes with a given word.

Nursery Rhymes Can:

- Enrich young children’s vocabulary.
- Provide opportunities for oral language development.
- Introduce children to basic story structure such as problem and solution, cause and effect.
- Be easily integrated into already existing themes.
- Be FUN and engaging for young children.

The Power of Nursery Rhymes:

- Teach each nursery rhyme for a one or two week duration instead of “chunking” all nursery rhymes into one, brief unit.
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• This method will ensure that your students receive plenty of rhyming practice throughout the entire year.

• Integrate nursery rhymes into your existing themes (see handout)

Integrating Nursery Rhymes:

• Classroom Library
• Create your own Big Book
• Nursery Rhyme/Poetry Notebooks
• Nursery Rhyme Pocket Charts
• Nursery Rhyme Flannel Boards
• Nursery Rhyme Puppets
• Nursery Rhyme Music
• Nursery Rhyme Puzzles
• Take-Home Activities

Read books that have rhyme and repetition daily.

Select your books for reading aloud carefully to ensure that they are high quality literature and that they include the elements of early literacy your students require.

Nursery Rhyme Music

• Jack Hartmann’s Rhymin to the Beat Vol. 1 & 2
• Dr. Jean’s Nursery Rhymes and Good Ole Times
• Frog Street Press Nursery Rhymes

Rhyming Ideas:

• Pointers
• Microphones
• Funky Monkey hat
• Rhyme the Word Wall

Acting Out Nursery Rhymes

Providing props for students to act out nursery rhymes will help extend opportunities for developing early literacy skills.

See handout in your packet for details.
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Phonological Awareness: Alliteration

Refers to two or more words that have the same sounds at the beginning.

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

TEA Pre-K Guidelines: B.7. Child can produce a word that begins with the same sound as a given pair of words.

Phonological Awareness: Syllables

Being able to separate words into syllable parts and combine parts back into a single word.

TEA Pre-K Guidelines:
B.4. Child combines syllables into words.
B.5. Child can delete a syllable from a word.
B.10. Child recognizes and blends two phonemes into real words with pictorial support.

Syllable Ideas:

• Picture Sorting
• Glove/Mitten Game
• Hands-On Syllable sorts w/objects

Phonological Awareness: Onset/Rime

Onset = initial consonant
Rime = remaining vowel and consonant

The ability to divide syllables or words into the parts defined above. Often known as “word families”

TEA Pre-K Guidelines:
B.8. Child combines onset and rime to form a familiar one syllable word with pictorial support.
B.9. Child combines onset and rime to form familiar one syllable words without pictorial support.

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Phonological Awareness: Segmenting

Being able to separate the words said together as a sentence into individual words that make up a sentence

The cat is big.

TEA Pre-K Guidelines: B.1. Child separates a normally spoken four word sentence into individual words.

Alphabet Knowledge:

Alphabet knowledge is the understanding that letters are shapes and those shapes have specific names.

*TEA Pre-K Guidelines:*

C.1. Child names at least 20 upper and at least 20 lower case letters.
C.2. Child recognizes at least 20 letter sounds.

Teaching the Alphabet:

Current research points away from programs that emphasize a Letter of the Week.

It is important to teach the alphabet in context instead of isolation. Removing letters from their meaningful context removes the meaning and purpose from the letter.

Teaching letters in context is much more effective and accelerates the learning process.

*From TEA Pre-K Guidelines:*

III Emergent Literacy Reading Domain:
B. Alphabet Knowledge Skills

Young children learn best when information is presented in context and when educators provide opportunities for children to create experiences that make the material meaningful.

Rote practice (or the “skill and drill” method) can result in frustration and negative attitudes toward learning.
Alphabet Ideas:

• Heidi Songs Letters and Letter Sounds (www.heidisongs.com)
• LeapFrog Letter Factory
• LeapFrog Fridge Phonics
• Independent practice with engaging, hands-on activities.
• Multi-Sensory Approaches

What are concepts of print?

Understanding how printed language works

• Print reads left to right, top to bottom, return sweep.
• Ability to discriminate between letters, words, sentences, and spaces.
• Comprehends functions of print (period, question mark, capital letters…)
• Follows print as it is read (1 to 1)
• Understands that print carries a message.
• Understands that illustrations hold meaning.

Incorporating Concepts of Print:

Shared Reading:

• Pointing to text as it is read.
• Calling attention to words, spaces, first letters, upper and lowercase letters, and punctuation.

Morning Message:

• Talk aloud while writing to reinforce concepts of print.
• Use props to locate letters, words, spaces, first and last letter, capitals/lowercase, and punctuation.
• Allow children to interact with message to make it more meaningful.

Environmental Print:

Reading print from the world around us is a beginning stage of literacy development.
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The letters, numbers, shapes, and colors found in logos for products and stores such as McDonald’s, Wal-Mart, and Coke all provide opportunities for early readers to interact with print.

http://www.pre-kpages.com/environmental_print.html

Why Use Environmental Print?

Using Environmental Print in the classroom is meaningful to students. The logos and signs they see in their daily lives hold great meaning for them.

Environmental print is important because students easily identify letters, colors, and shapes in the print and visually discriminate between the different types.

Oral Language and Literacy:

The lack of oral language and vocabulary directly impacts decoding skills. For example, if a child does not know what a dog is then it will be more difficult for him to decode the word “d-o-g”. Therefore, there is a direct correlation between oral language development and reading.

Incorporating Oral Language:

We should provide experiences for our students that are rich in oral language development so they can develop good decoding skills.

What Students Remember:

Students remember only:

10% of what they hear
30% of what they hear and see
40% of what they hear, see, and say
70-100% of what they hear, see, say, and DO!

Where Do We Start?

Providing hands-on learning experiences will ensure that our students retain more of what they are being taught.

We must incorporate early literacy strategies into every facet of our daily schedules.

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Any direct teaching must be followed by hands-on practice, both independent and small group.

The most successful activities are those that are “Playful, Planful, and Purposeful”.

**Review the objectives:**

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