

# Six Early Literacy Skills



Early Literacy is everything children should know about reading and writing before they can actually read or write. Literacy skills begin developing in the first 5 years of life with your child holding and chewing on a book, to wanting a favourite book read over and over, to becoming a preschooler or kindergartner who loves to “read” a story to you from memory.

Young children entering school with specific early literacy skills have the greatest opportunity to become successful readers and writers. Early literacy skills include, Print Motivation, Print Awareness, Letter Knowledge, Vocabulary, Phonological Awareness & Narrative Skills.

## Print Motivation

Print Motivation is taking an interest in and enjoying books. A child with print motivation loves being read to, plays with books, and pretends to write. Trips to the library are fun, motivational, and FREE! Encourage print motivation in your child by making reading a special shared time with you. Make books accessible to your child. Let your child see you enjoying reading. Talk to your child about how we use reading and/or writing almost every minute of the day.

## Print Awareness

Print Awareness is a child’s ability to point to the words on the page of a book. It includes learning that writing (in English) follows rules: print moves top to bottom and left to right, and that the person reading is someone that knows what all the letters and words say. Point out and read words to your child everywhere you see them: on signs, advertisements, labels, stores, candies, products, etc.

## Letter Knowledge

Letter Knowledge is the ability to recognize and name letters (upper and lower case) and produce the sounds they make. Develop your child’s letter knowledge by using lots of fun reading and/or writing activities: pointing out and naming letters in a book, on a sign or on a label; drawing letters in sand or shaving cream; painting letters on paper with brushes, etc. Teach the child how to write the letters in his/her name (one letter at a time) when he/she begins using a crayon to draw or “write”.

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary (knowing the names of things) is the most important skill for children to have when learning to read. By the time your child enters school, he/she should know between 3,000-5,000 words. Help develop your child’s vocabulary by reading and rereading a variety of books (fiction and nonfiction) and teaching the names of all the objects in your child’s world.

## Narrative Skills

Narrative Skills help a child understand and tell a story and describe things, like what happened at a birthday party or about a trip to Grandma’s. Parents can help strengthen their child’s narrative skills by asking him/her to tell what is happening in a story or book, instead of always listening to you read. Ask your child to tell you about things he/she has done or will do that involve a regular sequence of steps: getting ready to go out, how to play a particular game, etc.

## Phonological Awareness

Phonological Awareness is an understanding of hearing and manipulating sounds in words. Phonological awareness includes the ability to hear and create rhymes (bat, cat, gnat, hat, mat, and sat), say words with sounds left out (bat without b is at), and put two word chunks together to make a word (fl + at = flat). An understanding of phonological awareness begins with a child’s exposure to and practice with the previous five steps.