



Foundational Literacy Skills

Oral Language Skills

Oral language skills are the backbone of early literacy. When children engage in conversations, sing songs, and listen to stories, they're building the vocabulary, grammar, and listening skills that will prepare them for reading and writing.

Talking: Talking with children, asking questions, and describing what you're doing helps them learn new words and understand sentence structure.

Singing: Songs and Nursery Rhymes introduce rhythm and rhyme, which support memory and help children become aware of sounds in language.

Reading Aloud: Reading together not only builds vocabulary but also encourages comprehension skills as children listen to and discuss the story.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is a key pre-reading skill that involves recognizing and working with sounds in spoken language. Mastering these skills makes it easier for children to understand the connection between letters and sounds when they begin to read.

Rhyming: Recognizing and Producing Rhymes (e.g., "cat" and "hat") is a fun way to become aware of sounds in words.

Segmenting Sounds: Breaking words into individual sounds (e.g., "c-a-t") is a crucial step in learning to read.

Blending Sounds: Putting sounds together to form words (e.g., combining "c-a-t" to make "cat") helps children prepare for sounding out words.

Encourage phonological awareness through playful activities, like rhyming games and clapping out sounds in words.

Tips

Try these simple activities to build foundational literacy skills at home or in early childhood settings:

Singing Nursery Rhymes: Songs like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and "Baa Baa Black Sheep" are fun and introduce rhyme and rhythm.

Playing Word Games: Try games that involve rhyming or breaking words into sounds (e.g., "Can you think of a word that rhymes with 'sun'?").

Pointing Out Print: Label items around the home or classroom, and point to the text when reading to emphasize the role of print.

With everyday interactions and playful activities, children naturally develop the skills that set the stage for successful reading and learning.

Milestones

- **By Age 3:** Children can usually recognize simple rhymes, enjoy singing songs, and begin to listen to stories.
- **By Age 4:** Children may start identifying letters and recognize that text carries meaning.
- **By Age 5:** Many children can recognize familiar words, follow along with text, and start to understand word-sound connections.

More Resources

