



PARENT GUIDE TO EARLY READING SKILLS KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3

HELP YOUR CHILD MASTER SOUNDS, LETTERS AND SMOOTH READING

This parent guide of sample ideas was designed to help you grow your child into a strong reader. You don't have to be a teacher or a reading specialist. But start as early as you can, even before kindergarten begins, and practice often. And don't hold back from making it fun.

If you want help or more ideas, visit [Readby4th.org](https://www.readby4th.org) and ask your child's teacher to partner directly with you to support your child's reading adventure.

KINDERGARTEN

Sounds "Phonological Awareness"

CHILD CAN:

1. Tell if words rhyme. Bat, mat: YES! Bat, ball: No.
2. Say words that rhyme. Hears "hop" and says words like: stop, shop, cop. Hears "day" and says words, like: say, play, sleigh.
3. Hear a word and make just the first sound of that word. Hears "pup" and then makes the sound /p/. Hears "hamburger" and makes the sound /h/.
4. Hear a word and make just the last sound of that word. Hears "bad" and then makes the sound of /d/. Hears "drum" and then makes the sound of /m/.
5. Hear a simple three-letter word, and make just the middle sound. Hears "bad" and then makes the sound of /a/. Hears "hop" and then makes the sound of /o/.

Letters and Words "Phonics"

CHILD CAN:

1. Recognize and name all of the letters
2. Write all of the capital and lower-case letters.
3. Read and spell simple three-letter, short-vowel words (by the end of the kindergarten school year). Reads and spells words, like: cat, met, sip, hop, and hug.
4. Read and spell simple long-vowel words (by the end of the kindergarten school year). Reads and spells words like: rake, bite, and cute.
5. Say the sound each letter makes. Adult points to, or writes, a letter and child makes the sound of the letter (including short and long vowel sounds).
6. Read kindergarten-level high-frequency sight words that may not follow rules like: I, the, and was.

GRADE 1

Sounds "Phonological Awareness"

CHILD CAN:

1. Hear the number of syllables in a word. One syllable: cat. Two syllables: tiger. Three syllables: elephant.
2. Hear the difference between short- and long-vowel sounds. Child can say:
 - Short "a" vowel sound in cap and the long "a" vowel sound in cape
 - Short "e" vowel sound in pet and the long "e" vowel sound in meat
 - Short "i" vowel sound in bit and the long "i" vowel sound in light
 - Short "o" vowel sound in hop and the long "o" vowel sound in snow
 - Short "u" vowel sound in up and the long "u" vowel sound in cube
3. Put sounds together to make a word. Child can hear:
 - Three separate sounds, /p/ /i/ /g/, and says "pig."
 - Three separate sounds, /ch/ /o/ /p/, and says "chop."
 - Four separate sounds, /s/ /l/ /i/ /p/, and says "slip."
4. Make the middle sound in words with three sounds. Hears "lap", and then says the short-vowel sound /a/. Hears "rope" and says the long-vowel sound /o/.
5. Break apart words with three or four sounds into individual sounds. Hears "ride" and says the sound /r/, then the long-vowel sound /i/, then the sound /d/. Hears "flat" and says the sound /f/, then the sound /l/, then the short-vowel sound /a/, then the sound /t/.

Letters and Words "Phonics"

CHILD CAN:

1. Read and spell words with digraphs (two letters with one sound), such as: wh, th, sh, ch, ck. Sample words with digraphs: chin, check, thud, thick, ship, which.
2. Read and spell words with initial blends (two consonants next to each other that make two sounds), such as: slip, drag, flop, step, trip, grin, stun.
3. Read and spell long-vowel words with digraphs and initial blends, such as: plate, chime, spoke, shine, she, cry, and fly.
4. Read words with double vowels, such as: rain, meet, meat, read, and heat.
5. Read and spell two-syllable words with short-vowel sounds, such as: rabbit, bandit, and suntan.
6. Read first-grade-level, high-frequency sight words that may not follow rules like: what, could, and said.

GRADE 2

Letters and Words “Phonics”

CHILD CAN:

1. Use a final “e” to make the vowel sound long, adding a final “e” to change words, such as: cap/cape; fin/fine; cut/cute; and not/note.
2. Read two-syllable words with long vowels, such as: baby, pancake, happy, combine, and refine.
3. Read and write common contractions, for example in rewriting the following words as contractions: “can not” to “can’t” and “I have” to “I’ve.”
4. Read words with common prefixes (beginning of word) and suffixes (end of word), such as:
 - Prefixes: re (recycle, replay, remind); dis (dislike, disrupt, disappoint); un (unpack, unhappy, undo); and pre (preheat, preview, premade)
 - Suffixes: s, es (rabbits, boxes, brushes); ed (jumped, cried, folded); and ing (ringing, reminding, standing)
5. Read second-grade-level, high-frequency sight words that may not follow rules like: know, through, and because.

GRADE 3

Letters and Words “Phonics”

CHILD CAN:

1. Read and understand words with common prefixes (beginning of word) and suffixes (end of word), such as:
 - Prefixes: im (impossible, impression, immature); mis (mistake, misrepresent, misread) and il (illustrate, illogical).
 - Suffixes: ly (lovely, happily, gladly); er, or (player, writer, visitor); ion (champion, action, vacation); able (dependable, readable, reasonable); ible (visible, audible); and ment (department, amazement, compartment).
2. Read multisyllable words that increase in length, such as:
 - Compound words: playground, handshake, snowman, and highway.
 - Two-syllable words: rabbit, tiger, and donkey.
 - Three-syllable words: misconduct, rectangle, and gentleman.
3. Read third-grade-level, high-frequency sight words that may not follow rules like: thought, enough, and together.

Smooth Reading “Fluency”

KINDERGARTEN

CHILD CAN:

Read at independent reading Level A (at the beginning of the school year) and at Level D (by the end of kindergarten).

GRADE 1

CHILD CAN:

Read at independent reading Level D (at the beginning of the school year) and at Level J (by the end of first grade).

GRADE 2

CHILD CAN:

Read at independent reading Level J (at the beginning of the school year) and at Level M (by the end of second grade).

GRADE 3

CHILD CAN:

Read at independent reading Level M (at the beginning of the school year) and at Level P (by the end of third grade).

ALL CHILDREN AT EVERY GRADE LEVEL CAN:

- Practice reading aloud the same book using correct words and expression.
- Read aloud with a speaking voice.
- Read a lot of books on different topics.
- Enjoy adults reading books to him.

Download a “Parent Guide to Reading Levels” at Readby4th.org or ask your child’s teacher.

YOUR CHILD’S LOVE OF READING BEGINS WITH YOU.

- Make reading a fun family activity.
- Think about your child’s reading level and interests when selecting books.
- Team up with teachers. Bring this flyer to your parent meeting.
- Help your child get to school every day on time. Reading is taught in the morning.



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Read by 4th, a citywide coalition of partners managed by the Free Library of Philadelphia.