

Reaching for Reading: Strategies for School, Therapy, & Home

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Why We're Here

- Children with significant communication & physical impairments are at-risk for reading problems
 - Approximately 70-90% of them read below grade level.
- Individuals with ASD tend to have strengths in some areas of reading and problems in other areas.
- Expectations are high even at the PreK level

What Should PreK Children Know/Do to Be Ready for Reading?

- Use language well
- Attend to the sounds of language
- Understand that writing conveys meaning
- Pretend to read (e.g., turn pages, invents story using pictures and memory)
- Begin to match spoken words with print
- Know some letter names & some letter-sound associations
- Recognize some words & letters in their environment or in books

Today We Will

- Talk about:
 - How reading skills develop
 - A balanced approach to teaching reading
 - Areas of instruction within reading programs
- Discuss strategies to:
 - Develop skills in connecting how language sounds (speaking) with how language looks (print)
 - Build language that supports reading

What does it mean to be able to *read*?

What is '*a reader*'?

Emergent

Fluent

Early

Advanced

What is An Emergent Reader?

Based on Bank Street Corner and LinguaLinks Library

- Skills
 - Understands that written language conveys messages
 - Pretends to read and write (e.g., turns pages, invents story using pictures and memory)
 - Begins to match spoken words with print
 - Knows some letter names and some letter-sound associations
 - Recognizes some words and letters in their environment or in texts
 - May still be unsure of the concept of "word" or "letter"

What is An Early Reader?

Based on Bank Street Corner and LinguaLinks Library

Skills

- Does not always understand what he/she reads
 - Does not always pay attention to meaning
- Finds reading difficult
- Reads slowly
- Sounds out new words syllable-by-syllable
- Has difficulty reading long words with several syllables
- Often self-corrects and repeats
- Reads without expression or proper intonation
- Reads word-by-word; Does not usually make natural phrase and clause breaks

What is A Fluent Reader?

Based on Bank Street Corner and LinguaLinks Library

Skills:

- Reads and understands what he/she is reading
- Reads quickly and with a minimum of effort.
- Reads a good number of sight words
- Has good **decoding, comprehension & word attack** skills
- Reads smoothly and with expression

What is An Advanced Reader?

All previous skills plus:

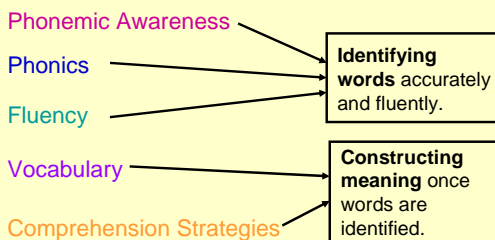
- Reading & writing at/above grade/age level
- Decodes text automatically and quickly with good comprehension
- Uses critical thinking
- Effortlessly uses reading for a variety of age-appropriate purposes
- Reads text of various genres (e.g., expository, fiction, poetry)

Development of Reading Skills

1. Pre-Reading or Emergent Reading Stage
2. Decoding Stage
3. Fluency Stage
4. Reading-to-Learn Stage

Key Areas for Reading Instruction

Torgesen, 2002



Balanced Literacy: A Framework for Reading & Writing

Four Block Model for Classroom Instruction

Cunningham & Hall, 1997

- Guided Reading Block
- Self-Selected Reading Block
- Writing Block
- Working with Words Block

Guided Reading

Sigmon, 1997

- **Purpose:** Building comprehension and fluency with reading
 - Age-appropriate materials
 - Repeated reading of same book/stories
- **Focus:**
 - Exposure to a wide range of literature
 - All learners are supported according to their needs.
 - Allows time to read easier books to foster confidence
- **Typical Classroom Activities**
 - Mini-comprehension lesson with whole group
 - Independent reading
 - Whole group closure activity

The Self-Selected Reading Block

- **Purpose:** Building fluency in reading
- **Focus:**
 - Working with text most appropriate to the individual's own independent reading level (97% of words)
 - Building confidence as a reader
- **Typical Classroom Activities**
 - Teacher reads aloud to all participants
 - Participants choose a book and reads
 - Teacher holds conferences with designated participants daily
 - One participant shares briefly in a small group

The Working with Words Block

- **Purpose:** Enabling participants to read, spell, and use high-frequency words correctly
- **Focus:** Establishing the patterns necessary for decoding and spelling
- **Typical Classroom Activities**
 - Teacher introduces 5 word wall words per week (says/chants/writes words, etc)
 - Teacher guides activities to teach spelling patterns

The Writing Block

- **Purpose:** Building fluency in writing
- **Focus:**
 - Employing the writing process
 - Refining and applying knowledge of phonics
 - Building confidence as a writer
- **Typical Classroom Activities**
 - Teacher presents mini-lesson on writing
 - Students write on self-generated topics
 - Students share briefly

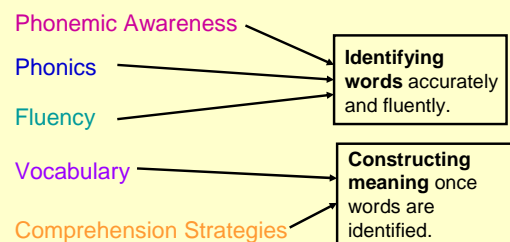
Teaching Reading Via the Four Block Model

(Cunningham & Hall, 1997)

- Working with Words
 - **Phonics** and **Phonological Awareness**
 - **Vocabulary**
- Guided Reading
 - **Fluency**
 - **Comprehension**
- Self-Selected Reading
 - **Fluency**
- Writing

Key Areas for Reading Instruction

Torgesen, 2002



Phonics

- An approach to reading that teaches the relation of the letters (graphemes) to the sounds (phonemes) they represent
 - A method of teaching beginners to read and pronounce words by learning to associate letters or letter groups with the sounds they represent
- Based on these assumptions:
 - Most languages have consistent sound/phoneme to letter/grapheme correlation (i.e., letter-sound correspondence)
 - Readers who have learned the relationships of letters to their sounds, they can pronounce printed words by blending the sounds together.

Adapting Phonological Awareness Activities

- Adapt activities to compensate for fine motor limitations
 - E.g., counting syllables or words (change a clap to a tap or nod)
- Adapt to compensate for oral motor limitations
 - E.g., program AAC device to allow for sound blending or segmentation
 - Use computer programs that speak

What Parents Can Do

1. Play 'Sound Games'
2. Help your child build language
3. Make reading interactive
4. Read, read, read

'Sound Games'

- Rhyming
- Odd Man Out
- Long and Short
- Silly Sounds
- Pick Apart
- Sound Scrunchers
- *** Adapt language level
- *** Add visual supports

Rhyming

- Purpose: helps the child hear similarities and differences in how language sounds
 - This is the start of phonics.
- Example:
 - "I'm going to say some words. Some of them will sort of sound the same, like 'cat' and 'hat.' Give me a thumbs up if they sound alike. Ready? 'rat-mat' Great! Here are some more: frog-bell...sing-ring...boy-toy...sock-nose"
- Adaptations: Reduce language level; Add visual supports

Odd Man Out

- Purpose: helps the child make judgments about the sounds they hear
- Example:
 - "I'm going to say a bunch of words. Most of them fit together, but one doesn't. It sounds different than the rest. Like this: rat, hat, cake, sat. Cake sounded different than the others, didn't it. Okay, let's do some more! Raise your hand when I say the one that doesn't fit. Ready? Sit, hit, pop, fit..."
- Adaptations: Reduce language level; Add visual supports

Long and Short

- Purpose: helps the child make judgments about the sounds they hear as opposed to the meaning of words
- Example:
 - “Some words sound long, like television. Hear how many parts that has: tel-e-vi-sion? Some words are short, like dog. I’m thinking of a long word. See if you can tell which one I’m thinking of. Say ‘yeah’ when you hear a long word. Ready? Bike, shoe, watermelon....”
- Adaptations: Reduce language level; Add visual supports

Silly Sounds

- Purpose: helps children pay attention to particular sounds in words
 - This sets the stage for associating sounds with letters which comes later in development.
- Example:
 - I know a ‘quiet sound.’ Shhh is a quiet sound. I can hear that quiet sound in the word ‘shop.’ I’m thinking of some other words. See if you can tell which one has ‘shhh,’ the quiet sound. Raise your hand when you hear the word with ‘shhh.’ Ready? Foot, red, shoe, dad...”
- Adaptations: Reduce language level; Add visual supports

Pick Apart

- Purpose: helps the child pay attention to the fact that sentences can be broken down into words, and word can be broken down into syllables, and syllables can be broken down into sounds.
 - This plays an important role in early reading instruction.
- Example:
 - “Listen to my sentence: I want a kiss. It has 4 parts. Let’s tap them out: I (tap) want (tap) a (tap) kiss (tap). Here’s another one: Grandma (tap) is (tap) pretty (tap). That one had three parts. Now you do one. I’ll say it and you tap it. Ready? My hair is brown.”
- Adaptations: Reduce language level; Add visual supports

Sound Scrunchers

- Purpose: helps the child understand that sounds can be combined into words in different ways
- Example:
 - “Here’s a funny game: I’m going to make some sounds and you tell me what word it’s supposed to be. Like this s-i-t. That one is ‘sit,’ right? Okay now listen to my sounds and then I’ll ask you what word it’s supposed to be. Ready? F-a-t. Squeeze my hand when we get to the right word. Jump, cook, fat.”
- Adaptations: Reduce language level; Add visual supports

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Building Language

- Create situations in which the child has to give you directions
 - “Turn the page”
 - “Show me”
 - “Use a funny voice”
 - “Give me a turn”
 - “Tell me more.”

Building Language

- **Expand** on what the child says
- Focus on **what they say**, not how they say it
- If the child uses some form of augmentative communication, incorporate that as often as possible.

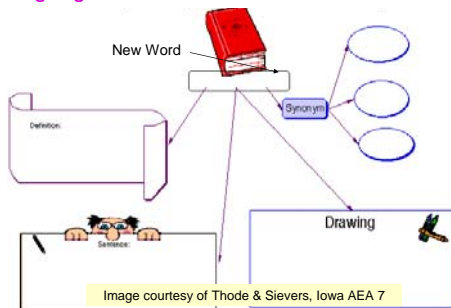
Building Language

- If the child uses some form of augmentative communication, use adapted books that have the same symbols as in the child's AAC system.



Building Vocabulary

- Receptive vocabulary in **spoken language** is the foundation for vocabulary development in **written language**.



Building Reading Comprehension

- The ability to take meaning from text, remember, and communicate the meaning from the text.
 - Good readers monitor their comprehension to make sure they understand the text.
- Teachers & Tutors: Teach specific reading comprehension strategies (explicit instruction)

“What can you do when you come across a word you don't know?”

“The picture might help me.”

Reading Comprehension Lessons Should:

- Build background knowledge
- Target specific strategies
- Have learners read for an established purpose
- Complete a task directly related to the purpose
- Provide informative feedback.

--- Tierney and Cunningham

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Reading with Your Child

1. Read, read, read: More is better
2. What to look for in a book
 - Predictability
 - Rhythm and Rhyme
 - High interest
 - Let the child pick the book sometimes.
 - Repeated reading builds skills
3. Make it fun and interactive

Making Reading Interactive

- Use props, sound, and movement
 - Act it out
 - Use a funny voice
 - 'My turn – Your turn'
 - Noises that fit the story

Make Reading Interactive

- Create opportunities for dialogue
 - Choice making with props/actions
 - What is this book going to be about?
 - What do you think is going to happen?
 - What do you think about that?
 - Relate it to daily life
 - Comprehension questions
- Avoid
 - Too much identification (e.g., where's the red bird?)
 - Excessive labeling (e.g., what's this?)

While You're Reading with Children Who Use AAC

Based on UTD/Callier Center AAC Literacy Project

- Model use of the AAC system
- Direct focus to the print, not just the pictures
- Provide **lots** of opportunities for interaction
- Provide access to an appropriate communication board or device
- Be sure there are comments, questions, and vocabulary on the AAC device to allow for this interaction.
- Pause and wait expectantly for the person to participate.
 - Expectant delays.

While You're Reading with Children Who Use AAC

Based on UTD/Callier Center AAC Literacy Project

- Make it fun and interesting by using all **modalities** (e.g. animal noises, climbing motion, train sounds) and **props** (e.g., toys monkey for 'Five Little Monkeys')
- Point out letters occasionally and show the sounds that letter makes
- Point to key words and pictures in the story
- Relate the story to real life experiences (e.g., "Remember when we went on the train?" "Was that train big or little?")

Messages for the AAC Aid or Device

- Consider whether you will use:
 - The person's own AAC aid or device
 - A shared classroom or therapy aid or device
- Messages specific to the book or activity
 - Names of characters, key events or places
 - Lines of the story
 - Repeated lines or words
 - Important words
- Generic messages
 - Use a funny voice.
 - Read it again!
 - What's gonna happen?
 - I want to see!
 - Turn the page, please.
 - What's that?
 - Uh-oh!!!
 - I like this part.
 - This is stupid.
 - What do you think?

What Parents Can Do

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Reading is Everywhere

- Every person, every day
 - No one is 'too impaired' to benefit from and enjoy reading at some level.
 - "Literacy Bill of Rights"
- Try to:
 - Model your own enjoyment of reading.
 - Read with the person every day.
 - Make reading fun.
 - 'Read' everyday things like road signs, cereal boxes, video cassette labels, and building or door signs.
 - Have lots of reading materials available (books, books on tape, computerized stories, magazines, family letters, greeting cards, notes, lists).

A Literacy Bill of Rights (Yoder, Erickson, & Koppenhaver, 1996)

All persons, regardless of the extent or severity of their disabilities, have a basic right to use print. Beyond this general right, there are certain literacy rights that should be assured for all persons. These basic rights are:

1. The right to an **opportunity to learn** to read and write. **Opportunity** involves engagement in active participation in tasks performed with high success.
2. The right to have **accessible** clear, meaningful, culturally and linguistically appropriate **texts** at all times. **Texts**, broadly defined, range from picture books to newspapers to novels, cereal boxes, and electronic documents.
3. The right to **interact** with others while reading, writing, or listening to a text. **Interaction** involves questions, comments, discussions, and other communications about or related to the text.
4. The right to **life choices** made available through reading and writing competencies. **Life choices** include, but are not limited to, employment and employment changes, independence, community participation, and self-advocacy.
5. The right to **lifelong educational opportunities** incorporating literacy instruction and use. Literacy **educational opportunities**, regardless of when they are provided, have potential to provide power that cannot be taken away.
6. The right to have **teachers and other service providers who are knowledgeable** about literacy instruction methods and principles. **Methods** include but are not limited to instruction, assessment, and the technologies required to make literacy accessible to individuals with disabilities. **Principles** include, but are not limited to, the beliefs that literacy is learned across places and time, and no person is too disabled to benefit from literacy learning opportunities.
7. The right to live and learn in **environments** that provide **varied models of print use**. **Models** are demonstrations of purposeful print use such as reading a recipe, paying bills, sharing a joke, or writing a letter.
8. The right to live and learn in environments that maintain the expectations and **attitudes that all individuals are literacy learners**.

Reading is Everywhere

- Try to:
 - Model your own enjoyment of reading.
 - Read with the person every day.
 - Make reading fun.
 - 'Read' everyday things like road signs, cereal boxes, video cassette labels, and building or door signs.
 - Make everyday events into reading events (e.g., songs)
 - Have lots of reading materials available (books, books on tape, computerized stories, magazines, family letters, greeting cards, notes, lists).

Making Reading Material Accessible

- Put reading in the schedule
- Make sure book shelves are accessible
- Provide a comfortable and inviting place to read
- Use tabs or page fluffers to make pages easier to turn
- For children who cannot manage too much text at one time, block out all but the section that they are reading.
- Consider using a book stand to stabilize the reading material at an appropriate angle
- Use online books, books on CD ROM, books on tape

Thank You!

- Questions?
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