

Delivering Strong Early Readers

Many students across the country and in Delaware are not learning to read at the necessary level to succeed in college, career, and life. In fact, according to the 2022 Smarter Balanced assessment data, only 40 percent of third graders in Delaware are proficient in reading.

The Delaware Department of Education and school systems across the country are working to reverse this trend so that all students will read at grade level by the end of third grade, making them strong readers, writers, thinkers, and speakers. Families and caregivers can serve as partners to teachers in fostering literacy and a love of reading.

This guide provides an overview of how families and caregivers can support their children’s literacy development at home.



Understanding Literacy

What is literacy?

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

The information students know about a topic.

COMPREHENSION

The ability to understand, remember, and make meaning of what has been read.

FLUENCY

The ability to read texts accurately, quickly, and expressively, either to oneself or aloud.

ORAL LANGUAGE

The ability to use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

The ability to hear, identify, manipulate, and substitute the sounds that make up speech.

PHONICS

The ability to break down words into sounds and syllables to connect words on paper with the words students hear & speak daily.

VOCABULARY

The ability to use and understand words.

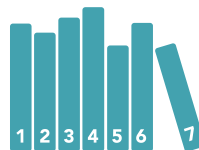
WRITING

The ability to convey thoughts and ideas in a readable form.

Why are these skills important?



Students who struggle with basic reading use a lot of time and energy to get through simple passages and therefore have difficulty comprehending what they read, which is the true purpose of reading.



Students must receive instruction that introduces them to **all seven components of literacy** to build their foundational reading skills.



Building early literacy skills **before grade 3** creates a foundation for children to **competently and confidently read and write** throughout the course of their education and lives.

What are activities I can do at home to support early literacy?

- Create a daily reading routine to read books, magazines, comic books, or any printed materials together. You read a page or section and then have your child read the same page or section. Then have your child answer questions about what they read.
- Look for objects that begin or end with a specific letter in the car or at the grocery store. "I spy with my little eye something that begins with the letter..."
- Have your child go on a treasure hunt for items (book, toy, etc.) that begin with a specific letter or sound and then have them clean it/put it away, etc.
- Read and sing nursery rhymes with your child.
- Watch educational TV channels that encourage vocabulary and build your child's knowledge of animals, plants, weather, the world, etc.

What to do if my child struggles with reading?

- Children in grades K–3 are assessed three times a year using the "universal screening process." This process examines multiple data points to identify children's strengths and potential reading difficulties.
- If the school informs you that your child is having reading difficulties or is behind expectations for their grade level, the school will put a plan in place to provide additional support for your child during the school day to help them be successful.
- If the school identifies your child as having continued reading difficulties after additional supports have been consistently provided, partner with the school to create a plan to give them the support and services they need to be successful.
- If you suspect your child is struggling with reading, schedule a conference with their teacher to discuss their performance in class and the results of their most recent tests and screening results. During this meeting, you and the teacher can discuss the additional support your child may need at school and home.

Questions to ask your child's teacher

- What can I do when I'm reading with my child?
- What can we do at home to encourage reading in fun and stimulating ways?
- What skills or books is my child learning in class that I can support at home?
- What are my child's strengths in reading, speaking, and writing? Where do you have concerns?
- What tests are you using to measure my child's progress in reading, and how is my child performing on these tests?

Tools & Resources to Support Families and Students

Below are additional resources that you can access to further support your child's learning at home.

Achieve the Core Family Guides: Guides to help families learn more about what children should know and be able to do, grade by grade, in math and literacy. (bit.ly/achieve-core)

Readiness Check: A short set of 3 to 5 questions to see your child's reading skills progress for their grade level. (bit.ly/readiness-check-2022)

New Mexico Early Literacy Guides for Families: In-depth information on key skills for literacy development while explaining the importance and progression of these skills in literacy development. (bit.ly/NM-early-literacy)

REL Family Activities: Free videos to practice foundational reading skills at home. (bit.ly/REL-activities)

Reading Tips: One-page parent tips offer easy ways for parents to help kids become successful readers. (bit.ly/reading-tips-for-parents)

Questions? Your child's teacher is a wonderful resource to contact with any questions regarding your child's progress. You can also contact your school's principal for additional support.