

Areas of Literacy

CONCEPTS OF PRINT

Concepts of print are the things readers need to know about books and print. It may seem very basic, but children need to know that books have a front and a back. They need to be shown that, in English, we read from left to right. They have to understand that the letters on a page make up words that have meaning, and that pictures can also help them understand what they're reading.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Phonological awareness has to do with the ability to separate out and play with sounds within words without the use of written letters. When children have strong phonological awareness, they can recognize when words rhyme, and they can come up with rhyming words. They can recognize when words start with the same sound, and they can think of words that start with the same sound. They can blend individual sounds together to form words and separate words into the individual sounds that make them up. These skills eventually help children use sounds to read and write words.

ORAL LANGUAGE

Oral language involves speaking to communicate ideas and understanding when others speak. The strength of children's oral language, such as their vocabulary and their ability to understand long sentences, has a significant influence on how well children learn to read and write.

LETTER-SOUND KNOWLEDGE

Letter-sound knowledge refers to knowing the names and sounds of letters. For example, letter-sound knowledge means a child knows this shape—M—is called the letter "M" and stands for the *mmmmm* sound as at the beginning of *moon*. This can be tricky because there are 26 letters in the English alphabet that can be used alone or in combination to make about 44 sounds. These skills eventually help children use letters to read the words that others have written and to represent the sounds they hear when writing words.

COMPREHENSION

Comprehension is the purpose of reading. It is the ability to make sense of a book or other piece of writing. When we comprehend, we think about what we know already and how that relates to what we are reading. We also think about what the author wants us to know.

WRITING

For young children, writing means expressing meaning by drawing, scribbling, using familiar letters and words, and using their best guesses at how words might be spelled. These different types of writing allow children to communicate and to share their thinking with people who may not be present when they write.