



## Seven (7) Components of Literacy\*

### 1. Literacy as a Source of Enjoyment

A central goal for emergent readers is to introduce them to the power and pleasure of literacy. Children need to experience the enjoyment of being read to, experience new words in meaningful contexts, and have fun with rhymes and songs. Instill in children a love of reading!

### 2. Vocabulary and Language

Oral language is the foundation of literacy. Literacy learning begins with listening and speaking. Children need to learn new words and learn about the structure of language through talking with peers and adults, enjoying songs, rhymes, fingerplays, hearing new words, and listening to print read aloud and talking about new words.

### 3. Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is hearing and understanding the different sounds and patterns of spoken language. It includes the different ways oral language can be broken down into individual parts, for instance, separate sounds and syllables. Phonological awareness develops along a continuum from simple skills (e.g., listening) to very complex skills (e.g. manipulating individual sounds in words).

### 4. Knowledge of Print

Knowledge of print refers to all the concepts related to how print is organized and used to convey meaning. Children begin to understand that print carries meaning but that written language is different from oral language. They develop an understanding that

- a. Print serves a number of purposes in our society (functions of print).
- b. Print has distinct features and forms (forms of print).
- c. Print is organized in a particular way (print conventions).

### 5. Letters and Words

Readers must understand that a letter is a symbol that represents one or more sounds. A more complex level of understanding requires knowing that these symbols can be grouped together to form words and that words have meanings. The idea that written spellings correspond to spoken words is called the alphabetic principle. Children's understanding of the alphabetic principle is a predictor of future reading success.

### 6. Comprehension

Comprehension, the process of making meaning, is the goal of reading instruction. It is connecting what you read and hear with your experiences. Background knowledge helps the reader understand the meaning of language. Even though preschoolers are not reading conventionally, they try to comprehend stories being read and told, oral directions and information, conversations, and subject area content (e.g. science, math, and music concepts.)

### 7. Books and Other Texts

When children understand books and other texts, they learn that written language serves many purposes. They realize that written language is a valuable tool for learning about the world and a way to communicate with others. To increase children's understanding of books and other texts, teachers give children experience with a wide variety of books from numerous categories, or genres, and help them develop concepts about books and book-handling skills.

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