

Six Early Literacy Skills

Vocabulary

The more words children know, the more easily they will be able to begin decoding print once they begin to read. It is particularly important that we focus on this while reading to children, because in English, our spoken vocabulary is dramatically smaller than our written vocabulary so as they begin to read, children will encounter many words in text that they will not be exposed to in daily life.

Maps to: Identifying high-frequency words, as well as low frequency, high functioning words, word learning

Print Motivation

Print Motivation is a child's interest in books and learning to read. Children with high print motivation express excitement about reading and being read to and will often play with books or pretend to write. We can encourage this by expressing our own love of reading to children, and by making the time we spend reading to them exciting and special.

Maps to: Behavior management, quality whole book read through, physical delivery, responsiveness

Print Awareness

Print Awareness is a basic understanding of how English text works. For example, words move from top to bottom on the page, and from left to right. On a more basic level, it is an understanding that writing on a page is a series of symbols that represent words, and making the connection that when someone reads out loud, they are decoding the print on the page.

Maps to: Orientation, physical delivery, environmental print, long/short words, non-linear print,

Narrative Skills

Narrative Skills are the ability to tell a story. This begins with the understanding that a story has a beginning, middle, and end. These are important skills because they allow children to make sense of what they're learning to read.

Maps to: Quality whole book read through, language elicitation, extension, orientation

Letter Knowledge

Letter Knowledge is learning that letters are different from each other, and that each letter has its' own unique associated sounds.

Maps to: Punctuation marks, specific letters, uppercase/lowercase letters

Phonological Awareness

Phonological Awareness is the most difficult early literacy skill to develop, and the one that most children who experience difficulty learning to read struggle with. It is the ability to hear that words are comprised of small but repeating sounds -larger than letters, but smaller than actual words- and to manipulate these sounds. Children with strong phonological awareness can hear and create rhymes and alliteration, complete words with sounds left out, and are aware of the rhythms language frequently takes.

Maps to: Long/short words, language elicitation, physical delivery

By: Elizabeth French, August 2013