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Learning Pathways in Literacy

A comprehensive document on Early Literacy Development: From Foundational Communication to Advanced Thinking, Reading and Writing



Why we created this document

The Early Literacy Pathway was created to support educators, caregivers and families in understanding and supporting Washington children’s development in literacy and beyond. This document will support and enhance the conversation of how best to support every child’s future.

How this document is connected to early learning, early elementary frameworks

The *Learning Pathways in Early Literacy* was written using the following frameworks specifically in the areas of social-emotional development, cognitive development, language and literacy development, and reading and writing development. Looking forward to the spring of 2018, this document will incorporate Special Education access points and be translated into Spanish.

Early Learning and Development Guidelines (ELG), *GOLD*[®] (formerly *Teaching Strategies GOLD*[®]), used in WaKIDS & ECEAP, Head Start Early Learning Outcomes (HS), and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

How this document is organized

More than thirty years of converging research illuminate many aspects of how children develop literacy and become strong readers, writers, speakers, and thinkers by third grade. Growing evidence in brain science makes clear that literacy development begins at birth¹. In fact, intelligence is not set at birth, as previously thought, but instead developed over time through input, often from adult and caregiver interaction². This unique growth period in brain development extends over the first eight years of life. This document was created to align the guiding frameworks that inform literacy development used from birth through age eight. Thus, caregivers and educators can more easily access the literacy skills and abilities outlined across these multiple frameworks more easily. The developmental literacy progressions drawn from the four frameworks are outlined in this document and have been divided into three bands, which, when combined, represent the Learning Pathways in Early Literacy.

These three bands are:

- 1. Birth to three years old- *Acquiring the foundations of literacy***
- 2. Three to six years old- *Using individual literacy foundations to learn specific literacy skills***
- 3. Six to nine years old- *Using reading, writing, speaking, and listening to learn and communicate effectively***

¹ Center on the Developing Child, “The Science of Early Childhood Development (In Brief),” 2007 (Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu)

² Kuhl, P. K. (2010, October). Patricia Kuhl: The linguistic genius of babies [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/patricia_kuhl_the_linguistic_genius_of_babies?language=en

Each of these developmental bands is divided into major domains that describe literacy skills and abilities by age and/or grade level and that align with the widely agreed upon standards or outcomes for that particular age group across the referenced state frameworks (i.e., HS, *GOLD*[®], ECEAP, WaKIDS, ELG, and CCSS). Each of these bands or stages of development is further described below.

Acquiring the foundations of literacy: birth to three years old

From birth through age three, the foundational skills that set the stage for becoming a contributing member of a community are developed.


These foundational skills include language, communication, and cognition.

Urie Bronfenbrenner, a distinguished developmental psychologist, explains that: *“In order to develop normally, a child requires progressively more complex joint activity with one or more adults who have an irrational emotional relationship with the child. Somebody’s got to be crazy about that kid. That’s number one. First, last, and always.”*

In other words, the success of these first three years is marked by social relationships-- the relationships between adults and children, and the direct attention, communication, and focus our newest members of society receive from their loved ones and those who care for them. Instructors of infants and toddlers should be gifted at building safe relationships, engaging in pointed interactions that offer children the opportunity for back and forth communication, and on- going child-directed interaction.

Acquiring the foundations of literacy: three to six

During the next stage of development, from age three to six, children build upon and use the foundational thinking, speaking, and interacting skills they developed in their first three years to access and develop what is commonly known as “emergent reading” skills and “early reading” skills. That is, children learn to recognize specific symbols (i.e., letters) and the associated sounds, and they learn to “read” books (i.e., concepts of print), as well as broad phonological awareness skills (i.e., letter names and sounds, rhyming, etc.). In other words, they break the code and gain access to the organized system of reading and writing. In addition, they build upon their foundational language and cognition skills such as communicating to have needs met and engaging in basic conversations about themselves and their environment to learn higher order cognitive and communication skills such as narrative, explanatory, persuasive, and procedural. They develop more sophisticated conversational skills such as taking turns, responding to other’s questions and comments, clarifying information, building on ideas and thoughts, and asking pertinent questions.




“In order to develop normally, a child requires progressively more complex joint activity with one or more adults who have an irrational emotional relationship with the child. Somebody’s got to be crazy about that kid. That’s number one. First, last, and always.”

**Urie Bronfenbrenner,
Distinguished psychologist**

Children at this stage, bring their world experiences and their unique expertise with listening, speaking, thinking, interacting, reading, and writing to specific literacy practices and tasks such as opening a book and turning the pages, pointing to print, looking at pictures, and “reading the book.” During this time, children gain access to the organized system of reading and writing, and they work to merge this new knowledge with the way they make sense of the world, and the way they learn to communicate, think and interact. In other words, they combine code breaking with meaning making. Recognizing a letter becomes learning a letter sounds, which then leads to understanding that that letter is part of a word, then that that word means something, and eventually how that word tells a part of a story, or conveys information in a conversation, book, or piece of writing.

The success of this three to six year old stage rests upon successfully learning the skills that unlock the code of reading and writing (i.e., concepts of print and phonological awareness) and using those skills to gain meaning from books and communication. The instructor (i.e., caregiver and/or teacher) plays a crucial role during this period and must have explicit expertise in using the individual strengths of each student to help them acquire specific literacy skills. Instructors should also understand the context within which language and thinking develop, how reading and writing are contextualized within communication, and the very specific ways phonological awareness is developed and supported.



Reading and writing help children explore real interests, collaborate and complete group and individual projects, and to engage in meaningful discussions and learning journeys that are increasingly sophisticated about books, life, interests, and current events.

Using reading, writing, speaking, & listening to learn and communicate: six to nine years old

During the next stage of development from age six to nine years old the phonological awareness skills associated with reading (i.e., letter sounds, rhyming, blending, and word solving) become internalized skills that ultimately will not require much attention when reading or writing. Effort during this stage of literacy development focuses primarily on comprehension, word knowledge, and knowledge development. Texts become longer and more complex with plot twists, subplots, and/or with multiple structures represented in one text (e.g., a book about polar bears being endangered and how to stop their extinction using persuasive, descriptive, and procedural writing forms throughout). As texts become more complex, close reading, note taking, writing about reading, and conversations and discussions that offer multiple perspectives help to uncover deeper meaning. In this stage, thinking, reading, and writing develop beyond a specified set of skills and conventions that provide access to the organized system of literacy. In fact, reading, writing and thinking become a means for sharing one’s unique voice, experiences, and perspectives, and informs their ideas and interpretations.

In the words of distinguished Language, Literacy, and Culture Professor, James Gee, *If you want to understand how reading and writing work, don’t look at them directly, and in and of themselves. Rather, look directly at specific social practices in which specific ways of reading and writing are embedded. Furthermore, look at how these specific ways of reading and writing, within these social practices, are always integrally connected to specific ways of using oral language... and specific ways of using various sorts of objects, tools, technologies, symbols, places, and time.*

In other words the success of this stage is reliant upon opportunities for children to think and communicate. Instructors of students in this stage of literacy development should be masterfully engaging children in exciting discussions, with a lot of open-ended questions with room for multiple interpretations and figuring out solutions, understanding student’s interests and providing opportunities for those interests to be brought into the curriculum, and elaborating on thinking and problem solving. Texts and tasks need to have real purposes and spark interests. Text and tasks also need to be varied, for different purposes and contexts.

Guiding principles of this document

This document is primarily focused on children from birth through nine years old and preparing these students to have a strong foundation in language, thinking, communicating, reading, and writing. These are fundamental abilities that aid in participation in social relationships, society, and our current global community. Every child brings strengths, interests, and needs in their developmental growth and acquisition along this literacy continuum. Along with that sentiment, the main principals guiding the development of this document are as follows:

1. The acquisition of literacy is embedded within individuals, their cultures, and their society. Therefore, awareness of and attention to cultural relevancies will support development along the continuum from birth through third grade
2. Language, thinking, and communicating are necessary in all human endeavors. They are the foundation for how we exist in the world. Reading and writing are contrived forms of communication that allow humans to develop their thinking and communicate over time and spaces with broader audiences for multiple purposes. Literacy is the combination of thinking, communicating, reading and writing (i.e., encompassing the expressive and receptive forms of communicating with language).
3. Language development, cognitive development, and play are inextricably linked in the early years. Play offers children opportunities to communicate for real purposes, to express their unique thoughts and ideas, and to direct their own thoughts and language.
4. Teachers, caregivers, and instructors perform best and get the best results from children, when they understand the children’s cultural backgrounds, the developmental literacy continuum, and the overlaps between and among literacy skills, abilities, and acquisition.
5. The underlying purpose of all literacy development is comprehension- seeking to understand and be understood. All literacy learning must be embedded in the larger goal of fostering meaning.

2016. Developed by Molly Branson Thayer, Ed.D in coordination with the English Language Arts Learning and Teaching Department at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Referenced Frameworks: Key & References

Head Start Framework (H.S.)

Reference: Administration for Children and Families Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, Office of Head Start. “Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five.” Release, U.S Department of Health and Human Services, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/sr/approach/elof>

ATL= Approaches to Learning

SE= Social and Emotional Development

LC= Language and Communication

LIT=Literacy

C=Cognition

M= Mathematics

SCI= Science Reasoning

PM/PD = Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

GOLD®

Reference: Teaching Strategies, LLC. (2010–2016). *GOLD®*. [Electronic version]. Bethesda, MD: Author. May be referenced beyond the scope of the WaKIDS subset of objectives and criteria.

WA EL & DG

Reference: Washington State Department of Early Learning, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and Thrive by Five Washington. “Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines.” Release, Washington State Department of Early Learning, 2012. PDF. Retrieved from: <http://www.del.wa.gov/development/guidelines/>

1. About me and my family and culture
 1. FC = family and culture
 2. SC = self-concept
 3. SM = self-management
 4. LL = learning to learn
2. Building relationships
 1. IA = interactions with adults
 2. IP = interactions with peers
 3. SB = social behaviors
 4. PS/CR = problem solving/ conflict resolution
3. Touching, seeing, hearing, and moving around
 1. LM = large motor skills
 2. SM = small motor skills
 3. US = using the senses
4. Growing up healthy
 1. DL= daily living skills
 2. NH = nutrition and health

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3. S = safety
 5. Communicating (literacy)
 1. SL = speaking and listening
 2. R = reading
 3. W = writing
 6. Learning about my world
 1. K = knowledge (cognition)
 2. M = math
 3. S = science
 4. S.S = social studies
 5. A = arts

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Reference: National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. "Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical subjects." Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010. PDF. Retrieved from: <http://www.corestandards.org/>

RL = Reading Standards for Literature

RI = Reading Standards for Informational Texts

RF = Reading Standards Foundational Skills

W = Writing Standards

SL = Speaking and Listening Standards

L = Language Standards

Document Quotes

All quotes are by Molly Branson Thayer Ed.D, unless otherwise indicated.

Acquiring the foundations of literacy: 0-12 months old

Language (Linguistics and Brain Science), Communication, and Play	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Uses and modifies facial expressions and actions based on interaction with others	ATL8	1b	
Mimics sounds and facial expressions	SE12		
*Learns to hear and distinguish sounds of home language	LC5	11a	
Initiates interactions with adults	ATL6		
Focuses attention on objects directed to	LC2 & 2IWA	8a	
Participates when engaged in activities	ATL 7	11d	
Participates in back and forth interactions through facial expressions	ATL8 & SE12	2b	
Expresses feelings and emotions through facial expressions, crying, laughing, and gesturing to elicit a response	SE6		
Communicates needs in a variety of ways (including pointing, crying, laughing, etc.)	LC3		1SC
Learns through play and interaction	ATL9		1LL
Attends to verbal and non-verbal communication	LC1		
Explores books through all sense	LC10	17a	
Cognition, and Social & Emotional	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Attends to important people and objects in the environment and maintains focus	ATL3	11a	4S
Recognizes and remembers a few familiar people, places and objects	C3 & SE1	12a	
Anticipates familiar routines	C5		
Uses senses to examine people and objects	C1		
Explores and examines differences between familiar and unfamiliar objects (Understands concepts of more versus less)	C10		
Imitates actions and behaviors	SE5	2c	6K
Responds to familiar adult presence by smiling or calming	SE2		
Follows adults pointing or gaze			2IWA

Acquiring the foundations of literacy: 12-24 months old

Language (Linguistics and Brain Science), Communication, and Play	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Participates in simple imitation games such as making similar sounds or repeating an action with an object	LC7		6K
Points to desired objects, pictures in a book, says word(s) about pictures, and has favorite books and toys	LC10, 11, & 12		5R
Attends to and participates in songs, new materials/toys, and initiated activities	ATL7	11b	1SC
Expresses a variety of emotions and modifies expressions based on reactions of familiar adults	SE 6		1FC & 1SC
Learns through play and interaction	ATL9		1LL
Initiates interactions with adults such as pointing at a book or toy	ATL6	1c	
Shows understanding of familiar caregiver verbal and nonverbal communication	LC1	37	
Communicates some needs and wants verbally or with gestures	LC3	38	
Participates in conversations, and asking questions with one word outputs, or gestures, or babbling	LC5, 6 & 8	10a	
Says a few culturally or linguistically relevant words	LC9		
Cognition, and Social & Emotional	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Attends to people and objects in order to participate in activities	ATL3		
Recognizes and recalls many familiar people, places, and objects	C3	12a	1FC
Remembers how to use objects from previous experience	C5		1SC
Acts intentionally to achieve a goal	C1	11b	6K
Matches objects by similar or related characteristics	C10		
Imitates actions and behaviors	SE5		
Explores how/why things work through repeated attempts at solutions	C6, 7	11b	
Uses objects and symbols in representative ways (i.e., a doll as a baby)	C12		

Acquiring the foundations of literacy: 24-36 months old

Language (Linguistics and Brain Science), Communication, and Play	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Begins to use social rules of language	LC1	10b	
Engages others in interactions, activities, and conversations		10a	5SL
Asks questions and shows awareness of and interest in the environment	ATL7		5SL
Responds appropriately to basic commands (i.e., jump)		8b	
Seeks information from others	C1		
Begins Make believe and pretend play	ATL9	14b	1LL
Joins in culturally and/or linguistically familiar songs and rhymes	LC9	15a	5R
Participates in conversations and demonstrates understanding	LC1		
Uses two word sentences in familiar languages	LC3	9c	
Describes experiences from the past	LC5	9d	
Shows increasing interest in written language and may recognize some letters	LC11	16a	
Pretends to read books by turning pages	LC10	17a	
Talks about books and acts out events from stories and books	LC12	18a	
Cognition, and Social & Emotional	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Maintains focus and attention for short periods of time (i.e., being read to)	ATL3	11a	5R
Makes connections between people, objects, and places (i.e., tells what will happen in a familiar story)		12b	5R
Recognizes feelings and emotions of self and others, and of characters within a book	SE7	12a	6K
Remembers how to do a series of actions associated with a familiar event or activity	C1	12a	5SL
Observes and experiments with how things work	C2	11c	
Anticipates Cause and effect, and makes predictions	C10		
Sorts and categorizes objects based on single characteristics	C13	13	
Acts out routines and stories (such as shopping for groceries or feeding a baby) to increase understanding	ATL6	14a	
Identifies and names characteristics of people and objects	SE6	29	
Expresses a wide range of emotions based on interactions with others	SE13		
Refers to the past and past events (e.g., when grandma visited, etc.)	SE12	9d	
Contributes own ideas, skills, and abilities during experiences with others		1c	

**Progress by
the end of
36 months.**



By three years old children have become firmly apart of their communities. They are able to communicate well with others in their community and are beginning to communicate with people outside of their community. They have learned specific ways of thinking and speaking that have been promoted and used by their family and caretakers. They interact well with others who they are comfortable with, expressing their needs, thoughts, and emotions, and understanding the feelings and needs of those close to them.

They are also interested in the world around them and love experiences like visiting the zoo and then being reminded of those experiences through repeated retellings of the event. They will listen attentively when a loved one or caregiver is narrating the world around them or experiences they are having. There is excitement for books, songs, and activities that help them learn about the world and make connections between their world and experiences and the world around them.

During the first three years, children spend a lot of time watching and then imitating others to learn and are active and enthusiastic learners who explore their world excitedly every moment. They have developed preferences, favorite stories, games, songs, and delight in repeated experiences. They crave constant attention, communication, and interaction, and they thrive when it is returned.

By three years old, these young children are all set to join larger social communities and build upon the foundational learning they have received within their communities.

During the first three years, children spend a lot of time watching and then imitating others to learn, and are active and enthusiastic learners who explore their world excitedly every moment.

Combining individual literacy foundations with specific literacy skills: 3-4 years old

Language, Speaking and Listening, and Play	HS	<i>GOLD</i> [®]	ELG
Regularly uses social rules of language	LC5	10b	
Comprehends language in most age appropriate stories, and in age appropriate conversations	LC1	8a	
Retells simple stories		18c	
Uses language to express thoughts, ideas, and needs	LIT4		
Begins to use language to explain, persuade, describe processes, and tell stories	LC3		5R
Engages in basic conversations with turn-taking	LC3		
Shows rapid increase in the acquisition of new words that describe actions, emotions, things, or ideas		9a	
Engages in socio-dramatic play communicating storyline, characters, events and outcomes (i.e., “We are a family, I am the mommy, the baby is hungry and I need to feed her”)	LC4	14b	
Engages in singing, rhymes, chants and finger play	LC6		2SB
Begins to negotiate turn taking		3a	2IWP
Learns through play (e.g., “Let’s build a tower, which blocks go on the bottom?” “The bigger ones.” etc.)	ATL13		6K
Comprehension and Cognition	HS	<i>GOLD</i> [®]	ELG
Makes connections between and among books, experiences, and facts		12b	5R
Thinks symbolically		14a	
Engages in some group activities that illustrate/demonstrate narrative, explanatory, and procedural processes (e.g., making a recipe, watching a butterfly emerge from a cocoon, etc.)	SCI5		
Comprehends and responds to books and other texts		18a	5R
Answers personal questions about a text (what was your favorite part?)			5R
Articulates and understands the meaning of a basic text (i.e., what is this book about)			5R
Engages in inquiry and investigations, analyzing outcomes and drawing conclusions	SCI6	24	
Focuses attention on tasks and experience with adult support	ATL6	11a	
Holds small amounts of information in mind to complete tasks or follow multi-step directions	ATL8	8b	

*Combining individual literacy foundations with specific literacy skills: 3-4 years old
(cont'd)*

Reading (Decoding) and Writing (Encoding)	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Uses classification skills		13	
Understands spatial relationships		21a	
Understands shapes		21b	
Demonstrates knowledge of patterns	M7	23	
Writes to convey meaning (may be marks, scribbles, or letters)		19b	5W
Recognizes name or the first letter		19a	
Draws pictures and dictates to compose narrative, explanatory, or procedural texts		14b	5W
Listens to narrative, explanatory, procedural, and mixed genre texts read aloud			5R
Requests favorite books and rereads			5R
Distinguishes print from pictures	LIT2		

Combining individual literacy foundations with specific literacy skills: 4-5 years old

Language, Speaking and Listening, and Play	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Expresses and understands thoughts, ideas, and needs and increasingly uses language to explain, persuade, describe processes, and tell stories	LC1, 5 & LIT4	8a,b & 9d	5SL
Uses mostly correct language	LC5	10b	
Speaks and is understood by most listeners	LC5	9b	
Uses conventional grammar and acquires new sentence structures		9c	5SL
Shows steady increase in the acquisition of new words that describe actions, emotions, things, or ideas	LC6	9a	
Demonstrates an increasingly sophisticated understanding of words	LC7	8a	
Engages in more elaborate and creative play and imagination (e.g., “let’s pretend I am the police and there is a bad guy...” or “Let’s have this be a train and these are the tickets, and this is the whistle.”)	ATL13	14b	1LL, 1SC &
Participates in increasingly sophisticated conversations		10a	
Engages in group word games, and group physical activities (i.e., Hide and Seek, Musical Chairs, etc.)		2c	1SM

*Combining individual literacy foundations with specific literacy skills: 4-5 years old
(cont'd)*

Comprehension and Cognition	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Identifies and repeats patterned texts in choral reading			5R
Asks and answers simple questions about stories, games, or activities while engaged in them	SCI4 & LIT5	18a	5SL
Determines meaning from images and pictures			
Records with a group, experiences that demonstrate narrative, explanatory, procedural, and persuasive processes (e.g., making a recipe, watching a butterfly emerge from a cocoon, writing a letter to make a change in the community)	SCI4 & SCI5	19b	5R & 5SL
Begins to identify basic story elements (who are some characters?)			
Makes relevant predictions about experiences, experiments, and texts			5R
Makes increasingly detailed observations and descriptions of objects	SCI1		
Increases attention, focus, and independence when engaged in tasks and experiences	ATL6	11a	
Holds an increasing amount of information in mind to complete tasks or follow multi-step directions	ATL8	8b	
Reading (Decoding) and Writing (Encoding)	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Writes to convey meaning (using some letters)	LIT6	19b	3USM
Writes name (may be very messy letter shapes)		19a	5R & 5W
Practices writing letters using a variety of tools, including crayons, markers, fingers in sand, and Playdoh			5W
Hears and Identifies rhymes		15a	
Turns pages of a book			5SL
Knows what direction the print is read		17b	
Identifies some letters		16a	5R
Distinguishes between letters and numbers	LIT3		5R
Demonstrates an understanding of the connection between print and speech	LIT2		5R
Uses letter sound knowledge		16b	
Engages in singing, rhymes, chants and finger play and hears and identifies rhymes and syllables	LIT1	15a 15	
Draws pictures, writes and dictates to compose narrative, explanatory, or procedural texts			5W
Listens to increasingly sophisticated narrative, explanatory, procedural, and mixed genre texts read aloud			5R
Recognizes and duplicates simple repeated patterns	M7	23	
Writes to convey meaning (using some letters)	LIT6	19b	3USM

Combining individual literacy foundations with specific literacy skills: 5-6 years old

Language; Speaking and Listening; and Play	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Tells personal stories or retells stories from books, and makes-up stories and story lines		9d & 18c	5R
Increasingly uses language to explain, persuade, and describe processes			5SL
Explains thinking, with prompting, and extrapolates on original ideas or thoughts	SL1a		
Participates in collaborative conversations and discussions about books and experiences	SL1b	10a	5SL
Listens to texts, classmates, adults, and peers, and responds appropriately to information exchanges	SL1ab	10a	
States opinions and preferences about content and texts during conversations and discussions	SL2 & SL3	10a	
Speaks audibly and clearly	SL6	9b	5SL
Produces and expands complete sentences	L1f		
Explores word relationships (i.e., sorts common objects by word categories, produces antonyms and synonyms, can differentiate among similar nouns e.g., walking, marching, strutting)	L5a-d	9c	6K
Uses words acquired through conversations, experiences, and being read to	L6	9a	5SL
Engages in socio-dramatic play (composing stories, revising stories, naming characters, and creating plots)		14b	3USM
Engages in manipulative play (building, describing, experimenting, testing, etc.)		11c	3ULM
Engages in word games, and physical activities (i.e., Duck, Duck, Goose, etc.) and plays by rules		2c	
Comprehension and Cognition	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Retells stories, and identifies main topic including supporting details with prompting	RL & RI2		5SL
Identifies, with support, story elements (characters, setting, major events)	RL3		
Describes, with support, the connection between events, ideas, and/or information (i.e., caterpillars and butterflies; heat and ice)	RI3	12b	5SL
Asks and answers, with prompting, questions about unknown words in a text, conversation or experience	RL & RI4		5SL
Identifies common types of text (i.e., stories, poems, nonfiction, etc.)	RL 5		
Explains, with support, how pictures and illustrations relate to a story or text	RL7 & RI7		5W
Compares and contrasts, with support, familiar stories, similar texts, ideas and experiences	RL9 & RI9		
Reads emergent reader texts, including patterned texts, with purpose and understanding	RF4	18b	5R
Develops opinions and preferences about content and texts			5R

*Combining individual literacy foundations with specific literacy skills: 5-6 years old
(cont'd)*

Reading (Decoding) and Writing	HS	GOLD®	ELG
Uses a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces and texts giving information	W1, 2, & 3		
Writes short pieces to convey meaning	RF1b	19b	5W
Begins to read personal writing	RF2a	18b	5R
Writes many upper- and lower case letters	RF2b-e		5W
Produces and recognizes rhymes	RF1ac	15a	
Hears and identifies smaller units of speech	RF1d	15c	
Uses a book correctly, and may rely on finger while reading simple patterned texts	RF3ab	17b	5R
Recognizes and names all upper- and lowercase letters	RF3c	16a	
Produces the consonant sounds and long and short vowel sounds	L2cd	16b	
Writes phonetically with sound-symbol relationships			
Capitalizes the first word and pronouns	L2a		
Recognizes and names end punctuation	L2b		

**Progress by
the end of
6 years.**



By six years old children have grown leaps and bounds. They have their own original ideas and thoughts that they bring to all of their experiences (i.e., readings, events, and interactions etc.), and share them readily. They speak well within their cultural vernaculars and express themselves and understand others, especially when the subject matter is at their level.

They are great at school and can participate attentively for books being read aloud in class lessons and discussions. They contribute to projects, experiments, investigations, and write about a number of topics that interest them and are important to them.

Children at this age use their understanding of books (concepts about print, words carry the message, pictures support the text information), to “read” before they are able to actually read the words. However, using their book knowledge, they are able to read simple patterned and predictable texts with easy sight words and some simple decodable words independently (i.e., turn pages, point to words with one-to-one matching, check that the picture matches the meaning of what they read). They understand what they read and can retell simple stories. They delight in responding to open ended questions about books especially if the books interest them, and if they are asked preference and opinion questions.

Children at this age use their understanding of books (concepts about print, words carry the message, pictures support the text information), to “read” before they are able to actually read the words.

These children play for longer periods of time in groups creating storylines and using their imagination. During play they have the opportunity to direct their thinking and produce original self-directed speech. These children need to talk a lot. They are becoming better speakers and need plenty of opportunities to talk for real purposes.

When they talk during

work time, they should be encouraged to express complete thoughts, explain their thinking, and defend the thoughts, ideas and positions they express. It is their cultures, experiences, and unique environments that lead to their ideas, inferences, and interpretations and are uncovered when full expression is prompted.

By the end of kindergarten, alongside supportive adults and friends who they can learn with and from, children are excited to learn about the world through investigation, experimentation, and exploration and **READING**. They are all set to be readers and writers!

Using reading, writing, speaking, and listening to learn and communicate: 6-7 years old

Language (Semantics, Morphology, & Syntax) and Play	CCSS	ELG
Uses language to explain, persuade, describe processes, state opinions, and produce narratives that may include some details, facts, and reasons	SL4	5SL
Produces sophisticated correct sentences in response to prompts (i.e., simple and compound declaratives, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory), or to express thoughts and ideas	L1j	
Acquires new vocabulary through word solving (e.g., sentence-level context)	L4a-c	5SL
Sorts words into categories for deeper conceptual understanding	L5a	6S
Defines words by categories or one or more key attributes (e.g., a duck is a bird that swims; a tiger is a large cat with stripes)	L5b	
Uses many conventions of Standard English (common, proper, and possessive nouns; personal, possessive, and indefinite pronouns; past, present, and future, adjectives, conjunctions, and prepositions, etc.)	L1b-i	
Engages in socio-dramatic activities (actively composing stories, revising stories, naming characters, and creating plots)		6A
Engages in manipulative activities (building, describing, experimenting, testing, etc.)	6k	
Engages in word games, and physical activities (i.e., Duck, Duck, Goose, etc.)		6A
Learns through discovery		6K
Speaking and Listening	CCSS	ELG
Asks and answers questions in whole group, small group, and one-on-one settings, about books, experiences, events, and information	RL1, RI1, SL1, 2 & 3	
Communicates ideas with details, feelings, understanding, and expression	SL4	5SL
Participates in conversations and discussions to clarify ideas and thoughts, build on ideas and thoughts, and to listen and learn new ideas and perspectives	SL1bc	5SL
Uses appropriate habits of discussion (i.e., looks at speaker, speaks audibly, listens to speaker, etc.)	SL1a	
Writing (Craft & style and Grammar & Mechanics)	CCSS	ELG
Begins to use writing to explain, persuade, describe processes, state opinions, and produce narratives that may include some detail, facts, reasons and a sense of closure	W1, 2 & 3	5W
Writes collaboratively with teacher and peers, responds to, and revises as new ideas emerge	W5 & 8	
Researches topics to strengthen ideas presented in writing	W7	
Uses varying tools to produce and publish writing (i.e., digital, reports, etc.)	W6	
Understands and uses basic features of print (capitalizations, ending punctuation, commas in dates and lists, etc.)	L2a-c	
Prints all upper- and lower case letters	L1a	5W
Uses conventional spelling and sophisticated phonetic spelling for untaught/unknown words	L2de	
Begins to use writing to explain, persuade, describe processes, state opinions, and produce narratives that may include some detail, facts, reasons and a sense of closure	W1, 2 & 3	5W

Using reading, writing, speaking, and listening to learn and communicate: 6-7 years old (cont'd)

Reading (Comprehension and Decoding)	CCSS	ELG
Retells stories with key details, central theme, and a beginning, middle, and end	RL2	5R
Describes major story elements (characters, setting, problem, etc.)	RL3	5R
Identifies the main topic	RI2	
Identifies important/provocative words in stories	RL4	
Describes the difference between narrative and informational texts	RL5	
Compares and contrasts characters' experience within and across stories	RL9	
Identifies who is telling the story/POV	RL6	
Provides text evidence to support ideas in the text	RI8	
Describes connections between events, ideas, information, and individuals in a text	RI3	
Understands and uses simple text features (e.g., table of contents, glossaries, pictures, diagrams, etc.)	RI5	
Understands and uses basic features of print (capitalizations, ending punctuation, etc.)	RF1	5R
Segments words into phonemes	RF2	
Decodes regularly spelled one-syllable words	RF3b	
Knows final -e and common vowel patterns for representing long vowels	RF3c	
Decodes two-syllable words by breaking the word apart	RF3e	
Uses word-solving strategies to read (i.e., segments words into sounds, uses finger when stuck, gets mouth ready, thinks about whether the word makes sense, skips and reads on for understanding, checks the illustrations for support, etc.)	RF2, 3 & 4	5R
Reads silently		

**Progress by
the end of
1st grade.**



By seven years old children have strong preferences and interests and express these on a regular basis. These preferences become apparent in their friendships, the activities they choose, and the subject matter and content they are most interested in. They understand their role as a student in school and a learner in the class. They are excited learners who still want to be actively engaged in curriculum that is exciting and hands-on.

Children at this age are early readers, and they are proud of their abilities to read books and rely more heavily on print rather than texts to convey meaning.

Children at this age are early readers and are proud of their abilities to read books and rely more heavily on print rather than images to convey meaning. They begin to read books silently. They express genre preferences, favorite authors, and have strong interests and opinions about content. They gain self-reliance in reading and apply word-solving skills independently to read simple and more challenging texts with a standard storyline including beginning, middle, and end, or within a single informational genre (i.e., procedural, biographical, or descriptive). They are working on endurance with reading and can read short, grade appropriate books from beginning to end with understanding.

They can sit for longer periods of time for a read-aloud and engage in author studies or chapter book reading over multiple days. Their understanding of the content becomes more sophisticated and, they are able to engage in discussions drawing upon multiple comprehension strategies, beyond making connections and predictions. As they listen to books read aloud, they are able to make inferences and develop interpretations based on their own experience and textual evidence.

They write short self-directed pieces, reports, stories, and write in response to books or prompts. Their writing crosses multiple genres and while they are short pieces, they are able to write genre specific pieces such as a book report, or a descriptive story, or an explanatory text.

They play games, negotiate rules, and take turns. They are still very active and motivated by play and active learning. While their attention span is significantly increased from earlier years, they still need many changes and shifts in focus. The best way to hold their attention and get the highest performance from them is to engage them in work they find interesting.

Using reading, writing, speaking, and listening to learn and communicate: 7-8 years old

Language (Semantics, Morphology, & Syntax) and Play	CCSS	ELG
Convincingly uses language to explain, persuade, describe processes, state opinions, and produce narratives including some detail, facts, and reasons	SL4	
Produces, expands, and rearranges complete simple and compound sentences correctly	L1f	
Identifies new words and their meanings through word solving (including sentence-level context, root words, affixes, prediction, glossaries and dictionaries, etc.)	L4a-e	5R
Uses conventions of Standard English (common, proper, and possessive nouns; personal, possessive, and indefinite pronouns; past, present, and future, adjectives, conjunctions, and prepositions, etc.)	L3 & L1a-d	
Uses adjectives and adverbs and chooses between them depending on what is being modified	L1e	
Engages building, describing, experimenting, testing, etc.)		6S
Engages in table games and increasingly sophisticated physical activities		2BR
Works well in groups and encourages others to join		2BR
Speaking and Listening	CCSS	ELG
Participates in conversations and discussions to clarify ideas and thoughts, build on ideas and thoughts, and to listen and learn new ideas and perspectives	SL1	5R & 5SL
Recounts and describes information from texts or that is presented through other media	SL2	5SL
Asks and answers questions regularly to clarify information and gain deeper understanding	SL3	
Speaks audibly and in coherent, complete sentences	SL4	
Writing (Craft & style and Grammar & Mechanics)	CCSS	ELG
Uses writing to explain, persuade, describe processes, state opinions, and produce narratives that include appropriate details, facts, reasons, and supporting information, and concludes appropriately.	W1, 2 & 3	5W
Engages in the formal writing process including revising and editing in response to feedback	W5	
Writes with more detail and organization		5W
Participate in shared research and report production	W6 & 7	
Understands and uses basic features of print consistently correctly (capitalizations, ending punctuation, commas in dates, lists, and conventional writing forms, apostrophes for contractions and possessives, general spelling patterns and consultation of appropriate reference materials, etc.)	L2a-e	

Using reading, writing, speaking, and listening to learn and communicate: 7-8 years old (cont'd)

Reading (Comprehension and Word Study)	CCSS	ELG
Ask and answers who, what, where, when, why, and how questions that demonstrate understanding of a text	RL1 & RI1	5R
Describes key character actions and story events, and determines the central theme, message, moral, or lesson	RL2&3	
Describes the connection between events, ideas, concepts, or steps in informational texts	RI3	
Explains the purpose of a text, and what the author is trying to convey with the text	RI6 & 8	5R
Analyzes, with support, a paragraph within a text for meaning, key words, and/or significance within the larger text	RL4, RI2 & 4	
Describes the overall story structure as well as keeping track of main plots and sub plots	RL5	
Identifies differences in characters, their points of view, motivations, and changes overtime	RL6	
Compares and contrasts stories and texts on the same or similar topics	RL9 & RI9	
Uses visual comprehension to aid meaning (i.e., text features such as, diagrams, illustrations, charts, etc.)	RL7 & RI7	5R
Reads with expression and fluency		5R
<u>Distinguishes long and short vowels when reading regularly spelled words</u>	RF3a	
<u>Knows spelling-sound correspondence for common vowel patterns</u>	RF3b	
<u>Reads two syllable words with long vowels</u>	RF3c	
<u>Decodes words with common prefixes and suffixes</u>	RF3d	
Reads chapter books		

Progress by
the end of
2nd grade.



By eight years old children are becoming independent readers, thinkers, and speakers. They are still very interested in what the adults around them expect, but they are beginning to understand that sometimes their beliefs and understandings are different from those of their teachers. They understand the purpose of school better and can be an active partner in directing their own learning.

Children at this age read silently and fluently with very little attention paid to word-solving. They begin to read entirely for meaning, attending to character motivation and development, overall plot and basic subplots, with the goal of reading longer and more complex texts (i.e., chapter books, a series with one main character, connected short stories). They can read all sorts of informational texts for real purposes and to conduct research, pursue an interest, understand a topic better, or to follow directions. They are metacognitive readers who regularly self-correct,

Children at this age read silently and fluently, with very little attention paid to word-solving.

apply comprehension strategies as needed, and engage in critical thinking about their reading. They have longer attention spans and more defined interests. They choose reading and writing activities for free time and express their interests and points of view about books, topics, and experiences.

Discussions, where children have the opportunity to express their thinking and hear the thoughts of others, are some of the best ways to support their deep reading comprehension. In fact, debates, arguments, and real life dilemmas present some of the best curricular content for these children. They will learn the thinking patterns and the ability to use academic English well through real opportunities to learn about real topics and engage in real discussions.

These advanced reading, thinking, and speaking skills will translate to writing. As they get better at close reading and understanding and using academic language, they will become better at using their many different thinking patterns in writing. They will write increasingly sophisticated “pieces” and with instruction will begin to add personal style and well-developed craft. These children are on the precipice of using reading and writing in the ways we hope for from our earliest learners.

Using reading, writing, speaking, and listening to learn and communicate: 8-9 years old

Language (Semantics, Morphology, & Syntax) and Play	CCSS	ELG
Uses language effectively to explain, persuade, describe processes, state opinions, and produce narratives that include relevant and appropriate details, facts, and reasons	SL4	
Produces predominantly complex sentences	L1i	
Identifies new words and their meanings through word solving (including sentence-level context, root words, affixes, prediction, glossaries and dictionaries, etc.)	L4a-e	5R
Distinguishes the literal and non-literal meanings of words and phrases in context (i.e., take steps)	L5a	
Uses Standard English when speaking	L3	
Explains the functions of most common conventions of speech	L1	
Uses abstract nouns (i.e., childhood)	L1c	
Demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English	L2	
Plays well alone or with others, spends hours at one activity (i.e., sports, building, inventing, designing, etc.)		2BR
Works well with groups (including table games, sports, plays, etc.)		2BR
Speaking and Listening	CCSS	ELG
Prepares for conversations and discussions through reading, writing, and thinking	SL1a	
Asks specific questions that clarify and build upon the discussion	SL1c	5SL
Explains personal ideas and interpretations about experiences, ideas, and texts	SL1d	5SL
Reports on topics and texts and recounts experiences with relevant information, and descriptive details	SL3	5SL
Speaks clearly at an appropriate pace	SL4	
Writing (Craft & style and Grammar & Mechanics)	CCSS	ELG
Writes longer opinion pieces, informative/explanatory pieces, and narratives according to the appropriate standards governing each genre of writing	W1, 2, & 3	1FC
Uses the writing process (i.e., planning, editing, and revising) as needed and in response to feedback and to strengthen and publish pieces of writing	W5 & 6	5W
Writes short reports based on research to build knowledge about a topic	W7	
Writes routinely, over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of purposes (i.e., academic writing, creative writing, reflective writing, etc.) and audiences	W10	
Chooses words for effect	L3a	
Demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English	L2	
Recognizes the differences between the conventions of spoken and written English	L3b	
Uses commas and quotation marks in dialogue	L2c	
Forms and uses possessives	L2d	
Spells words correctly	5W	

Using reading, writing, speaking, and listening to learn and communicate: 8-9 years old (cont'd)

Reading (Comprehension and Word Study)	CCSS	ELG
Asks and answers text based questions using text as primary source for understanding and responding	RL1 & R11	
Determines the main idea, purpose or point of texts, across multiple genres, and explains how main ideas are supported throughout the text	RL2 & R12	
Uses text-based language when discussing text	RL6 & R16	
Distinguishes personal point of view from that of the author		
Determines the meaning of words and phrases in the context of the text, and explains how specific words, paragraphs, and sections are important within the overall text	RL4 & R14	
Understands how sections of the text build on, and relate to other sections, and the overall content	RL5 & R15	
Uses visual comprehension to deepen understanding (i.e., text features such as, diagrams, illustrations, charts, timelines etc.)	RL7 & R17	
Compares texts on similar topics		5R
Understands the purpose of, and how to read a variety of documents (i.e., directions, recipes, etc.)		5R
Identifies and knows the meaning of the most common prefixes and suffixes	RF3a	
Decodes words with common Latin suffixes	RF3b	
Decodes multi-syllabic words	RF3c	
Uses context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding	RF4c	
Rereads as necessary to support comprehension	RF4c	
Uses reference materials as necessary		5R

**Progress by
the end of
3rd grade.**



By nine years old, children are ready to learn at school in a way they have not before. They are in charge of their learning. They are able to remain involved and attentive even if the subject matter is not interesting. However, they will actively evaluate their teachers and the content and if it remains uninteresting to them, they may choose to withdraw.

Curriculum for these children should be interest based, grounded in real world content, and allow for opportunities for them to express their ideas and hear differing interpretations. They should be exposed to all kinds of texts and documents to further their understanding of topics. They use their experience and personal knowledge combined with that of their knowledge of genres, text structures and features, root words and text-based language to determine overall text meaning, and a textually supported interpretation. They read to learn for real purposes and to complete assignments. They also read for personal choice and enjoyment. They can select books that will hold their attention and usually have a series, genre, or character type that they choose to read. Their discussions and conversations are informed by facts and interpretations. They can hold and defend their own opinion, even if it differs from that of a peer or author.

Children leave third grade as independent readers and writers who use literacy to engage with the real world in much the same way adults do. Upper elementary readers who are progressing at an appropriate rate steadily increase in their abilities to judge their own understanding of text and constantly employ a growing arsenal of comprehension strategies (i.e. visualizing, summarizing, questioning) and vocabulary strategies to remedy misunderstandings. They also continue to grow their vocabulary, increasing their awareness and understanding of the power of words, both in general and academic settings. They begin to see reading as an experience that varies according to their own purpose, the author, the genre, the mode of communication and their own social context. As they progress, they become more proficient in wider ranges of reading, even as they also gain more security in their own preferences when given a choice. As they move through the grades, they grow in their ability to see texts as open to interpretation and as created by humans, and thus, imperfect. In addition, they begin to place texts in dialogue with one another in order to build more complex understandings. They use reading across their lives to gain information, to revise understandings, and for the pleasure it can bring.

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Every student ready for career, college and life.

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