READING rockets | Toolkit for School Psychologists

www.ReadingRockets.org

FOREWORD

As you know, school psychologists play a critical role in the lives of children who are struggling to learn to read. We'd like to help make your job easier.

Together Reading Rockets and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) have created the **Reading Rockets Toolkit for School Psychologists**. We hope it will help you get more involved in the development of comprehensive research-based reading programs in your school district. We also hope it will help you apply evidence-based strategies to your assessments of students with reading difficulties.

We encourage you to incorporate the toolkit resources — including videotape and DVD materials — into an overall program of professional development designed to support early reading instruction and intervention. School psychologists have the power to help more students become good readers — and to keep more kids from unnecessarily entering special education. We hope this toolkit will make a difference for you.

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Getting Started

Effective reading instruction in the early grades can prevent reading difficulties for many children who might otherwise be referred for remedial or special education programs. Research indicates that, today, 37 percent of our nation's fourth graders are performing below the "basic" level, meaning they cannot read well enough to understand a simple story or can barely read at all. We also know that more than two-thirds of high school students receiving special education are three or more grade levels behind in reading, and 20 percent are behind by five or more grade levels. Research shows that reading problems are much more difficult to remediate in later grades, even with the services of special education. And we know how severe the consequences can be.

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, school psychologists are in an unprecedented position to significantly contribute to efforts to ensure that all children receive the most effective scientifically-based reading instruction possible. Reading Rockets is an empirically based program that provides school psychologists with the necessary resources to meet this goal.

This toolkit includes information about the essential elements of reading instruction that were identified by the National Reading Panel and the No Child Left Behind Act, as well as descriptions of the research-based practices that many schools are using to increase reading performance.

In this section of the toolkit you'll find an overview of Reading Rockets as well as some ideas about how to become more involved in the reading curriculum and associated assessment and intervention activities at your school.

Section 2, "Research-Based Reading Instruction," is designed to provide you with a basic foundation for understanding reading and strategies for working with young readers. It also includes several important research summaries about effective reading instruction. We recommend that you study *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*, which is based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the landmark 2000 report of the National Reading Panel. It's located in the back pocket of this toolkit.

Section 3, "Workshops for Teachers," includes step-by-step instructions for conducting workshops for teachers. If you do not have a background in reading instruction, we urge you to take on the role of facilitator and find a reading specialist or other reading professional to conduct these workshops.

Section 4, "Workshops for Parents," includes step-by-step instructions for conducting workshops for parents and other family members.

The following materials are also enclosed in the toolkit to assist with your workshops for teachers and parents: Reading Rockets Video Modules (on VHS tape); *Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers* (on DVD); *Reading Rockets Bilingual Family Guide* (Spanish and English);

Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers Teachers' Guide; and *Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers Viewers' Guide.*

If you do not have a background in reading instruction, we encourage you to read the teachers' guide located in the front pocket of this toolkit. This will help you to become more knowledgeable in this critical field. For those of you who wish to deepen your knowledge even further, we have also included in Section 2 a list of Web sites that will give you access to articles and reports written by this country's leading researchers and experts in the field of reading instruction.

We have included print materials to use in consultation, Web sites that offer ongoing resources for professional development, and an array of downloadable tip sheets to meet a variety of needs in your school district. Recognizing that curriculum materials may differ in focus from school to school, we are confident you will find many ideas and strategies that can be used to augment or enhance your own reading curriculum.

More and more, school psychologists are leaders in developing and carrying out the assessment and placement decisions that impact students from the beginning of their school careers. We have known for a long time that early intervention is the most successful and effective way to help students who are struggling to read. By using the information in the Reading Rockets toolkit, you can help reduce dramatically the number of students who lag behind grade level — and increase the number of successful readers.

A Few Ideas to Get You Started

Below are some suggestions for how to use this toolkit. You will undoubtedly be able to think of even more.

Assessing Your Knowledge of Reading

Using the information in this toolkit as a guide, assess your knowledge of reading. Consider what coursework you have had, your professional development activities, and how familiar you are with the latest research findings and recommendations. Consider pursuing professional development opportunities as needed through your district, through state and national professional associations, and through your local university.

Assessing the Needs in Your Schools and District

If you have not already done so, become familiar with the actual curriculum materials and instructional techniques that are used in your schools and district. This is important because it will help to ensure that the recommendations you make for students are developmentally and grade appropriate, as well as evidence-based.

It is also important to know what types of tiered interventions are available for at-risk readers and how decisions are made to assign students to different programs. Is your school a "Reading First" school? What training has been conducted? How is data used to make instructional decisions? Is progress monitoring used to provide frequent feedback? Once you have assessed these needs, it may become clear how you can best provide support.

Assessing Student Needs

School psychologists are in a great position to assist teachers with students who are struggling to learn to read. You have the background and skills needed to assist in selecting appropriate assessment methods to identify a child's level of performance in all elements of reading. If you are not familiar with early assessment tools, be sure to study Section 2 of this toolkit, which outlines a number of research-based early assessment tools that have been proven to be effective.

Providing Leadership

School psychologists understand the structure of schools and have the ability to pull various district groups and resources together to benefit students. You can use this toolkit to help you:

» Review published reading programs in the context of reading research and evaluate their technical validity and reliability.

» Serve as advisor to administrators and teachers as they select appropriate instructional programs and curriculum for use in the district.

» Provide or facilitate district-wide in-service training for teachers, other school psychologists, paraprofessionals, and administrators regarding selected programs.

» Contribute to or facilitate parent information sessions dealing with literacy.

Conducting In-Service Workshops for Teachers

The Five Elements of Reading

Many K-3 teachers received limited college instruction on how to effectively teach reading skills. You can present a series of one-hour sessions designed to explore the five elements of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The video modules can be used as a starting point for providing in-depth information about research-based practices, focusing on reading interventions. We have designed these workshops particularly for K-3 teachers, but you can easily customize them for colleagues with limited knowledge and experience in reading, paraprofessionals who work with teachers, and volunteers.

Assessment

Assessment issues can be particularly challenging for teachers. You can use Reading Rockets materials to train teachers in how to use appropriate assessment tools to identify students who are struggling to learn to read. When teachers understand the importance of their contribution to assessment — and the benefits to students — they are often more willing to participate.

Research-Based Practices

With the No Child Left Behind Act, teachers now need to use both research-based practices and early assessment. Reading Rockets materials provide research-based resources for you to use in helping teachers to meet current standards for instruction and ensure student success. Furthermore, Reading Rockets provides school psychologists and reading specialists with a common foundation that will help their work in linking assessment to relevant published curricula.

Conducting Joint Workshops for Parents and Teachers

The resources in this toolkit are designed to be easily understood by a wide variety of people. By bringing teachers and parents together to focus on reading, school psychologists can provide a starting point for developing critical collaborative relationships to enhance student success. You can introduce the various materials included in Section 4 of this toolkit and discuss how parents and teachers can work together to support students' development of reading skills. When you dispel the mystery of how children learn to read, parents are more likely to become willing partners in helping children with homework and volunteering in the classroom.

Conducting In-Service Workshops for Administrators

This toolkit provides an ideal opportunity to develop a collaborative relationship with school administrators in order to address literacy. Arrange with the superintendent to make a presentation to all district administrators to ensure that they are aware of the latest research and resources available in reading. Attend district administrators' meetings and assist in policy-making decisions that will affect all students in your district. The use of screening and progress-monitoring assessment tools is an area of particular confusion for many school administrators. They might value the input of a knowledgeable school psychologist.

Conducting In-Service Workshops for Speech and Language Pathologists

Speech and language pathologists already have significant knowledge regarding the importance of language development and phonological processing. They are a natural resource that we often overlook. By sharing the research found in this toolkit, you can develop collaborative relationships with these professionals, which will benefit many students. Speech and language pathologists are particularly interested in research-based assessment tools used to determine early intervention needs.

Facilitating Cooperative Activities with Parent-Teacher Associations

School psychologists with a strong background in reading can use these toolkit materials to facilitate workshops for parents. Parents need to know what is expected of their children and what measures are used to determine if their children are meeting those expectations. Each video module can be used as a springboard for discussion. After the workshops, you can give print materials to parents so that they have something to refer to at home.

Understanding the Design and Implementation of Research

You can use Reading Rockets materials to support data-driven assessment and progress monitoring. Since school psychologists are trained in research methods, you are a logical choice to direct efforts to track the implementation and effectiveness of research-based interventions.

Consulting with Teachers

Current research indicates that improved academic outcomes result from effective classroom management, positive teacher-student interactions, and increased academic time in the classroom. School psychologists can use Reading Rockets materials to assist teachers in designing intervention plans that will lead to student success. You are in a position to demonstrate the links between the assessment data that teachers are required to gather, the selection of appropriate interventions, and the evaluation of intervention effectiveness.

Reading Rockets in Action

In the fall of 2002, Reading Rockets provided the National Association of School Psychologists with 100 copies of the five-part television series *Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers*, along with the teachers' guide, for distribution to a sample of school psychologists nationwide. The goal was for psychologists to bring the program to their districts and incorporate it into professional staff development and parent workshops. Two examples of these efforts follow.

Howard County, Maryland
Brian Bartels, NCSP

Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) has approximately 47,000 students and more than 60 school psychologists. The Department of Psychological Services helps coordinate our instructional intervention teams (IITs), which focus on accelerating student achievement. Part of our success has been our alignment of efforts with those of colleagues in curriculum and special education.

After previewing the Reading Rockets videotapes and support materials, I realized that there are a number of possible applications and target audiences. I contacted our coordinator for elementary reading. She asked me to come to her monthly meeting with the reading specialists, share the information, and preview a tape. We previewed the reading fluency videotape together since this is an area of focus right now. The specialists were enthusiastic about the resources and tapes. I left the tapes with the coordinator, and we are going to talk further about potential uses. The reading specialists brainstormed potential applications with staff and families.

I also shared the program with our coordinator of special education. She has already ordered another set of videotapes. And I ordered yet another set of videotapes for the school psychologists. The tapes are very reasonably priced, particularly when the set is purchased.

We used some of these materials for our "Best Practices" in-service in February 2003. The participants were teachers in their first year of teaching or first year with HCPSS, both general and special education, grades K-5. Our topic was "Support for the Below Grade Level Reader." We liked the information about the risk factors and tied those skills in with skills on our summative assessment checklists (an HCPSS curriculum-based assessment) for emergent to early 2 readers. Our goal was to help these teachers know when to be concerned about a student's difficulty in acquiring specific reading skills and what interventions to put in place — as opposed to referral to special education.

We hope to add the television series to our lending library so that staff members may use the videotapes as they conduct professional development with teachers and administrators. The series will also be helpful during parent education programs focusing on early literacy, as it contains a great wealth of useful, evidence-based information. Reading Rockets provided a useful opportunity for us to collaborate with our colleagues in curriculum, family outreach, and special education.

Muscogee County, Georgia
Robert C. Smith, Jr., NCSP

It was a warm pleasant night in late February 2003 in Columbus, Georgia. Fred Rogers — better known as Mister Rogers — had just passed away that morning. However, his reassuring voice was again heard in a school auditorium, doing what he did best — trying to make a positive difference in the lives of children. And this time it was in the Reading Rockets television series.

In distributing Reading Rockets to its members, NASP suggested that the program could be used as the basis for parent forums. In our effort to present Reading Rockets, we paired two school psychologist "moderators" with five literacy experts from the community. This proved to be a very effective combination, as the seven individuals worked well together to meet the audience's needs. The parent forums were so successful in our district that we were only halfway through the first "airing" when requests started coming in to use the program in other district venues.

The program has a very positive public relations impact for our profession when school psychologists participate in its implementation. After all, at least part of our job should be to try to prevent reading problems, not just treat reading failures. Reading Rockets fits the bill nicely and is a no-brainer to implement. Not only are the videos well done and self-contained, but the materials, such as the viewers' and teachers' guides, as well as the Reading Rockets Web site, www.ReadingRockets.org, offer great supplementary material for handouts to parents or other caregivers.

"Reading Rockets is so well done that it appeals to parents, educators, and other professionals," said Kathryn Hargrove, a preschool psychologist and one of the moderators of the first program. "It is very easily introduced. Since reading problems affect about 80 percent of the students referred for comprehensive psychological evaluation, Reading Rockets is a proactive effort to prevent reading problems before they begin. It's certainly a great asset for the practicing school psychologist."

Alberta Harvey, a grandmother and attendee, was astounded at how very young children could recognize minute differences between sounds and learned "why kids like the same story over and over again." Harvey said her motto is, "Readers become leaders."

Reading Rockets Resources

Reading Rockets provides a wealth of materials for educators and parents.

Reading Rockets on the Web

›› The **comprehensive Reading Rockets Web site** at www.ReadingRockets.org provides articles, research reports, a daily news service, a monthly newsletter, and other resources. The Web site's materials help educators and parents learn more about the basics of reading instruction and provide up-to-the-minute information about programs to improve literacy that are under way in communities across the country. Also, the site has monthly interviews with children's book authors and illustrators, thematic book lists, and a search engine that can find book titles by age or subject.

›› **"Target the Problem!"** is a new area of the Reading Rockets Web site that provides parents and teachers with information about the different types of reading disabilities a child may experience. It is designed to help pinpoint the problem a child may be having with reading and suggest what can be done to help. "Target the Problem!" was developed by Reading Rockets and the Access Center and is presented in partnership with LD OnLine.

›› Colorin Colorado is Reading Rockets' **bilingual Web site** in Spanish and English. You can find it at www.ColorinColorado.org. The site is geared to Spanish-speaking parents, as well as professionals (Spanish-speaking or English only) who work with families of children who are English language learners (ELL). We are in the process of greatly expanding the Web site to include an education section for mainstream teachers who teach Hispanic ELLs. A toolkit is also in the works for educators who wish to engage Hispanic families more comprehensively in their students' education. The new Web content and toolkit will be available in July 2005.

Reading Rockets Bilingual Family Guide

The *Reading Rockets Bilingual Family Guide* is available in Spanish, English, Hmong, and Somali. It provides tips for parents and other adult caregivers on helping children get the most out of reading, pointers on working with schools and teachers, and great ideas for use in libraries. It includes computer tips, valuable Web site addresses, and more. The bilingual guide in Spanish and English is located in the front pocket of this toolkit and is also available online at www.ReadingRockets.org, along with the Hmong and Somali versions.

LD OnLine

LD OnLine is the most visited Web site on learning disabilities. It uses the power of the Internet to disseminate research-based information about learning disabilities to parents, educators, and people with LD or ADHD. It offers the latest research articles on learning disabilities and follows up with practical information, tips, advice, and resources that can be used immediately. Experts answer questions from visitors to the Web site on a daily basis,

and the site hosts forum discussions 24 hours a day. Please visit www.LDOnLine.org.

Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers

This eight-part television series covers the foundations of literacy from preschool through third grade. It includes a companion Web site, viewers' guide, teachers' guide, and special video for students.

>> **Program 1 – The Roots of Reading: Pre-Reading Skills**
Looks at the earliest stages of literacy, offering practical advice and suggestions for parents of young children, and gives concrete suggestions for teaching preschool and kindergarten students.

>> **Program 2 – Sounds and Symbols: Phonemic Awareness and Phonics**
Spotlights teachers using innovative strategies to help kids crack the code of reading.

>> **Program 3 – Fluent Reading: The Ability to Decode Quickly**
Highlights successful strategies to help children become fluent readers and shows how early testing and intervention can help struggling readers.

>> **Program 4 – Writing and Spelling: Motivation and Vocabulary Building**
Features activities that promote writing practice, vocabulary growth, and spelling proficiency in children.

>> **Program 5 – Reading for Meaning: Comprehension**
Highlights effective strategies used across the country to help kids understand — and care about — what they read.

>> **Program 6 – Empowering Parents**
Focuses on helping parents recognize reading problems early, as well as providing advice on where to turn for help.

>> **Program 7 – Becoming Bilingual**
Offers a look into the world of children learning to speak and read in English — and shows some strategies that work in the classroom.

>> **Special Kids' Episode – Reading Rocks! A Show for and About Kids with Reading Difficulties**
A fun program that motivates kids who are struggling with reading. It includes interviews with children who are overcoming their reading difficulties.

>> A **companion Web site** for the original five-part video series, www.pbs.org/launchingreaders, was developed especially for parents. There are downloadable one-page tip sheets for parents, which can be reproduced by schools and distributed to parents and other family members. This site also includes an overview of the five elements of reading, which correspond with the first five television programs in the *Launching Young Readers* series.

>> **Companion guides for viewers and teachers** are available. Copies are located in the front pocket of this toolkit, and they are both downloadable at www.ReadingRockets.org.

A Tale of Two Schools

A Tale of Two Schools is a one-hour television documentary from PBS that looks at how two schools — and two dedicated teachers — take on the challenge of teaching young kids to read. Narrated by Morgan Freeman.

Ordering Additional Reading Rockets Materials

To order online, go to www.ReadingRockets.org/store

Or phone, fax, or mail your order:

Phone: 800-343-5540

Fax: 845-774-2945

Mail: Reading Rockets Store
P.O. Box 1084
Harriman, NY 10926

Please include check, money order, credit card, or purchase order information with your order.

Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers, an eight-part television series, is available for purchase on VHS tape or DVD.

Videotape Set $119.95
Includes a complete set of the first eight episodes listed below on eight VHS videotapes, the viewers' guide, plus your choice of either the family guide or the teachers' guide.

DVD $119.95
One DVD contains the first five episodes listed below, plus bonus segments featuring additional interviews with reading experts, teachers, and others. You'll receive three additional DVDs, one each for *Empowering Parents, Becoming Bilingual,* and *Reading Rocks!* And you'll receive a viewers' guide and your choice of either the family guide or the teachers' guide.

Individual Videotapes $19.95

›› *The Roots of Reading*

›› *Sounds and Symbols*

›› *Fluent Reading*

›› *Writing and Spelling*

›› *Reading for Meaning*

›› *Empowering Parents*

›› *Becoming Bilingual*

›› Special Kids' Episode: *Reading Rocks!*

Research-Based Reading Instruction

The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act has focused our nation on accountability for all schools. The legislation requires schools to use research-based curricula and instructional techniques that have been proven to work in classrooms across America. We have included a copy of *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*, which summarizes the best strategies for effectively teaching children to read. It is based on the findings of the National Reading Panel, which reviewed more than 100,000 studies. Their landmark report, published in 2000, still informs and influences national policy and legislation.

In this section of the toolkit, you will find excerpts from two important publications that review the best in reading research:

» *Ensuring That Children Have the Opportunity to Learn to Read*, an excerpt from 1998's *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, edited by Catherine Snow, Susan Burns, and Peg Griffin; National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences.

» The introduction to a recent article by Joseph Torgesen entitled *Preventing Early Reading Difficulties*, in which he outlines two sets of findings about the kind of instruction that weak readers need in kindergarten through second grade and what we know about effective interventions. The article was featured in the fall 2004 edition of *American Educator*.

Assessment and Early Intervention

Research has shown that early intervention is one of the most powerful ways to narrow the achievement gap. Through informal and formal classroom assessments teachers can design customized intervention strategies for young students who struggle to learn how to read.

There are many research-based options available to teachers and schools. Joseph Torgesen shares some recent findings in the article listed earlier. We have also included another article from the same issue of *American Educator*. Entitled "Early Screening Is at the Heart of Prevention," it summarizes the types of available research-based assessment tools, provides tips for selecting assessments for your schools, and explains how — and how accurately — they work.

Finally, we have included a list of some of the available research-based assessment tools for each of the five major components of reading and information about where to find them.

Find Out More

There is also a wealth of articles at the Reading Rockets Web site, summarizing and reporting on the research that is shaping the effective ways schools are teaching children how to read. We invite you to visit www.ReadingRockets.org, which has over 300 articles on virtually all aspects of reading instruction and assessment, including these topics:

>> **Pre-K and K**

>> **Grades 1-3**

>> **ESL**

>> **Alphabetics**

>> **Fluency**

>> **Comprehension**

>> **Writing**

>> **Spelling**

>> **Assessment**

>> **Working with Families**

>> **School-wide Programs**

>> **Professional Development**

>> **Activities**

>> **Summer Reading**

Ensuring That Children Have the Opportunity to Learn to Read

Excerpted from *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, 1998, edited by Catherine Snow, Susan Burns, and Peg Griffin

Reading Instruction in Kindergarten Through Third Grade

Findings on the Mechanics of Reading

There is converging research support for the proposition that getting started in reading depends critically on mapping the letters and the spellings of words onto the sounds and speech units that they represent. Failure to master word recognition impedes text comprehension.

There is evidence that explicit instruction that directs children's attention to the phonological structure of oral language and to the connections between phonemes and spellings helps children who have not grasped the alphabetic principle or who do not apply it productively when they encounter unfamiliar printed words. Of course, intensity of instruction should be matched to children's needs. Children who lack these understandings should be helped to acquire them; those who have grasped the alphabetic principle and can apply it productively should move on to more advanced learning opportunities.

Findings on Comprehension

Several factors have been shown to promote comprehension: vocabulary, including full and precise understanding of the meanings of words; background knowledge about the subject matter; familiarity with semantic and syntactic structures that signal meaningful relationships among the words; appreciation of the writing conventions used to achieve different communicative purposes (e.g., irony, humor); verbal reasoning ability, which permits inferences to be made by reading between the lines; and verbal memory capacity.

Comprehension can be enhanced through instruction that is focused on concept and vocabulary growth and the syntax and rhetorical structures of written language, as well as through experience gained by reading both independently and interactively in dyads or groups.

Explicit instruction in comprehension strategies has been shown to lead to improvement (e.g., summarizing the main idea, predicting what text will follow, drawing inferences, discussing the author's communicative intent and choice of wording, and monitoring for misunderstandings).

Conclusions

Our analysis of the research literature in reading acquisition leads us to conclude that, in order to prevent reading difficulties, formal instruction in reading needs to focus on the development of two sorts of mastery: word recognition skills and comprehension skills.

Recommendations on the Mechanics of Reading

>> Kindergarten instruction should be designed to provide practice with the sound structure of words, the recognition and production of letters, knowledge about print concepts, and familiarity with the basic purposes and mechanisms of reading and writing.

>> First-grade instruction should be designed to provide explicit instruction and practice with sound structures that lead to phonemic awareness, familiarity with spelling-sound correspondences and common spelling conventions and their use in identifying printed words, "sight" recognition of frequent words, and independent reading, including reading aloud. A wide variety of well-written and engaging texts below the children's frustration level should be provided.

>> Instruction for children who have started to read independently, typically second graders and above, should be designed to encourage children to sound out and confirm the identities of visually unfamiliar words they encounter in the course of reading meaningful text, recognizing words primarily through attention to their letter-sound relationships. Although context and pictures can be used as a tool to monitor word recognition, children should not be taught to use them to substitute for information provided by the letters in the word.

>> Because the ability to obtain meaning from print depends so strongly on the development of word recognition accuracy and reading fluency, both of the latter should be regularly assessed in the classroom, permitting timely and effective instructional response where difficulty or delay is apparent.

Recommendations on Comprehension

>> Kindergarten instruction should be designed to stimulate verbal interaction to instruct vocabulary and encourage talk about books.

>> Beginning in the earliest grades, instruction should promote comprehension by actively building linguistic and conceptual knowledge in a rich variety of domains.

>> Throughout the early grades, reading curricula should include explicit instruction on strategies such as summarizing the main idea, predicting events and outcomes of upcoming text, drawing inferences, and monitoring for coherence and misunderstandings. This instruction can take place while adults read to students or when students read themselves.

>> Conceptual knowledge and comprehension strategies should be regularly assessed in the classroom, permitting timely and effective instructional response where difficulty or delay is apparent.

Recommendations on Writing

>> Once children learn to write letters, they should be encouraged to write them, to use them to begin writing words or parts of words, and to use words to begin writing sentences. Instruction should be designed with the understanding that the use of invented spelling

is not in conflict with teaching correct spelling. Beginning writing with invented spelling can be helpful for developing understanding of phoneme identity, phoneme segmentation, and sound-spelling relationships. Conventionally correct spelling should be developed through focused instruction and practice. Primary-grade children should be expected to spell previously studied words and spelling patterns correctly in their final writing products. Writing should take place on a daily basis to encourage children to become more comfortable and familiar with it.

Recommendations on Reading Practices and Motivation

›› Throughout the early grades, time, materials, and resources should be provided (a) to support daily independent reading of texts selected to be of particular interest for the individual student, and also beneath the individual student's frustration level, in order to consolidate the student's capacity for independent reading and (b) to support daily assisted or supported reading and rereading of texts that are slightly more difficult in wording or in linguistic, rhetorical, or conceptual structure in order to promote advances in the student's capacities.

›› Throughout the early grades, schools should promote independent reading outside of school by such means as daily at-home reading assignments and expectations, summer reading lists, encouraging parental involvement, and by working with community groups, including public librarians, who share this same goal.

School-wide Restructuring

Findings

When a large percentage of a school's students are from disadvantaged homes, it is often the case that median student reading achievements in that school will be low. Research has shown the effectiveness of clearly articulated, well-implemented, school-wide efforts that build from coherent classroom reading instruction. Such school-wide efforts, when they have included coherent regular classroom reading instruction consistent with the principles articulated in this report, have often proven substantially more effective than disconnected strategies or restructuring focused on organizational issues that have not included school-wide curricular reform.

Conclusion

The local adaptation of national models is often a more efficient route to meaningful reform than are numerous local efforts to "reinvent the wheel."

Recommendation

In situations of school-wide poor performance, school restructuring designs that include dual foci on organizational issues and coherent classroom reading instruction should be seriously considered.

Extended Time in Reading-Related Instruction for Children with Persistent Reading Difficulties

Thus far, we have emphasized quality instruction and an appropriate curriculum, keyed to high standards, as the primary route to preventing most reading difficulties. However, additional efforts will still be necessary for some children, including supplementary tutoring provided by professionals with specialties in reading and special education support and services.

Findings

At present, many interventions for children in the primary grades are aimed at helping those most at risk of failure, but they are too often implemented as late as third grade, after a child is well behind his or her classmates.

Supplementary instruction has merit if the intervention is time limited and is planned and delivered in a way that makes connections to the daily experiences that the child has during reading instruction. Supplementary instruction can be a significant and targeted enhancement of classroom instruction. A number of programs have supplementary components, but the empirical bases for judging their results are often weak.

Conclusions

Consistent with the view that reading develops under the influence of many early experiences, it is the committee's judgment that deferring intervention until third or fourth grade should be avoided at all costs.

Supplementary programs can neither substitute nor compensate for poor-quality classroom reading instruction. Supplementary instruction is a secondary response to learning difficulties. Although supplementary instruction has demonstrated merit, its impact is insufficient unless it is planned and delivered in ways that make clear connections to the child's daily experiences and needs during reading instruction in the classroom.

Recommendation

If a student is receiving high-quality classroom instruction in first grade but is still having reading related difficulties, we recommend the following: Additional instructional services in supplementary reading programs should be provided in the first grade.

>> Instruction should be provided by a well-qualified reading specialist who has demonstrated the ability to produce high levels of student achievement in reading.

>> Materials and instructional techniques should be provided that are well integrated with ongoing excellent classroom instruction and that are consistent with the findings, conclusions, and recommendations identified above in "Reading Instruction in Kindergarten Through Third Grade." Children who are having difficulty learning to read do not, as a rule, require qualitatively different instruction from children who are "getting it." Instead, they more often need application of the same principles by someone who can apply them expertly to individual children who are having difficulty for one reason or another.

Resources to Meet Needs

Findings

The interventions described in this report require manageable class size and student-teacher ratios, ongoing teacher preparation, qualified specialists, and quality instructional materials in sufficient quantity. School libraries and media resources need to be used effectively. Nationally, there are steady reductions in the average size of elementary classrooms; however, schools in poor urban areas continue to show higher class sizes than schools in all other areas.

Conclusions

To meet the goal of preventing reading difficulties, a greater burden will fall on schools whose entering students are least prepared in the requisite skills (e.g., schools in poor urban areas, schools with high numbers of children who have limited English proficiency). The resources provided for kindergarten and primary-grade classrooms should be proportional to the amount of instructional support needed, as gauged by the entry abilities of the school's population. This type of resource planning contrasts with the practice of giving schools bonuses for high-test scores as well as practices directed toward equating per-pupil resources across schools.

Recommendations

To be effective, schools with greater numbers of children at risk for reading difficulties must have extra resources. These resources should be used to ensure that class size, student-teacher ratios, teacher preparation and experience, availability and qualifications of specialists, quality and quantity of instructional materials, school libraries and

physical environments will be at least equal to those of schools whose students are less likely to have difficulties learning to read.

Volunteer Tutors

Findings

Although volunteer tutors can provide very valuable practice and motivational support for children learning to read, the committee did not find evidence confirming that they are able to deal effectively with children who have serious reading problems. Effective tutoring programs require comprehensive screening procedures for selecting volunteers, training tutors, and supervising their ongoing work with children.

Conclusions

Volunteer tutors are effective in reading to children, for giving children supervised practice in oral reading, and for allowing opportunities for enriching conversation but not usually in providing instruction per se, particularly for children having difficulties.

Recommendation

The role of well-trained and supervised volunteer tutors should be to expand children's opportunities for practicing reading and for motivational support but not to provide primary or remedial instruction.

Excerpt from **Preventing Early Reading Failure**
by Joseph K. Torgesen
American Educator, Fall 2004

Children who are destined to be poor readers in fourth grade almost invariably have difficulties in kindergarten and first grade with critical phonological skills: their knowledge of letter names, their phonemic awareness (ability to hear, distinguish, and blend individual sounds), their ability to match sound to print, and their other skills in using the alphabetic principle are weak. These weak phonological skills, in turn, mean it is difficult for these children to identify (decode) unknown words, and their efforts to do so produce many errors. Naturally, these children find it difficult, even unpleasant, to read independently.

Their problems then spiral. Their ability to become fluent readers is compromised because the development of fluent word reading depends heavily on learning to identify large numbers of words by sight (Schwanenflugel, Hamilton, Kuhn, Wisenbaker, and Stahl, 2004; Torgesen, Rashotte, and Alexander, 2001). Because words do not become sight words until they are read accurately a number of times, both inaccurate reading and diminished reading practice cause slow growth of fluent word-identification skills. Furthermore, the strongest current theories of reading growth link together phonemic and sight word-reading skills by showing how good phonemic decoding skills are necessary in the formation of accurate memory for the spelling patterns that are the basis of sight word recognition (Ehri, 1998).

The terrible spiral then spins even more strongly. We know, for example, that delayed development of reading skills affects vocabulary growth (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1998), alters children's attitudes and motivation to read (Oka and Paris, 1986), and leads to missed opportunities to develop comprehension strategies (Brown, Palincsar, and Purcell, 1986). If children fall seriously behind in the growth of critical early reading skills, they have fewer opportunities to practice reading. Recent evidence (Torgesen, Rashotte, and Alexander, 2001) suggests that these lost practice opportunities make it extremely difficult for children who remain poor readers during the first three years of elementary school to ever acquire average levels of reading fluency. All of this explains the very sobering fact obtained from several longitudinal studies: Children who are poor readers at the end of first grade almost never acquire average-level reading skills by the end of elementary school (Francis, Shaywitz, Stuebing, Shaywitz, and Fletcher, 1996; Juel, 1988; Shaywitz et al., 1999; Torgesen and Burgess, 1998).

That's the bad news. The good news is we now have tools to reliably identify the children who are likely destined for this early reading failure. (See "Early Screening Is at the Heart of Prevention"). Most importantly, given the results of a number of intervention studies, we can say with confidence that if we intervene early, intensively, and appropriately, we can provide these children with the

early reading skills that can prevent almost all of them from ever entering the nasty downward spiral just described.

In this article, I want to lay out two sets of findings: (1) what we know about the kind of instruction that weak readers need in kindergarten through second grade to prevent them from ever entering the downward spiral, and (2) what we know about the effectiveness of interventions that make use of this knowledge.

Before setting forth the case for early intervention, an important point needs to be clarified. Most children who enter school at risk for reading difficulties fall into one of two broad groups. Children in the first group enter school with adequate oral language ability but have weaknesses in the phonological domain. Their primary problem in learning to read involves learning to read words accurately and fluently (Torgesen, 1999). In contrast, the second group of children, coming largely from families of lower socioeconomic or minority status, enters school with significant weaknesses in a much broader range of prereading skills (Whitehurst and Lonigan, 1998; Hart and Risley, 1995; Hecht, Burgess, Torgesen, Wagner, and Rashotte, 2000). Not only are their phonological skills and print-related knowledge weak, they have weaker vocabularies, less experience with complicated syntax, and less general background knowledge — all of which are vital for strong reading comprehension at third grade and beyond. Children with these general oral language weaknesses on top of phonological weaknesses require a broader range of instructional support and interventions than those who come to school with impairments only in phonological

ability. However, both groups require special support in the growth of early word-reading skills if they are to make adequate progress in learning to read; and, with that support, both can achieve word-reading skills within the average range.

It is these early word-reading skills — and specifically how to help our weakest readers attain them — that are the focus of this article. Why make word-reading skills the focus when the ultimate goal is reading for comprehension and enjoyment? For several reasons: First, new discoveries about reading have produced a consensus belief that strong word-reading skills are central to fluent, accurate reading (Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky, and Seidenberg, 2001). Second, there is very strong evidence, as common sense would suggest, of both an empirical (Good, Simmons, and Kame'enui, 2001) and theoretical (Chall, 1996; Rayner, et al, 2001) nature that accurate and fluent word-reading skills are important for good reading comprehension. Third, we know how to prevent the emergence of early word-reading difficulties. Thus, if our end goal is strong comprehension, one important goal of early intervention should be to prevent the emergence of early word-reading difficulties. While strong word-reading skills don't fully equip students for advanced comprehension of texts beyond a third-grade level, they are absolutely necessary for it. (For a lengthy discussion of how to build the broader language skills and knowledge that are vital to later reading comprehension, see the Spring 2003 issue of *American Educator*, available at www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/spring2003/index.html.)

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Early Screening Is at the Heart of Prevention

American Educator, Fall 2004

Early intervention works. Because it is also expensive, it's important to be able to identify the kids who are most at risk of reading failure. Thanks to a new generation of screening assessments, we can identify these students as early as kindergarten — and then invest in interventions for them. The new assessments are brief, trustworthy, and easy to administer. They can be administered to all kindergartners through third-graders a few times a year, allowing teachers to identify which students need extra help. They take only five to 10 minutes per child to administer and can typically be given by classroom, reading, or special education teachers or aides. Once identified, these students can receive the assistance they need, and the downward spiral that results from weak early reading skills can be averted.

Selecting Assessments for Your School

Today, schools actually have more than two dozen individually administered early screening assessments to choose from that are appropriate for kindergarten through third grade. These assessments cover a variety of reading skills — phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension — as well as a variety of assessment purposes: screening, diagnosis, and progress monitoring. (There are also outcomes assessments that educators should be aware of if they plan to conduct studies of the effectiveness of their reading programs.) As an introduction to the kind of information that teachers can glean from early reading assessments, examples from TPRI and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are included here. The figure (next page) shows some items from the TPRI Screening Section for children at the beginning of the first grade. The figure on page 27 shows how a kindergarten student's progress is monitored using DIBELS.

Fortunately, a team of researchers has reviewed the current crop of assessments, identified which have sufficient reliability and validity, and developed a Web site for educators that clearly indicates which assessments are appropriate for differing grades, skills, and purposes (available at http://idea.uoregon.edu/assessment/). Most currently available assessments identify children using national norms. So, for example, schools can decide to intervene with all children who score in the bottom 10 to 20 percent nationally. Of course, just how many students this will be varies greatly by school. A few assessments have established benchmarks, or cut scores, that represent evidence-based thresholds indicating the likelihood of reading success (or

failure), and recommend that schools intervene with all students who fall below the benchmark.

A key issue that has arisen during the instrument-development research is creating accurate instruments that are not too long. Assessment developers have been grappling with the fact that longer assessments provide more detailed data, but shorter assessments are more practical for the classroom. This led to differentiating between screening and diagnostic assessments. Typically, screening instruments tend to be short, taking as little as five to 10 minutes per child, and they identify which students are at risk or behind, as well as some information on which skills the students are lacking. Diagnostic instruments — used only for the smaller group of students deemed at risk in the screening — tend to be longer, taking roughly 20 to 45 minutes per child, and they offer a much more thorough look at students' strengths and weaknesses. (These time estimates are for

teachers who are experienced in using these assessments. More time will be needed while teachers become accustomed to using those tools.) Sometimes assessments have both screening and diagnostic components. For example, the TPRI has "Screening" and "Inventory" sections. When children don't meet criteria in the Screening Section, the teacher can immediately switch to a more indepth assessment from the Inventory Section to pinpoint the knowledge and skills that the child still needs to develop. Teachers can also use Inventory data to match instruction with specific student needs.

A third type of assessment is for progress monitoring. These instruments typically come in short, multiple forms so that students' skills can be assessed every two weeks (or even more frequently) to quickly determine if an intervention is sufficiently effective. If not, the intervention can be altered (by changing the instructional content,

Screening 2 Word reading		Screening 3 Blending phonemes	
1. become 2. school 3. queen 4. great 5. summer 6. honey 7. push 8. asked		*(Remember pronounce letter sounds, not letter names, and say the word silently to yourself first.)* 1. /m/ /a/ /ss/ 2. /b/ /oo/ /m/ 3. /w/ /a/ /s/ /p/ 4. /s/ /t/ /r/ /ee/ /t/ 5. /ph/ /o/ /ne/ 6. /b/ /l/ /u/ /n/ /t/	
Screening 1	Graphophonemic Knowledge Letter sound		8 or higher: go to Screening 2 7 or lower: *Still Developing*
Screening 2	Word Reading		3 or higher: *Developed* 2 or lower: *Still Developing*
Screening 3	Phonemic Awareness Blending phonemes		5 or higher: *Developed* 4 or lower: *Still Developing*
Overall Screening			8 or higher on Screening 1 AND 3 or lower on Screening 2 OR 5 or higher on Screening 3: *Developed*
			7 or lower on Screening 1 AND 2 or lower on Screening 2 OR 4 or lower on Screening 3: *Still Developing*

Shown left are assessments and benchmarks from the Screening Section of the TPRI, the first early reading assessment to be used throughout a state. These two Screenings are used at the beginning of first grade along with a 10-item screening of children's knowledge of letter names and sounds. As you an see, the TPRI provides empirically derived criteria to indicate if students have developed adequate knowledge and skills. When students do not meet those criteria, the teacher moves directly into more in-depth assessments from the Inventory Section of the TPRI. Therefore, the amount of assessment is individualized: Students who are "developed" on the Screenings will be done in just five minutes; students lacking skills will continue through the Inventory assessments until the skills that need to be developed are identified — a process that can take an experienced teacher anywhere from 10 to 25 minutes. (For more information on the TPRI, see www.tpri.org.)

methods, and/or intensity), the child may be given a diagnostic assessment, or the child may be referred for special education. For example, DIBELS is a widely used screening and progress-monitoring assessment. DIBELS measures take just a few minutes each and usually come in 20 alternate forms for frequent checkups. The figure (below) shows how a kindergarten student's progress is monitored using DIBELS.

While screening instruments are used with all students, diagnostic instruments are only necessary for students whose screenings reveal serious skill deficits and/or whose progress monitoring indicates that they are not responding to the intervention. Ideally, all K-3 students should be screened three times per year starting in mid-kindergarten; diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments can be done as needed, with progress monitoring of children in an intervention being quite frequent to make sure that interventions are as effective as possible.

How Do They Work?

The key to our new ability to predict which children are likely to have problems in learning to read is the research finding that almost all struggling readers have problems with phonemic awareness — identifying and being able to manipulate the sounds in words (Torgesen, 1998). Not surprisingly, given their troubles with the phonological features of language, these children also have difficulty grasping the alphabetic principle and are slow to build up a "sight vocabulary," meaning words that they can read automatically without sounding them out. Building on these highly consistent findings, researchers have found that by midway through kindergarten (assuming prereading skills are being taught), knowledge of letter names predicts future reading ability. And by first grade, letter-sound knowledge is highly predictive. (For more on this topic, see "Catch Them Before They Fall:

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Page 1

Instructional change is indicated

Instructional support is sufficient

Name:

Teacher: Smith

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills™ 6th Ed.
University of Oregon
Kindergarten - Phoneme Segmentation Fluency Prog. Mon.

	Dec. Scores	Jan. Scores	Feb. Scores	March Scores	April Scores	May Scores	June Scores
Week 1		3	4	6	22	38	
Week 2		5					
Week 3		2	6	14	30	48	
Week 4							

This chart shows one kindergarten student's improvement based on a progress monitoring assessment from January to June. Using alternate forms of the DIBELS measure of Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), the teacher screened this child three times in January to be sure that he really needed an intervention. As noted by the horizontal line in the chart, all students should score at or above 40 on PSF by the end of kindergarten. Drawing a line from the student's initial scores to that benchmark creates clear goals for the rest of the year and allows the teacher to judge the success of his intervention. Initially, the intervention was not sufficient. The teacher made his intervention more intense by providing additional modeling, examples, and practice — and the student reached the PSF benchmark by the end of May. (To learn more about DIBELS, visit http://dibels.uoregon.edu/ and www.dibelsassessment.com.)

Identification and Assessment To Prevent Reading Failure in Young Children" from the Spring/Summer 1998 issue of *American Educator*; it is available online at www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/spring_sum98/torgesen.pdf.)

How Accurate Are They?

Just how accurate are these early assessments? Accuracy varies by instrument. Rather than reviewing several assessments, let's look at the average predictive power of assessing kindergartners' letter identification skills (Snow et al., 1998). A meta-analysis of 20 studies that measured 11 different possible predictors of reading difficulties (including receptive vocabulary, expressive language, concepts of print, and verbal memory of stories or sentences) found that letter identification was the strongest single indicator of future reading. The mean correlation between letter identification in kindergarten and reading scores in grades one through three was .52. In fact, letter identification was almost as good a predictor by itself as an entire reading-readiness test (which includes a whole host of reading skills). But what does a moderately strong correlation like this mean when it comes to designating children at risk or not? Another study (Snow et al., 1998) used 1,000 kindergartners' letter identification skills to find out. The researchers considered their predictions accurate if the children who were designated at risk in kindergarten were then in the bottom 20 percent on teachers' ratings in first grade.

To begin with, the researchers tested a strict letter-identification cutoff; they designated students at risk only if they fell in the bottom 10 percent. According to the first-grade teachers' ratings, this strict cutoff correctly identified 83.2 percent of children. Since there were 1,000 children in the study and the bottom 10 percent were designated at risk, 100 children were so designated. Of these, 63 were correctly identified (meaning they were in the bottom 20 percent according to teachers' ratings in first grade), but 37 were false alarms (meaning they were not in the bottom 20 percent). Of the 900 children designated not at risk, 769 were correctly identified, but 131 were misidentified (meaning they were in the bottom 20 percent in first grade).

Believing that too many children who did end up having reading difficulties were missed with the strict cutoff, the researchers also examined a more lenient letter-identification cutoff. In this second analysis, they designated the bottom 25 percent of kindergartners at risk. Of these 250 children, 118 were correctly identified, but 132 were false alarms. Of the 750 children designated not at risk, 677 were correctly identified, but 73 were not. Overall, the more lenient cutoff meant that the overall accuracy of the prediction was reduced slightly (79.5 percent of children were correctly identified) — but the percentage of struggling readers who were missed dropped from 15 to 11.

Obviously, educators have to make a conscious choice when they decide what percentage of children to intervene with. Intervening with the bottom 10 percent means that many at-risk children will not be appropriately served. And intervening with the bottom 25 percent means that many not-at-risk children will be served.

No assessment can completely overcome these potential errors in identifying at-risk children. Even with the best assessment, some children who will have reading problems are not identified and some who will not are. But there are strategies to greatly reduce the errors in identification. To minimize under-identification, schools are encouraged to

screen all children — three times per year — starting with mid-K. (Assessments at the very beginning of kindergarten tend to be unreliable because students may lack skills simply because they haven't been taught, not because they will have trouble with the concepts once they have been presented in the regular classroom setting.) To minimize over-identification, assessments often come with multiple forms so that teachers can confirm the results (and be sure that the child was not just having a bad day) before the intervention begins. Given the importance of addressing skill deficits, over-identification of children may be the best policy. For not-at-risk students, the intervention will simply reinforce their skills, acting like an "insurance policy" against future problems with reading. And, with adequate progress monitoring, such students will test out of the intervention quickly.

Fortunately, predictions of which students are at risk for reading failure become even more accurate by the end of first grade. This is what one would expect given that, starting at the end of first grade, students' word-reading ability can be assessed directly instead of indirectly through such pre-reading skills as letter naming and phoneme segmentation. While it is clearly true that early word reading ability is a strong predictor of later word reading ability, very brief measures of oral reading fluency are also a strong predictor, and thus a good screening measure, for difficulties in reading comprehension. In fact, Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, and Jenkins (2001) reported evidence that a very brief measure of oral reading fluency was a better predictor of performance on a reading comprehension outcome measure than was a brief measure of reading comprehension itself. In this study, with middle and junior high school students with reading disabilities, the correlation between oral reading fluency and the reading comprehension measure was a nearly perfect .91.

More recently, researchers comparing third graders' performance on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills measure of Oral Reading Fluency to their scores on state assessments of reading comprehension have found correlations of .70 with the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (Buck and Torgesen, 2003) and .73 with the North Carolina end-of-grade assessment (Barger, 2003).

— EDITORS

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Source for the DIBELS figure: Good, R.H., Gruba, J., and Kaminski, R.A. (2002). Using Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) in an Outcomes-Driven Model. In A Thomas and J. Grimes (Eds.), Best Practices in School Psychology IV (pp, 679-700). Washington, D.C.: National Association of School Psychologists.

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Research–Based Assessment Tools

After children have been screened through informal assessment, it may be necessary for you to conduct further evaluation to gather diagnostic information. The following charts list research-based assessment tools available for diagnosis. We've organized them according to the five components of reading, and we've provided information about where to find them.

The charts are adapted from:

• *Hall, S.L. and Moats, L.C. (1999). Straight Talk About Reading. Chicago: Contemporary Books.*

• *University of Oregon (2003). Analysis of Reading Assessment Instruments for K-3, http://idea.uoregon.edu/assessment.*

• *Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, http://www.sedl.org.*

Phonemic Awareness

NAME	AGE/GRADE	DESCRIPTION	URL	CRITERION/ NORMED
Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP)	Ages 5 years 0 months through 24 years 11 months	Assesses phonological awareness, phonological memory, and rapid naming	www.proedinc.com/store	N
Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment	Grades K–3	Measures phonological awareness: rhyming, syllables, phonemes, and rimes	www.psychcorp.com	C
Lindamood Auditory Conceptualization Test (LAC)	Ages 5 years 0 months through 18 years 11 months	Measures an individual's ability to perceive and conceptualize speech sounds using a visual medium	www.agsnet.com	N
Phonological Awareness Test (PAT)	Ages 5 through 9	Measures rhyming, segmentation, isolation, deletion, substitution, and blending	www.linguisystems.com	N
Rosner Test of Auditory Analysis	Ages 5 through 8	Measures auditory processing of sequences of syllables and sounds within common words	www.academictherapy.com	C
Test of Phonological Awareness (TOPA)	Ages 5 years 8 months through 8 years 11 months	Measures phoneme matching	www.proedinc.com/store	N
Texas Primary Reading Inventory	Grades K–3	Measures phonemic awareness and listening comprehension	www.txreadinginstruments.com	C
Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation	Grades K–1	Assesses a child's ability to separately articulate the sounds of a spoken word in order	*The Reading Teacher* (vol. 49, no.1, pp. 20-29)	C

Phonics

NAME	AGE/GRADE	DESCRIPTION	URL	CRITERION/ NORMED
Decoding Skills Test	Grades 1–5 reading level	Assesses basal vocabulary, phonic patterns, and contextual decoding	www.wpspublish.com	C
Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment	Grades K–3	Measures letter recognition and pseudo word decoding	www.psychcorp.com	C
Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement-2	Ages 4 years 6 months through 25 years	Measures nonsense word decoding, word recognition, fluency, and decoding fluency	www.agsnet.com	N
Letter Sound Fluency	Grades K–1	Assesses a student's capacity to translate letters into sounds fluently	diana.j.phillips@vanderbilt.edu	C
Phonological Awareness Test (PAT)	Ages 5 through 9	Assesses students' knowledge of graphemes and decoding skills	www.linguisystems.com	N
Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE)	Ages 6 years 0 months through 24 years 11 months	Measures sight word efficiency and phonemic decoding efficiency	www.proedinc.com	N
Texas Primary Reading Inventory	Grades K–3	Measures graphophonemic knowledge, word reading, and book and print awareness	www.txreadinginstruments.com	C
Woodcock-Johnson III Test of Achievement	Ages 2 through 90+ years	Assesses basic reading skills (letter-word identification and word attack)	www.riverpub.com	N
Woodcock Reading Mastery Test – Revised (WRMT-R)	Ages 5 years 0 months through 75+ years	Measures visual-auditory learning, letter identification, word identification, and word attack	www.agsnet.com	N

Fluency

NAME	AGE/GRADE	DESCRIPTION	URL	CRITERION/ NORMED
Gray Oral Reading Test IV (GORT-IV)	Ages 6 years 0 months through 18 years 11 months	Assesses rate and fluency	www.agsnet.com	N
Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement-2	Ages 4 years 6 months through 25 years	Assesses word recognition fluency, decoding fluency, and associational fluency	www.agsnet.com	N
Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency	Ages 6 years 0 months through 17 years 11 months	Measures a student's ability to recognize printed words accurately and efficiently	www.proedinc.com	N
Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE)	Ages 6 years 0 months through 24 years 11 months	Measures word reading accuracy and fluency	www.proedinc.com	N
Texas Primary Reading Inventory	Grades K–3	Assesses reading fluency	www.txreadinginstruments.com	C

Vocabulary

NAME	AGE/GRADE	DESCRIPTION	URL	CRITERION/ NORMED
Expressive Vocabulary Test	Ages 2 years 6 months through 90+ years	Measures expressive vocabulary and word retrieval	www.agsnet.com	N
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – 3rd Edition (PPVT-3)	Ages 2 years 6 months through 90+ years	Measures receptive vocabulary	www.agsnet.com	N
Test of Language Development – Primary: 3rd Edition	Ages 4 years 8 months through 8 years 11 months	Measures picture vocabulary, relational vocabulary, and oral vocabulary	www.agsnet.com	N
Test of Word Knowledge (TOWK)	Level 1: Ages 5 years 0 months through 7 years 11 months Level 2: Ages 8 years 0 months through 17 years 0 months	Assesses a student's skill in the reception and expression of semantics: Expressive and receptive vocabulary, word opposites, word definitions, synonyms, conjunctions, and transition words	www.psychcorp.com	N
Texas Primary Reading Inventory	Grades K–3	Measures listening comprehension	www.txreadinginstruments.com	C
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-II (WIAT-II)	Ages 4 years 0 months through 19 years 0 months	Measures listening comprehension and oral expression	www.psychcorp.com	N
Woodcock-Johnson III Test of Achievement	Ages 2 through 90+	Assesses reading vocabulary and picture vocabulary	www.riverpub.com	N
Woodcock Reading Mastery Test – Revised (WRMT-R)	Ages 5 years 0 months through 75+ years	Measures word comprehension	www.agsnet.com	N

Comprehension

NAME	AGE/GRADE	DESCRIPTION	URL	CRITERION/ NORMED
Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)	Grades 1–12+	Measures student's ability to comprehend written text	www.tasa.com	C and N
Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment	Grades K–3	Measures reading comprehension and listening comprehension	www.psychcorp.com	C
Gray Oral Reading Test IV (GORT-IV)	Ages 6 years 0 months through 18 years 11 months	Assesses comprehension	www.agsnet.com	N
Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement-2	Ages 4 years 6 months through 25 years	Assesses reading comprehension	www.agsnet.com	N
Texas Primary Reading Inventory	Grades K–3	Measures reading comprehension	www.txreadinginstruments.com	C
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-II (WIAT-II)	Ages 4 years 0 months through 19 years 0 months	Measures reading comprehension and written expression	www.psychcorp.com	N
Woodcock-Johnson III Test of Achievement	Ages 2 years 0 months through 90+ years	Assesses reading vocabulary and passage comprehension	www.riverpub.com	N
Woodcock Reading Mastery Test – Revised (WRMT-R)	Ages 5 years 0 months through 75+ years	Measures passage comprehension	www.agsnet.com	N

Workshops for Teachers

This section of the toolkit contains guidelines for conducting workshops for teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators, as well as school psychologists with a limited background in reading. If you are not qualified to conduct workshops in reading instruction for teachers, recruit a reading specialist from your school or school district — especially if there is no in-place professional development in reading instruction for you and your colleagues.

This toolkit includes video modules demonstrating best practices, suggested talking points for workshop leaders, and handouts to go along with each of the five workshops. If you already have in-service professional development in place, you can drop the videos into the appropriate sections of your pre-designed workshops.

We selected the video modules to help you strengthen the reading program in your school district. They will demonstrate to workshop participants what good strategies actually look like in practice and how Reading Rockets resources can support professional development and parent involvement. These materials will go a long way toward making sure your colleagues leave the workshops armed with research-based information and ideas to put into action in their classrooms and schools.

The enclosed **VHS tape** features short modules (three to eight minutes each) from the Reading Rockets series *Launching Young Readers*, providing a great springboard for discussion. The series features information and best practices that reflect the latest research findings, including work from the landmark publication *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* from the National Research Council (1998), and the *National Reading Panel Report* (2000). All Reading Rockets material is carefully reviewed by our advisory panel of nationally known experts (listed on page 2 of this toolkit).

The **DVD** located next to the **VHS** tape in this toolkit contains five 30-minute television programs. Ideally, you will be able to show all five videos over the course of your professional development program.

Please note that all **handouts** that accompany the workshops are available online, along with the rest of this toolkit, at www.ReadingRockets.org or www.nasponline.org.

Workshop 1: The Roots of Reading

Key Topics: Foundations of literacy — oral language competence, print awareness, phonological awareness, and phonemic awareness.

Program 1: *The Roots of Reading*, located on your DVD: Looks at the earliest stages of literacy and offers concrete suggestions for childcare providers, teachers of young children, and parents. Hosted by Fred Rogers. *Length: 30 minutes*

Module 1: *Becoming Aware of Print,* located on your VHS tape: If time does not permit you to view *The Roots of Reading* in its entirety, use Module 1, a segment from the program that features three-year-old Mira. It shows how her parents incorporate early literacy experiences into their everyday lives. The specific focus is on Mira's efforts to gain print awareness. *Length: 3:30 minutes*

Teachers' Guide: Read pages 10-12 of the *Reading Rockets Teachers' Guide* (located in the front pocket of this toolkit).

Before the Video

Review the basic elements of early literacy skills (see page 11 of the *Teachers' Guide*)

>> **Print awareness** – children's knowledge about print and how it is typically organized on a page.

>> **Phonological awareness** – the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate larger parts of spoken language, such as words, syllables, onsets, and phonemes.

>> **Phonemic awareness** – sensitivity to the speech sounds in spoken words.

After the Video

>> Ask participants if they saw things they can use with their students. How do they reinforce **print awareness** in their classrooms?

>> Review the list of **typical achievements of preschoolers** (page 11, *Teachers' Guide*). Ask participants how they can help their students achieve these skills.

>> Review the **handout** "Guidelines for Promoting Print Awareness" (located on page 39 of this toolkit) to see if anything else can be added to the participants' list of strategies.

>> Discuss **read-aloud techniques**. Ask participants if they have a particular format they follow every time they read to their students. Ask for a volunteer to demonstrate the way he or she reads stories to students, and ask the other participants to interact with the reader.

>> After the story is read, ask participants to identify some of the techniques the reader used. Review the **handout** "Read-Aloud Techniques" (located on page 41 of this toolkit) to identify other ways they can help their students develop early literacy skills.

>> Lead a discussion on **parental involvement.** How important is the parent's role in early literacy development? How can teachers engage and support parents as partners in their children's early literacy development? (See page 11, *Teachers' Guide*.)

>> If time allows, you may want to review the **assessment tools** that are currently being used at your school. If one or more are in place, discuss their effectiveness in identifying students who need additional support, as well as in helping to select from the intervention options that are available to students. Are they adequate? How can they be improved?

>> Ask participants to identify two or three **new strategies** they will use in their classrooms, and ask them to share these with the group.

Handouts:
"Guidelines for Promoting Print Awareness"
"Read-Aloud Techniques"

Web Sites:
For more information, direct participants to www.ReadingRockets.org or to the Reading Rockets bilingual Web site in Spanish and English, www.ColorinColorado.org.

Guidelines for Promoting Print Awareness

Print awareness involves children's knowledge about print and how it is typically organized on a page.

>> **Make sure students know how books are organized** — that they are read from left to right and top to bottom, that print may be accompanied by pictures or graphics, that the pages are numbered, and that the purpose of reading is to gain meaning from the text and understand ideas conveyed by words.

>> **Read to children from books with easy-to-read large print.** Oversized "big books" help children notice and learn to recognize words that occur frequently, such as "a," "the," "is," "was," and "you." Use stories that have predictable words in the text.

>> **Encourage preschool children to play with print.** They can pretend to write a shopping list, construct a stop sign, write a letter, make a birthday card, etc.

>> **Reinforce the forms and functions of print** by making your classroom print-friendly: post classroom signs, label objects, hang posters, display calendars, and so forth.

>> **Help children understand the relationship between spoken and written language.** For example, in labeling objects in the classroom, pair the spoken word (e.g., "clock") with the printed word on the label, "clock"; or show children what their name looks like in print.

>> **Teach and reinforce print conventions** such as word boundaries, capital letters, and end punctuation.

>> **Teach and reinforce book awareness and book handling** — holding the book upright, turning the pages, starting the book from the front, etc.

>> **Promote word awareness** by helping children identify word boundaries and compare words (e.g., drawing circles around each word in a simple sentence or finding the longest and shortest words).

>> **Allow children to practice** what they are learning by listening to and participating in the reading of predictable and patterned stories and books.

>> Provide many **opportunities for children to hear good books** and to participate in read-aloud activities.

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org.

Read–Aloud Techniques

Come up with a format that you will follow every time you read a story to your students. Be sure the format is interactive, so that it requires participation from both you and your students. Below is a sample format.

Prior to Reading Any Story Aloud

Introduce the story by stating the title and the author's name and then ask students, "What does an author do?" (Students should respond, "The author writes the story.")

State the illustrator's name and ask, "What does an illustrator do?" (Students should respond, "The illustrator draws the pictures.")

Hold up the book and say, "This is the front of the book." Turn it sideways and state, "This is the spine." Turn the book to the back cover and say, "This is the back of the book."

Then ask, "Do we begin reading from the front or the back of the book?" (Students should respond, "From the front.")

Say, "Let's look at the picture on the front."

Hold up the book with the front cover facing the students. Ask, "What do you think will happen in this story? Remember, I want you to answer by using complete sentences."

Pre-Teaching Vocabulary

Select vocabulary words from the story that you need to discuss prior to reading the story. Write them on sentence strips or on the board. Discuss the words with your students.

Use open-ended questions that will require the students to give responses extending beyond yes/no answers. Remember to use open-ended questions as you read the story and in your discussion after the reading.

Encourage students to draw upon what they know about the words from their personal lives. For example, if the word is the verb "fish," perhaps some of the children have gone on fishing trips with their parents and could be encouraged to tell brief personal stories. These personal stories allow students to make connections to the text.

During the Reading

Be enthusiastic. Use dramatic voices to engage the kids.

Briefly discuss the pictures on each page after reading that page.

Ask open-ended questions that relate to the topic of the book.

Again, allow students to tell their personal stories.

Encourage students to guess or predict what will happen next.

After the Reading

Ask students to tell you if they liked the story and why.

Encourage responses in complete sentences: "I liked it when the little girl rescued her friends, because it showed that girls can be heroes."

Continue asking open-ended questions to generate more sharing of experiences and feelings that relate to the topic of the book.

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org.

Workshop 2:   Sounds and Symbols

Key Topics: Word decoding, phonemic awareness, and phonics.

Program 2:   *Sounds and Symbols*, located on your DVD: Focuses on decoding the printed word and spotlights teachers using innovative strategies to help kids crack the code of reading. Hosted by Annette Bening. *Length: 30 minutes*

Module 2:   If time does not allow you to watch *Sounds and Symbols* in its entirety, please view the two video clips in Module 2.

a. *The Alphabetic Principle,* located on your VHS tape: A Houston teacher of an advanced kindergarten class connects letters and sounds in a systematic and explicit way. *Length: 3 minutes*

b. *Letters and Sounds,* located on your VHS tape: A kindergarten teacher mixes serious instruction with lively play for his English language learners. *Length: 4:40 minutes*

Teachers' Guide: Read pages 13-15 of the *Reading Rockets Teachers' Guide* (located in the front pocket of this toolkit).

Before the Video

Review the decoding skills needed to figure out unfamiliar words using knowledge about letter-sound relationships and the alphabetic code, perhaps the most critical achievement of early reading. (See pages 14-15 of the *Reading Rockets Teachers' Guide*.)

» **Phonemic awareness** – specific type of phonological awareness involving sensitivity to individual sounds in spoken words.

» **Knowledge of letter sounds** – not only for individual letters, but also for common letter patterns such as "sh," "ch," and "ph."

» **Alphabetic principle** – the basic concept that written language is a code in which letters represent sounds in spoken language.

After the Video

» Ask participants if they saw things in the video they can tie into their curriculum and use with their students.

» Review the list of typical achievements of preschool to third-grade students (page 14, *Teachers' Guide*).

» Ask participants to identify additional ways they can help their students achieve these goals.

» Review the handout "Word Decoding" at the end of this workshop to see if there are other strategies that can be used in teaching students to decode words.

» Ask participants to identify two or three new strategies they will use in their classrooms, and ask them to share these with the group.

Handout:
"Word Decoding"

Web Sites:
For more information, direct participants to www.ReadingRockets.org or to the Reading Rockets bilingual Web site in Spanish and English, www.ColorinColorado.org.

Word Decoding

Children's reading development is dependent on their understanding of the **alphabetic principle** — the idea that letters and letter patterns represent the sounds of spoken language. Learning that there are predictable relationships between sounds and letters allows children to apply these relationships to both familiar and unfamiliar words and to begin to read with fluency.

Phonics instruction helps children to learn and use the alphabetic principle. It helps them understand the relationship between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language.

The Benefits of the Alphabetic-Principle Plan of Instruction

>> Teaches letter-sound relationships explicitly and in isolation.

>> Provides opportunities for children to practice letter-sound relationships daily.

>> Provides practice opportunities that include new letter-sound relationships, while cumulatively reviewing previously taught relationships.

>> Gives children opportunities early and often to apply their expanding knowledge of letter-sound relationships to the reading of phonetically spelled words that are familiar in meaning.

Steps for Introducing the Alphabetic Principle

>> Recognize that children learn letter-sound relationships at different rates.

>> Introduce letter-sound relationships at a reasonable pace, in a range from two to four letter-sound relationships per week.

>> Teach high-utility letter-sound relationships early.

>> Introduce consonants and vowels in a sequence that permits children to read words quickly.

>> Avoid the simultaneous introduction of aurally or visually similar letters and sounds.

>> Introduce single consonant sounds and consonant blends/clusters in separate lessons.

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org.

Workshop 3:   Fluent Reading

Key Topics: Reading fluency, naming speeds (for letters and single-digit numbers), motivation, and practice.

Program 3:   *Fluent Reading*, located on your DVD: Explores the ability to decode quickly and achieve fluency. Hosted by Deborah Norville. *Length: 30 minutes*

Module 3:   *Developing Fluency*, located on your VHS tape: If time does not allow you to show *Fluent Reading* in its entirety, show Module 3, a segment that features an after-school program called RAVE-O, which helps teach reading fluency in Malden, Massachusetts. *Length: 3:33 minutes*

Teachers' Guide: Refer to pages 16-18 of the *Reading Rockets Teachers' Guide* (located in the front section of this toolkit).

Before the Video

Review the meaning and importance of fluency, including the key topics listed on page 47. (See pages 16-17 of the *Teachers' Guide*.)

➤ *Reading fluency* – the ability to read text accurately and quickly. This requires the automatic decoding of individual words and the ability to understand meaning rapidly during the actual process of reading.

➤ *Naming speed* – a child's naming speed for "overlearned" stimuli, such as letters and single-digit numbers. Children with slow naming speeds tend to have poor reading fluency.

➤ *Practice* is an essential component in the development of fluency; *motivating children* to read and *encouraging* independent reading are especially critical.

After the Video

➤ Ask participants if they saw techniques in the video that they can use with their students.

➤ Review the typical achievements of children in reading fluency, which can be found on page 17 of the *Teachers' Guide*. Ask participants to list some of the ways they build their students' reading fluency.

➤ Review the handout "Guidelines for Fluency Instruction" (located on page 49) to see if there are yet additional strategies that can be used for building fluency.

➤ Review the handout "Assessing Fluency" (located on page 51); discuss how teachers are assessing fluency to monitor progress and what interventions they are using to help students who are lagging behind.

➤ Ask participants to identify two or three new strategies they will use in their classrooms, and ask them to share these with the group.

Handouts:
"Guidelines for Fluency Instruction"
"Assessing Fluency"

Web Sites:
For more information, direct participants to www.ReadingRockets.org or to the Reading Rockets bilingual Web site in Spanish and English, www.ColorinColorado.org.

Guidelines for Fluency Instruction

Good Fluency Instruction . . .

>> Provides children with opportunities to read and reread a range of stories and informational texts by reading on their own, partner reading, or choral reading.

>> Introduces new or difficult words to children and provides practice reading these words before they read on their own.

>> Includes opportunities for children to hear a range of texts read fluently and with expression.

>> Suggests ideas for building home-school connections that encourage families to become involved actively in children's reading development.

>> Encourages periodic timing of children's oral reading and recording of information about individual children's reading rate and accuracy.

Modeling and Rereading

By listening to good models of fluent reading, students learn how a reader's voice can help written text make sense. Read aloud daily to your students. By reading effortlessly and with expression, you are modeling for your students how a fluent reader sounds as they are reading.

After you model how to read the text, have the students reread it. By doing this, the students are engaging in "repeated reading." Usually, having students read a text four times is sufficient to improve fluency. Remember, however, that instructional time is limited, and it is the actual time students are actively engaged in reading that produces reading gains.

What Students Should Read

Students should practice rereading aloud texts that are reasonably easy for them — that is, texts containing mostly words they know or can decode easily. In other words, the texts should be at the students' independent reading levels. A text is at the appropriate level if the student can read it with about 95 percent accuracy. If the text is more difficult, students will focus on word recognition and will not have an opportunity to develop fluency.

The text used for oral reading practice should be relatively short — probably 50-200 words, depending on the age of the students. You should also use a variety of reading materials, including stories, nonfiction, and poetry. Poetry is especially well suited to fluency practice because poems for children are often short and contain rhythm and rhyme, as well as meaning, making practice easy, fun, and rewarding.

Activities for Students

There are several ways that your students can practice orally rereading text, including student-adult reading, choral (or unison) reading, tape-assisted reading, partner reading, and readers' theater (in which students rehearse and perform plays derived from books).

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org.

Assessing Fluency

You should formally and informally assess fluency regularly to ensure that students are making appropriate progress. Both types of assessments will help you determine the effectiveness of your instruction and set instructional goals. Moreover, certain assessments, like charts showing fluency growth, can help motivate students.

Informal Assessments

The most informal assessment is simply listening to students read aloud and making a judgment about their progress in fluency. You should, however, also include more formal measures of fluency.

Scoring Your Students' Fluency

Probably the easiest way to formally assess fluency is to take timed samples of students' reading and compare their performance (number of words read correctly per minute) with published oral reading fluency norms or standards.

To get a words-correct-per-minute (WCPM) score, select a 100-word passage from a grade-level text.

1. Have individual students read each passage aloud for exactly one minute.

2. Count the total number of words the student read for each passage.

3. Count the number of errors the student made on each passage.

4. Subtract the number of errors read per minute from the total number of words read per minute. The result is the number of *words correct per minute* (WCPM).

By repeating this process at least three times, using different, same-level passages, you can calculate the student's average WCPM score.

Repeat the procedure several times during the year. Graphing students' WCPM scores throughout the year easily captures their reading growth. Below are the norms your students should be working toward.

First Grade – 60 WCPM

Second Grade – 90 WCPM

Third Grade – 115 WCPM

Excerpted from: Guidelines for Examining Phonics and Word Recognition Programs, Texas Reading Initiative, Texas Education Agency (2002).
And from: Learning to Read/Reading to Learn: Helping Children with Learning Disabilities to Succeed, by Ed Kame'enui, Marilyn Adams, & G. Reid Lyon (1996).

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org.

Workshop 4:   Writing and Spelling

Key Topics: Spelling and writing, including phonemic awareness, letter-sound relationships, the alphabetic principle, morphemic relationships, and word decoding.

Program 4:   *Writing and Spelling*, located on your DVD: Examines the connection between reading and writing and between spelling and composition. This segment features successful methods of encouraging children to write, build their vocabulary, and develop their spelling. Hosted by Vivica A. Fox. *Length: 30 minutes*

Module 4:   If time does not permit you to view *Writing and Spelling* in its entirety, use Module 4. It contains two segments from the program:

a. *Spelling Patterns,* located on your VHS tape: Features Johnson Elementary School in Charlottesville, Virginia. The school has its own home-grown reading program called RISE (Reading Initiative for Student Excellence). *Length: 3:44 minutes*

b. *Invented Spelling,* located on your VHS tape: A first-grade teacher turns a spelling lesson into a game. *Length: 4 minutes*

Teachers' Guide: Refer to pages 19-22 of the *Reading Rockets Teachers' Guide* (located in the front pocket of this toolkit).

Before the Video

Learning how to spell words is closely connected to learning to read. Spelling draws upon phonemic awareness, knowledge of letter-sound relationships, understanding the alphabetic principle, and knowledge of morphemic relationships.

>> Conduct a detailed review of the skills listed under "Key Topics" (pages 19 & 21, *Teachers' Guide*).

>> Discuss the importance of "invented spelling" (page 19, *Teachers' Guide*).

>> Briefly review some of the major strategies for teaching "conventional spelling" (See page 22 of the *Teachers' Guide*):

- Direct teaching of spelling rules
- Orthographic patterns — common letter patterns within words
- Morphemic relationships — word parts and word roots
- Heavy exposure to printed words (through independent reading)
- Ample opportunities to practice (using spelling in longer compositions)

>> Review some of the other skills (besides spelling) that must be acquired in order to learn how to write well (page 21, *Teachers' Guide*). These include how to use the mechanical conventions of writing, such as punctuation, capitalization, and standard English grammar; how to organize and sequence ideas within a composition; how to elaborate on ideas; and how to use vocabulary, including rich, descriptive words.

After the Video

>> Ask participants if they saw techniques in the video that they can use with their students.

>> Review the typical achievements of children in spelling and writing (see page 20, *Teachers' Guide*).

>> Ask what strategies teachers can use to help students achieve proficiency in spelling and writing.

>> Review the handout "Essential Elements in a Spelling Program" (located on the next page). Are there additional strategies that can be added to your list?

>> Ask participants to identify two or three new strategies they will use in their classrooms, and ask them to share these with the group.

Handout:
"Essential Elements in a Spelling Program"

Web Sites:
For more information, direct participants to www.ReadingRockets.org or to the Reading Rockets bilingual Web site in Spanish and English, www.ColorinColorado.org.

Essential Elements in a Spelling Program

A strong spelling program has many essential elements and should be tied to your reading program. Some of the main components that should be introduced at each grade level are highlighted below.

Beginning in the middle of first grade through third grade, students should be taught letter-sound associations such as:

- **consonants**
- **short vowel patterns**
- **consonant blends (e.g., "string," "block")**
- **consonant digraphs (e.g., "shot," "the")**
- **long vowels**
- **different vowel combinations for long vowels**
- **silent letter graphemes**

Second through third graders should be introduced to plurals, past tense, and patterns or rules, including:

- **q followed by a u (the sound/kw/)**
- **drop e**
- **adding suffixes**
- **ch-tch**
- **c, k, and ck**
- **hard and soft c and g**
- **plural endings**
- **prefixes**
- **consonant doubling**

A teacher's instruction guide should also include activities on homophones ("sea"/"see"), contractions ("do not"/"don't"), and compounds (two words that, when combined, mean something different from what they mean when separate, e.g., "cup" and "cake" become "cupcake").

Enhancing Spelling Development in the Classroom

Teachers can encourage purposeful writing, such as the writing of messages, lists, plans, signs, letters, stories, songs, and poems. Teachers can also provide opportunities for frequent writing, which, when integrated with all aspects of the curriculum, should be a natural part of the daily classroom routine. Frequent application of spelling knowledge by students while writing encourages spelling competency.

Making Spelling Instruction Fun

Instruction should be clear, but it doesn't have to be dull! Instructional games are effective because they raise children's awareness of the language all around them. Students can become word-pattern detectives, hunting for samples of words and looking for clues to help form their understanding of spelling rules. They can develop knowledge through word sorts and spelling games. The mastering of spelling rules and patterns through fun activities can make learning enjoyable for all.

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org.

Workshop 5: Reading for Meaning

Key Topics:
Reading comprehension, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies.

Program 5:
Reading for Meaning, located on your DVD: Highlights effective strategies used across the country to help students understand and care about what they read. Hosted by Frank McCourt. *Length: 30 minutes*

Module 5:
Engaging Non-fiction Readers, located on your VHS tape: If time does not permit you to view *Reading for Meaning* in its entirety, use Module 5. The segment features Salt Lake City teacher Margaret Barnes, who uses a framework called CORI (Concept Oriented Reading Instruction) to teach reading comprehension skills to second and third graders. *Length: 4:48 minutes*

Teachers' Guide:
Refer to pages 23-26 of the *Reading Rockets Teachers' Guide* (located in the front pocket of this toolkit).

Before the Video

Review the skills fostered by effective comprehension instruction (pages 23-24, *Teachers' Guide*):

>> Vocabulary

>> Summarizing (summing up important points of a text or story)

>> Predicting (or guessing) what might happen next

>> Inferring word meanings from context

>> Actively constructing meaning

After the Video

>> Ask participants if they saw techniques in the video they can use with their students.

>> Review the typical achievements of children in comprehension (page 24, *Teachers' Guide*). Ask participants to list some of the ways to build their students' comprehension skills.

>> Review the handout "Text Comprehension" (located on the next page). Are there additional strategies that can be used to foster comprehension?

>> Ask participants to identify two or three new strategies they will use in their classrooms, and ask them to share them with the group.

Handout:
"Text Comprehension"

Web Sites:
For more information, direct participants to www.ReadingRockets.org or to the Reading Rockets bilingual Web site in Spanish and English, www.ColorinColorado.org.

Text Comprehension

Text comprehension can be improved with instruction on specific strategies good readers use to make sense of text. Comprehension-strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension. The following strategies are particularly effective:

>> **Monitoring comprehension:** Students who are good at monitoring their comprehension know when they understand what they read and when they do not. They have strategies to "fix" problems in their understanding as the problems arise.

>> **Metacognition – "thinking about thinking":** Good readers use metacognitive strategies to think about and have control over their reading. Before reading, they might clarify their purpose for reading and preview the text. During reading, they might monitor their understanding, adjusting their reading speed to fit the difficulty of the text and "fixing" any comprehension problems they have. After reading, they might check their understanding of what they have read.

>> **Using graphic and semantic organizers:** Graphic organizers can be very effective in helping students read and understand textbooks and picture books. They illustrate concepts and relationships in a text and may consist of such aids as maps, webs, graphs, charts, frames, or clusters.

>> **Answering questions:** Questions can be effective because they focus students' attention on what they are to learn, help students think actively as they read, encourage students to monitor their comprehension, and help students review content and relate what they have learned to what they already know.

>> **Question-Answer Relationship strategy (QAR):** This strategy encourages students to learn how to answer questions better. Students are asked to indicate whether the information they used to answer questions about the text was textually explicit information (information directly stated in the text), textually implicit (information implied in the text), or information entirely from the student's own background knowledge.

>> **Generating questions:** By generating questions, students become aware of whether they can answer the questions and whether they understand what they are reading. Students learn to ask themselves questions that require them to combine information from different segments of text.

>> **Recognizing story structure:** In story-structure instruction, students learn to identify the categories of content (characters, setting, events, problem, resolution). Often, students learn to recognize story structure through the use of story maps. Instruction in story structure improves students' comprehension.

Text Comprehension

» **Summarizing:** Summarizing requires students to determine what is important in what they are reading and to put it into their own words. Instruction in summarizing helps students identify or generate main ideas, connect the main or central ideas, eliminate unnecessary information, and remember what they read.

Explicit or Direct Comprehension Instruction

Research shows that explicit teaching techniques are particularly effective for comprehension-strategy instruction. In explicit instruction, teachers tell readers why and when they should use strategies, what strategies to use, and how to apply them. Typically, these are the main steps of explicit instruction:

1. **Direct explanation:** The teacher explains to students why the strategy helps comprehension and when to apply the strategy.

2. **Modeling:** The teacher models, or demonstrates, how to apply the strategy, usually by "thinking aloud" while reading the text the students are using.

3. **Guided practice:** The teacher guides and assists students as they learn how and when to apply the strategy.

4. **Application:** The teacher helps students practice the strategy until they can apply it independently.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning involves students working together as partners or in small groups on clearly defined tasks. Cooperative learning has been used successfully to teach comprehension strategies. Students work together to understand texts, help one another learn, and apply comprehension strategies. Teachers help students learn to work in groups and provide modeling of the comprehension strategies.

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org.

Workshops for Parents

Research shows that students benefit greatly when parents are involved in their children's education. Indeed, when parents actively support their children's learning, the children are more apt to enter school with the early literacy skills they need, complete their homework, and perform well in school. By recognizing parents' strengths and involving parents deeply in their children's education, you have the opportunity to ensure that your students receive the very best education possible.

A New Wave of Evidence*

According to a recent review of research published by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2002), students with parents who are actively involved in their schooling, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to:

>> Earn higher grades and test scores and enroll in higher-level programs.

>> Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits.

>> Attend school regularly.

>> Have better social skills, show improved behaviors, and adapt well to school.

>> Graduate and go on to post-secondary education.

Furthermore, the study found that families of all income and education levels, and from all ethnic and cultural groups, are engaged in supporting their children's learning at home. White, middle-class families, however, tend to be more involved at school. Supporting more involvement at school from all families may be an important strategy for addressing the achievement gap between white and ethnic/linguistic minority students.

When schools support parent involvement at home and school, students make greater gains. When schools build partnerships with families by responding to their concerns, honoring their contributions, and sharing power, they succeed in sustaining connections that are aimed at improving student achievement.

To put these findings into action, educators must recognize that all parents — regardless of income, education, or cultural background — are involved in their children's learning and want their children to do well. Teachers should also embrace a philosophy of partnership and focus on developing trusting and respectful relationships with their students' families — relationships that will result in shared responsibility for their students' educational development.

Helping Parents Help Their Children Develop Reading Skills

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act and the pressure to improve student achievement, many schools have developed comprehensive programs for involving parents more deeply in their children's education. In this section of the toolkit you will find guidelines and resources to use with parents in meetings, workshops, community forums, and other venues.

These materials will help you and your colleagues demystify reading instruction and provide parents with insights and specific strategies that go beyond simply reading to their children every day. By providing parents with information about the basic building blocks of reading, they can complement the work of their children's teachers and do more at home to support their children at every level of their reading and writing development. Be sure to have a reading specialist lead the discussions, so that parents can receive the best answers to their questions.

Parent Workshops

This section of the toolkit includes guidelines for four parent workshops. They are presented here as suggestions, and you may want to customize these for your particular group of parents. The workshops are designed to be 60-90 minutes in length, and we have provided several handouts that can be distributed during and after these workshops.

The enclosed VHS tape features short segments from the Reading Rockets television series, *Launching Young Readers*, for use with these workshops. The three- to eight-minute video clips will enable you to show workshop participants what these evidence-based strategies actually look like in

practice and will go a long way toward making sure participants leave workshops armed with information and ideas to put into action.

The workshop guidelines include information about recommended uses, talking points for workshop leaders, and suggested handouts to go along with each of the workshops. Although handouts have been written to accompany specific modules, you will find most of them interchangeable. Feel free to mix and match handouts to best meet your particular needs.

Also note that all handouts that accompany the modules are available online, along with the rest of this toolkit, at www.ReadingRockets.org/nasp.

Video Clips for the Parent Workshops

The following video clips have been selected for the four workshops outlined on the next pages. You can find them on the enclosed VHS tape in the order listed below.

Module 1: *Becoming Aware of Print*
Three-year-old Mira gets a head start on reading from her parents. *Length: 3:30 minutes*

Module 6: *Finding the Right Book*
The library is a vital resource for one mom, whose son's appetite for information — especially about dinosaurs — is growing as quickly as his shoe size. *Length: 3:14 minutes*

Module 7: *Reading as Dialogue*
In a Long Island Head Start classroom, children boost their reading skills using a technique called "dialogic reading." *Length: 3:05 minutes*

Module 8b: *Warning Signs*
We learn about the early warning signs that may indicate
a child will have, or is having, difficulties learning to read.
Length: 3:38 minutes

Module 8b: *Good Reading Instruction*
At Metzger Elementary in Portland, Oregon, we see effective
reading instruction and ongoing assessment in action.
Length: 7:53 minutes

We've also provided you with the first five episodes of
Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers on the enclosed
DVD. Please feel free to use parts of the individual episodes,
or the entire series, to enhance your workshops.

**Excerpts from "A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and
Community Connections on Student Achievement," by Anne T. Henderson
and Karen L. Mapp (Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development
Laboratory, 2002). To order the full report, go to www.sedl.org/connections
or call 1-800-476-6861.*

Workshop 1: The Roots of Reading

Recommended Use: This workshop is recommended for parents with preschool or kindergarten children.

Workshop Objectives: Parents will learn about the importance of reading to their children, how to identify early literacy behaviors, and how to model positive adult/child reading experiences.

Module 1: ***Becoming Aware of Print,*** located on your VHS tape: In San Jose, California, three-year-old Mira gets a head start on reading from her parents. *Length: 3:30 minutes*

Before the Video

Talking Points

>> Talking and listening to your child are two of the most important things you as parents can do to help your children in their **oral speech development**. Ask lots of questions; expose your child to new experiences and talk about them. Children need to express themselves, and in the process you can help them build their vocabulary and speaking skills.

>> **Print awareness** is also important for young children. It involves a child's knowledge about print and how it is typically organized on a page.

>> This video features three-year-old Mira and shows how her parents incorporate **early literacy skills** into their everyday lives. The specific focus is on Mira's efforts to gain print awareness, but notice how her parents engage her in conversation, as well.

After the Video

Talking Points

>> You just watched a piece in which Mira's mother reads to Mira and her baby brother. Mira's mother plainly illustrates concepts that adult readers know and take for granted, but that children must be taught in order to become fluent readers.

>> Children who are exposed to a "print-rich environment" are more likely to become proficient readers and achieve academic success than children who experience little or no exposure to print prior to beginning school.

>> We can begin to prepare children to learn to read very early in life. Books can be read to children long before they understand what a book is — from birth onward. From the child's perspective, she or he is sharing a pleasurable interaction with parents or other adults. From the parents' or other adults' perspective, they are helping their children to develop an ear for language.

>> Shared reading on a regular basis will help set the tone. Children will understand that reading is as much a part of their family's day as eating and sleeping.

>> Children who learn to "read" product names from logos found on signs, boxes, containers, and wrappers may be motivated and inspired to seek out opportunities to participate in literacy-related activities. The self-confidence that accompanies early reading success tends to motivate children to practice their reading skills often enough to become proficient readers.

If time permits, review the tips in the handout "Read Aloud" (located on page 73). Model the techniques listed on the handout and break your parents into small groups, so they can practice what they have learned.

Handouts:
"You Are Your Child's First and Best Teacher"
"Helping Your Child Become Aware of Print"
"Read Aloud: Tips for Reading to Your Children"

Web Sites:
For more information on reading and suggested books, direct participants to www.ReadingRockets.org and, for Spanish-speaking families, www.ColorinColorado.org.

You Are Your Child's First and Best Teacher

Parents are critically important in helping children learn to read. In fact, a parent is a child's first and best teacher. Most children who begin first grade with the ability to read fairly well have grown up with lots of print around them and adults who share it with them.

Here are some suggestions to get you started:

>> Read to your child at the same time every day.

>> Talk about stories and what words mean. Ask questions that your child can answer with more than "yes" or "no." Use questions that may have more than one right answer. Ask questions that need a longer response, such as, "What was Jenny doing?" rather than, "Did Jenny feel sad?"

>> Sit close. If your child is young enough to sit on your lap, enjoy being close.

>> Read lots of books with your child. Point out how books look different.

>> Help your child link real life with what he is hearing or reading in books. If he is reading a book about animals, remind him about a trip to the zoo and talk about the animals.

>> Talk about everyday experiences such as cooking and gardening with your child. Talk about movies and television shows. Talking about everyday things with your child helps her listen better and understand more.

>> Tell stories. We're all storytellers! Children love to hear stories about their families. What was life like when Grandma was growing up? How about that time you won the school science fair?

>> Visit the library. Find books that inspire family stories.

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org or www.ColorinColorado.org.

Helping Your Child Become Aware of Print

Becoming aware of print is an important ingredient in preparing children to learn how to read. Here are some suggestions for helping your child become aware of print. Be sure to make these activities fun and rewarding for your child.

>> Talk to your children. Read to them. Listen to them read and talk to you.

>> Read to children from the time they are first born. Although babies may not understand the words or meanings at this age, research suggests that even six- or seven-week-old babies get excited when adults read to them.

>> Draw your children's attention to print in the world around them. Find print in books, product logos, signs, lists, and billboards. Point out letters that are familiar or have special meaning, such as a letter in their names.

>> Keep books, newspapers, and other printed materials around the house. Let children see you reading. This will show them that you enjoy reading and that you think it's important.

>> Set aside 15 minutes each day to read with your children, no matter how old they are.

>> Encourage children to dictate made-up stories to you. Write down their words and then show them the words in their story as you read it back to them. Use family photographs to tell stories.

>> Plan activities that include recognition of letters and words (such as word games, educational videos, alphabet cards, writing the child's name, etc.).

>> Visit your library regularly. Get a library card. Check out books. Attend storytimes and other family events.

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org or www.ColorinColorado.org.

Read Aloud: Tips for Reading to Your Children

Before Reading

>> Point out the front and back of the book.

>> Read the author and illustrator names. Ask what they do. (The author writes the story. The illustrator draws the pictures.)

>> Talk about the cover of the book. Ask questions such as, "Why do you think the boy looks sad?"

>> Ask questions such as, "What do you think this book will be about?" This lets children predict what will happen. Also, this kind of question usually requires more than a one-word answer.

During Reading

>> Follow the words with your finger as you read.

>> Read the book with excitement. Use funny voices for dialogue.

>> Hold the book so that the child can see the print.

>> Point out letters, punctuation marks, and pictures.

>> Ask questions such as, "What do you think will happen next?"

After Reading

>> Ask children more questions that make them think. For example, "What did you like most about the story? What did you like the least about it?"

>> Have children write or dictate their own version of the story.

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org or www.ColorinColorado.org.

Workshop 2:   Finding the Right Book

Recommended Use: This is a good workshop for reminding parents about the power of the library. Libraries are an excellent source of books for the homes of low-income families, and they're great at getting all kids truly excited about reading.

Workshop Objectives: Parents will learn about the resources available at school and public libraries and become motivated to use them. Parents will be encouraged to become more involved in their children's education. This module can serve as a jumping off point to introduce parents to the idea that their children's interests can grow with books.

Module 6:   *Finding the Right Book,* located on your VHS tape: The library is a vital resource for one mom whose son's appetite for information — especially about dinosaurs — is growing as quickly as his shoe size.
Length: 3:14 minutes

Before the Video

Talking Points

» This video features Andrea Alford and her son T.J. Their trip to the library illustrates how important the library can be in increasing a child's appetite for books.

» Libraries offer children an opportunity to discover the type of books that they enjoy best. Librarians can ask questions and make suggestions to guide children through the process of self-discovery needed to choose books they find exciting.

» Books are only the beginning! Libraries are filled with educational resources such as computers, Internet access, educational videos, curriculum, educational games, and other tools. Many libraries offer formal tours, or a librarian can walk visitors through the library to show what is available.

» Some libraries offer book clubs or story times, which bring children together with their peers.

» Once the children have found their books, adults can look for books and other materials of interest for themselves.

After the Video

Engage the group in a discussion about your library. You might highlight some upcoming family events and have booklists and other appropriate library handouts available. If the program takes place in the library, take a short tour, including the computer stations. If it takes place at another location, talk about when the participants could visit the library and meet the staff.

Handouts:
"Discover Your Library"
"Never Too Early to Read: Books for the Very Young"
"Spanish Language and Wordless Book Recommendations"

Web Sites:
For more information, direct participants to www.ReadingRockets.org and, for Spanish-speaking families, www.ColorinColordo.org.

Discover Your Library

The public library is like a huge treasure chest, chock-full of books, magazines, videos, and computers — and it's all available for free with a library card.

Here are just a few of the things you might find:

» Librarians who can help you find books about topics that interest your child and are at the right reading level.

» A special kid-friendly section designed just for children.

» Storytimes for children. Ask your librarian for exact days and times. Books come to life during storytime. It's a great way for you to share stories with your child.

» Information about child and adult reading programs.

» Information about tutoring programs for children and adults.

» Computers for you and your child to use at no charge. You'll find a goldmine online. To get you started, visit these Web sites:

• At **www.ReadingRockets.org** you can find a list of books that are just right for your child, get tips from other parents, and see lots of other suggestions.

• For Spanish-speaking families, find booklists and information at **www.ColorinColorado.org**.

• On **www.pbs.org/launchingreaders** you'll find lots of tips for helping your child learn how to read.

• On **www.pbskids.org** you can link to your child's favorite PBS shows, such as *Between the Lions, Arthur,* and *Sesame Street*.

Check it out! A library card is really a passport to adventure!

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org or www.ColorinColorado.org.

Never Too Early to Read: Books for the Very Young

For Children up to Two Years Old

>> **Black on White and White on Black**
by Tana Hoban
(Greenwillow, 1993)

>> **Freight Train**
by Donald Crews
(Greenwillow, 1978)

>> **Goodnight Moon**
by Margaret Wise Brown
(HarperCollins, 1992 issue)

>> **Sheila Rae's Peppermint Stick**
by Kevin Henkes
(Greenwillow, 2001)

>> **Where's Spot?**
by Eric Hill
(Putnam, 1980)

For Children Three to Five Years Old

>> **Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?**
by Bill Martin Jr., illustrated by Eric Carle
(Holt, 1992 revised)

>> **Caps for Sale**
by Esphya Slobodkina
(HarperCollins, 1947)

>> **Mice and Beans**
by Pam Munoz Ryan, illustrated by
Joe Cepeda (Scholastic, 2001)

>> **Ten Nine Eight**
by Molly Bang
(Greenwillow, 1983)

>> **The Three Bears**
retold by Paul Galdone
(Houghton Mifflin, 1985)

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org or www.ColorinColorado.org.

Spanish Language and Wordless Book Recommendations

Spanish-Language Children's Books

>> *Abuela* by Arthur Dorros   Ages 3-6

>> *Arroz con Leche: Popular Songs and Rhymes from Latin America* by Lulu Delacre   Ages 3-6

>> *Barrio: José's Neighborhood* by George Ancona   Ages 6-9

>> *Chato's Kitchen* by Gary Soto   Ages 3-6

>> *De Colores and Other Latin-American Folk Songs for Children* by Jose-Luis Orozco   Ages 3-6

>> *From the Bellybutton of the Moon and Other Summer Poems/Del Ombligo dela Luna y Otros Poemas de Verano* by Francisco Alarcón   Ages 6-9

>> *In My Family/En Mi Familia* by Carmen Lomas Garza   Ages 6-9

>> *The Most Beautiful Place in the World* by Ann Cameron   Ages 6-9

>> *The Rainbow Tulip* by Pat Mora   Ages 6-9

>> *Roadrunner's Dance* by Rudolfo Anaya   Ages 6-9

>> *Under the Royal Palms: A Childhood in Cuba* by Alma Flor Ada   Ages 6-9

¡Fiesta! Books (Ages 4-8)

>> *Mi primer libro de fiestas (My First Party Book)* by Angela Wilkes

>> *¡Feliz cumpleaños Vivi! (Happy Birthday Vivi!)* by Anke De Vries

>> *¡Viva! ¡Una piñata! (Hooray, A Piñata!)* by Elisa Kleven

>> *¡Qué montón de tamales! (Too Many Tamales)* by Gary Soto

>> *La procesión de Naty (Naty's Parade)* by Gina Freschet

>> *La Nochebuena South of the Border* by James Rice

>> *¡Qué sorpresa de cumpleaños! (Birthday Swap)* by Loretta López

Wordless Books (Pre-kindergarten)

>> *Ah-Choo*! by Mercer Mayer

>> *The Angel and the Soldier Boy* by Peter Collington

>> *Ben's Dream* by Chris Van Allsburg

>> *A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog* by Mercer Mayer

>> *Changes, Changes* by Pat Hutchins

>> *Clown* by Quentin Blake

>> *Deep in the Forest* by Brinton Turkle

>> *Frog Goes to Dinner* by Mercer Mayer

>> *Frog on His Own* by Mercer Mayer

>> *Frog, Where Are You?* by Mercer Mayer

>> *Good Dog Carl* by Alexandra Day

>> *The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher* by Molly Bang

>> *The Hunter and the Animals* by Tomie dePaola

>> *The Midnight Circus* by Peter Collington

>> *Noah's Ark* by Peter Spier

>> *Pancakes for Breakfast* by Tomie dePaola

>> *Peter Spier's Christmas* by Peter Spier

>> *Peter Spier's Rain* by Peter Spier

>> *Rainy Day Dream* by Michael Chesworth

>> *Rosie's Walk* by Pat Hutchins

>> *Sector 7* by David Wiesner

>> *The Silver Pony* by Lyn Ward

>> *The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs

>> *Time Flies* by Eric Rohmann

>> *Tuesday* by David Wiesner

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org or www.ColorinColorado.org.

Workshop 3: Reading as Dialogue

Recommended Use: This workshop is recommended for parents of pre-kindergarten through second-grade students.

Workshop Objectives: Parents will see techniques modeled for questioning, reading aloud, and shared reading. They will better understand how they can monitor comprehension and increase their children's vocabulary.

Module 7: *Reading as Dialogue,* located on your VHS tape: In a Long Island classroom, children who are at risk for reading failure boost their reading skills using a technique called "dialogic reading." *Length: 3:05 minutes*

Before the Video

This video features Head Start students and their teacher using a reading technique called "dialogic reading." It encourages young children to become active participants in the read-aloud process. Dialogic reading helps to build comprehension and vocabulary.

Talking Points

>> As parents, you can do things at home to help build comprehension and vocabulary in children.

>> Parents can help build comprehension by talking about everyday activities. This helps build a child's background knowledge, which is crucial to listening and reading comprehension. Activities that foster comprehension do not always involve reading. Keep up a running patter, for example, while cooking together; take your child someplace new and talk about what you see; or discuss the movie or television show you have just watched together.

>> One way to improve a child's comprehension skills is to improve his or her vocabulary. Knowing the meaning of individual words, or being able to figure out the meaning of words in a sentence or paragraph, is essential to comprehension.

>> Talk is powerful! Young children learn the meaning of most words by listening to people talk.

>> As children grow older, what they read becomes an even more important source of new vocabulary. Many words, in fact, are rarely heard in everyday speech.

After the Video

Remind parents that although the video clip featured a teacher and her students, they can use some of the same techniques with their children at home. Engage participants in a discussion about how the techniques used in the video clip can be modified for use at home. To get the discussion going, ask questions such as:

>> Did you notice how engaged the children on the tape were as they listened to the story? It was clear that the students were sharing in the storytelling process.

>> What was different about dialogic reading as compared to what we think of as traditional story reading?

Ask participants to share effective comprehension and vocabulary-building techniques they use with their children.

If time permits, review the handout on the next page and ask for volunteers to model some of the techniques they learned in the workshop.

Handout:
"Talk, Read, Listen to Your Children: Read-Aloud Techniques"

Web Sites:
For more information, direct participants to www.ReadingRockets.org and, for Spanish-speaking families, www.ColorinColorado.org.

Talk, Read, Listen to Your Children: Read-Aloud Techniques

Parents and caregivers help children understand more by talking with them as they read aloud. Here are some ideas to help build understanding and vocabulary:

>> *Read dramatically.* Use different voices for different characters. Slow down or speed up while you read. Children pay attention and understand the story if they are having fun.

>> *Make the child part of the reading.* Have fun reading. Talk about the story. Answer questions children ask. Ask them questions. Listen to their comments. Encourage children to predict what will happen next.

>> *Help the child learn new words.* One way for children to build their vocabulary is by guessing what a new word could mean. They base their guess on how the word is used. Afterward, help your child look up the word in a dictionary to double-check the meaning.

>> *Ask questions that may have more than one right answer.* Ask questions which need a longer answer. Try to avoid yes-or-no and right-or-wrong questions, which can be answered with one word.

>> *Reread children's favorite books.* Children like reading their favorite stories many times. They are then able to take part in telling the story.

>> *Link reading to real life experiences.* Help children make the connection between what they read in books and what they do in life. If you read a book about animals, for example, remind children about a visit to the zoo or farm and the animals they saw.

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org or www.ColorinColorado.org.

Workshop 4: Preventing Reading Difficulties

Recommended Use: This is an especially good workshop for parents with children who are in kindergarten through second grade.

Workshop Objectives: Parents learn how to recognize early signs of reading difficulties and find out how to get help.

Module 8:

a. *Warning Signs,* located on your VHS tape: We learn about the early warning signs that may signal a child will have or is having difficulty learning to read. *Length: 3:38 minutes*

b. *Good Reading Instruction*, located on your VHS tape: At Metzger Elementary in Portland, Oregon, we see effective reading instruction and ongoing assessment in action. *Length: 7:53 minutes*

Before Video Clip 8a

Let your group of parents know that many children have difficulty learning how to read — about four in 10 children. Explain the importance of looking for signs that their child is having difficulty with reading, so that they can act early and get their child the help he or she may need.

Explain some of the reasons why children have difficulty learning to read, such as hearing and speech problems, learning difficulties like dyslexia, and language challenges such has learning English as a second language.

After Video Clip 8a

Open the discussion and ask parents what struck them most about the video clip they just saw. Some of what they see may seem familiar, so be prepared to receive some very specific questions about their children's pre-reading or reading skills. Use the opportunity to explain more fully each of the warning signs listed below.

Preschool:
- Late talking
- Speech problems
- Hearing impairment

Kindergarten:
- Poor vocabulary
- Difficulty following directions
- Difficulty following classroom routines
- Trouble making friends
- Difficulty learning numbers and letters

Grades 1-2:
- Difficulty remembering lessons
- Placement in the lowest reading level in class
- Strong aversion to reading out loud
- Difficulty sounding out words
- Guessing instead of sounding out words

Remind parents how and why *early* intervention is important to ensure their children get the help they need. Most important, tell them what they can do *now* if they suspect their child is having difficulty and falling behind. Expand upon the suggestions listed in the handout "Preventing Reading Difficulties" (located on page 89).

Create a handout that explains the steps parents can take in your school system to address their children's need for evaluation, including options for getting their children extra help. Include contact names and phones numbers.

Before Video Clip 8b

End the workshop by showing video clip 8b, where parents can see the kinds of instruction that will help their children learn to read.

After Video Clip 8b

Relate the video clip to the instructional approaches practiced at your school.

Encourage parents to meet with their children's teacher if they are at all concerned that their children are not receiving the support and instruction they need.

Remind parents to cultivate a love of books in their homes by reading to their children regularly. Encourage them to let their children choose books from the library or bookstore on topics that particularly interest the children. Urge parents to become deeply involved in their children's education, therefore boosting their children's chances of success in school.

Handout: "Preventing Reading Difficulties"

Web Sites: For more information, direct workshop participants to www.ReadingRockets.org and, for Spanish-speaking families, www.ColorinColorado.org.

Preventing Reading Difficulties

Be on the lookout for early signs that your child may need some extra help in learning how to read:

Preschool: Late talking
Speech problems
Hearing impairment

Kindergarten: Poor vocabulary
Difficulty following directions
Difficulty following classroom routines
Trouble making friends
Difficulty learning numbers and letters

Grades 1-2: Difficulty remembering lessons
In the lowest reading level in class
Hates to read out loud
Difficulty sounding out words
Guesses instead of sounding out words

You know your child best. If you think he or she needs help, act early so that your child has the very best chance of succeeding in school:

›› Talk to your child's teacher and/or a reading specialist to find out more about your child's reading difficulties and what you can do at home to help. Talking with the teacher gives both of you a chance to share information and work together for the good of your child.

›› Make certain your child's progress is monitored regularly, so that his or her needs are consistently being met and difficulties identified early.

›› Request an evaluation for special services if you think your child needs more help. If the school determines your child has a learning disability or is lagging behind in reading skills, your child may be able to receive extra help at no cost through special or remedial education programs.

›› If your child is of preschool age and is not in a school that can provide assessment or intervention assistance, contact your health care provider, a speech and language pathologist, or your local public elementary school for assistance in getting your child the services he or she may need.

For more information, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org or www.ColorinColorado.org.