

## PK-2 Grade Level Meeting

### Topic: Early Literacy Skill Development in Young Children

We had a wonderful turn-out for our first PK-2 Grade Level meeting on Tuesday, September 18, 2007. Our topic focused on early literacy skill development in young children. Literacy skills, reading and writing, are the foundation of all academic experiences. Whether in science, mathematics, foreign language or music, children must be able to know how to read and to write effectively. The information that follows is a synopsis of the content shared on Tuesday evening. If you wish to obtain the handouts shared at the meeting, please contact Casie Burley, and she will gladly prepare them for you.

There are defined and critical building blocks that must be in place for children to become successful readers and writers.

**1. The Spoken Word: experience talking and listening to language.**

Children that do not hear a lot of language or who are not encouraged to talk often have difficulty learning to read.

**2. Print Awareness: an understanding of how print works and how print is used.**

We use books in certain ways and for certain purposes. Print awareness helps understanding that the words in print and the words we hear and speak are related. Young children need to be aware of the print all around them.

**3. Phonological Awareness: the ability to hear and work with sounds of spoken language.**

Children need to be able to use and manipulate sounds through the use of rhyming words, identifying words that begin with the same beginning sound as another, and that words are made of parts called syllables.

**4. Phonemic Awareness: the understanding that spoken words are made of small, separate sounds called phonemes. Phonemes are the individual sounds of the letters in our alphabet or combinations of letters such as th, sh, ck.**

There are many opportunities for children to develop and gain confidence in their phonemic awareness. Taking words apart and identifying the sounds they hear is called phoneme segmentation. (The word cat has three sounds.../c/ /a/ /t/) Combining phonemes into words is phonemic blending (What word is /th/ /i/ /s/?) and taking a

phoneme out of a word and identifying the new word is called phonemic deletion (What is smile without the /s/?). Phonemic addition and phonemic substitution are important skills as well.

**5. Alphabetic Knowledge: Knowing the names and shapes of letters.**

If children know how to write and say them, they will have an easier time of learning how to read.

**6. Phonics: relationship between sounds of spoken language and letters of written language.**

A solid understanding of these relationships helps children recognize familiar words quickly and decode unfamiliar words with ease. Spelling development is strengthened when children have a strong phonetic understanding.

**7. Vocabulary: the understanding of the words we read and how they impact meaning.**

There is a strong connection between the size of a child's vocabulary and how well they comprehend what they read. Poor readers tend to have a lower vocabulary and have difficulty learning to read. The result is that they don't read. Good readers read more, learn new words and read better, therefore, having greater comprehension of what they have read.

**8. Fluency: the ability to read quickly, accurately, and with expression.**

Fluent readers have automatic word recognition and read smoothly with expression. Fluency allows meaning to be achieved because less thought is going to decoding. Repeated readings help children develop fluency, and good modeling is a wonderful way to teach your children to read fluently. So, read, read, read to your children.

**9. Comprehension: getting meaning from what we read and that we read with a purpose and are actively engaged in the process of reading.**

This is the heart of reading. There are numerous strategies to develop comprehension such as making predictions, connections, organizing information, visualization and more. With all that, reading is a metacognitive act – thinking about our thinking – that allows us to monitor and control what and how we read.