

# Early Literacy

## Quick Reference Guide

■ **Literacy:** All the activities involved in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and appreciating both spoken and written language.

■ **Early Literacy Skills:** Skills that begin to develop in the preschool years, such as alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, letter writing, print knowledge, and oral language.

*Note: Early literacy skills are sometimes called “emergent,” “precursor,” “foundational” or “predictive” literacy skills to distinguish them from more conventional literacy skills, such as decoding, oral reading, fluency, reading comprehension, writing, and spelling.*

■ **Alphabet Knowledge:** Knowing the names and sounds associated with printed letters.

■ **Concepts (Conventions) about Print:** The knowledge of print conventions (e.g., left-right, front-back) and concepts (e.g., book cover, author, and text).

■ **Conventional Literacy Skills:** More mature skills such as decoding, oral reading, fluency, reading comprehension, writing, and spelling that are the focus of instruction in elementary and secondary school students.

■ **Decoding:** The ability to apply knowledge of letter-sound relationships, including knowledge of letter patterns, to correctly pronounce written words.

■ **Environmental Print:** The print of everyday life, such as the letters, numbers, shapes, and colors found in logos and signs for products and stores (e.g., Coke and McDonald’s).

■ **Onset-Rime:** Parts of monosyllabic words in spoken language that are smaller than syllables – onset is the initial consonant sound of a syllable (the onset of ‘bag’ is ‘b’); rime is the part of a syllable that contains the vowel and all that follows it (the rime of ‘bag’ is ‘-ag’).

■ **Oral Language:** The ability to produce or comprehend spoken language, including vocabulary or grammar.

■ **Oral Reading Fluency:** The ability to accurately and quickly read a series of words or sentences.

■ **Phoneme:** The smallest unit of sound that changes the meanings of spoken words (e.g., by changing the first phoneme in bat from /b/ to /p/, the word ‘bat’ changes to ‘pat’).

- **Phonological Awareness:** The ability to detect, manipulate, or analyze the auditory aspects of spoken language (including the ability to distinguish or segment words, syllables, or phonemes) independent of meaning.
- **Phonological Memory:** The ability to remember spoken information for a short period of time.
- **Print Knowledge:** A skill reflecting a combination of elements of alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, and early decoding.
- **Rapid Automatized Naming:** The ability to name rapidly a sequence of random letters, digits, objects, or colors.
- **Reading Comprehension:** The ability to understand and gain meaning from text.
- **Syllable:** A part of a word that contains a vowel or, in spoken language, a vowel sound (e.g., e-vent, news-pa-per).
- **Visual Processing:** The ability to match or discriminate visually presented symbols.

*Excerpt taken from: EARLY BEGINNINGS Early Literacy Knowledge And Instruction*  
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