

# Literacy Development

Literacy behaviors and skills follow a developmental progression through particular stages. These stages are neither exclusive of or isolated from one another. Children move at different paces through the stages and at times may move back and forth between stages. Even though movement through the stages is likely to be much slower for children with complex learning challenges such as deaf-blindness or multiple disabilities, the behaviors and skills described in each stage are fundamental, regardless of age. Families, caregivers, educators and therapists share the responsibility of implementing strategies designed and adapted to move children along the continuum of Literacy Development.

Note: Age ranges noted in parentheses indicate when one would expect children without disabilities to be engaged in the activities and behaviors listed and are provided for general reference only.

## Building a Foundation for Literacy Development (infants and toddlers)

- Attends to pictures
- Pats pictures
- Holds and carries books
- Points to and names objects
- Turns pages with help
- Mouths books
- Brings a book/Asks to be read to
- “Reads” to self
- Handles writing materials, scribbles
- Recites familiar passages
- Searches for favorite pictures
- Notices and/or protests when adult gets wrong/leaves out a word

## Early Emergent Literacy (preschool)

- Learn that reading and writing are activities in which people engage
- Show interest in books, print
- Handle books
- Become aware that books have stories
- Listen to stories
- Recites phrases and/or stories
- Begin to prefer certain stories
- Scribble, make letter-like shapes or imitate cursive writing

## **Emergent Literacy (early primary)**

- Understand that text/pictures convey meaning
- Make the connection between signed or spoken language and print
- Understand picture books
- Recognize and begin to read familiar environmental print
- Begin to read some words, such as their name
- May write letters

## **Developing Literacy (primary)**

- Awareness that words are made of different sounds
- Decode words (apply knowledge of letter-sound relationships to correctly pronounce written words)
- Comprehend picture books, short chapter books, information materials
- Beginning sight vocabulary
- Put words together to form simple sentences
- Learn to develop ideas in a logical progression
- Write about topics of personal interest in various modes (e.g. letters, stories, notes, poems)

## **Early Independent Literacy (early elementary)**

- Begin to read for interest or information
- Write own ideas
- Answer questions about text
- Read independently for extended periods of time
- Use detail and organization in writing
- Record observations; ask and answer open-ended questions in writing
- Produce writing and artwork to reflect personal response to/understanding of text

## **Independent Reading (mid-elementary)**

- Decreasing support for new tasks or contexts
- Experience new feelings/attitudes through reading
- Reading for information/acquisition of knowledge
- Increased comprehension
- Self-correct quickly
- Read confidently and independently in multiple modes of text
- Written work is organized, coherent and easily understood

## **Expanding Literacy (late elementary and secondary)**

- Reading for information/acquisition of knowledge

- Analyze and think critically about ideas presented in text
- Form own opinions based on facts, invent point of view different from those read
- Read widely, critically and frequently
- Read for a variety of purposes and in a variety of modes
- Can read analytically and thoughtfully
- Write for a variety of reasons and in diverse modes

**Information adapted from the following sources:**

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