



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ Support children's health
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ Provide positive guidance
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ Foster curiosity and development through play
- ★ Individualize care and learning activities
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

This Month's Hallmark of Quality Child Care

Provide a Language-rich Environment

The Science of Reading

What does it take to learn to read? *The Science of Reading* represents more than 40 years of scientific evidence about how the human brain learns to read and the most effective strategies for teaching children to read. Researchers found that learning to read involves two main components – language comprehension and word recognition. These two components are broken down into 8 interconnected skills.

Language Comprehension:

- **Background Knowledge:** Knowledge about the world/ various topics
- **Vocabulary:** An age-appropriate bank of vocabulary words
- **Language Structures:** Knowledge of sentence structure and that the order of words matters (e.g., "The cat chased the dog," is different from "The dog chased the cat.")
- **Verbal Reasoning:** Ability to understand what the text in a story is about
- **Literacy Knowledge:** Print awareness and knowledge of how a book "works" (e.g., identifying the front/back covers of a book, knowing we read from left to right, etc.)

Word Recognition Skills:

- **Phonological Awareness:** Ability to recognize the spoken sounds in words and sentences (children gain this through rhyming, clapping syllables, etc.)
- **Decoding:** Knowledge that sounds are represented by written letters
- **Sight Recognition:** Ability to automatically read familiar words without sounding them out

Giving children opportunities to gain these skills will provide them with a crucial foundation for reading success. In this newsletter, we will introduce some of the *Science of Reading* strategies to help support children's **language comprehension** at each age level – infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.



Strategies for Building Language Comprehension Skills

The foundation for reading success starts long before children learn to read on their own. In fact, language comprehension skills begin at birth! When we respond to children's natural curiosity through everyday interactions, such as talking or singing about the things around them, acknowledging and responding to their interests and questions, and reading books to them, we are helping to build crucial language comprehension skills for reading success. Here are specific strategies you can use with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers:

Background Knowledge

- **Infants** – Give infants opportunities to explore objects through their senses. For example, take them on a stroll in your neighborhood, and talk about the things they can see, hear, smell, and touch. You can say, “Look at this tall tree. It has pretty green leaves. The tree trunk feels rough.” Gently take the infant's hand to feel the bark and repeat, “It is rough.”
- **Toddlers** – Help toddlers make connections between the stories they hear and their own life. For example, if you read a story about a butterfly, you might say, “We saw a butterfly in the backyard yesterday. That butterfly was orange and



black. Do you remember? This one in our story is colorful.” Next time you see a butterfly, be sure to point it out to them. Say, “Look! There's a butterfly– just like in our story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.”

- **Preschoolers** – Expose preschoolers to many experiences through field trips (e.g., a visit to a farm) and by providing them informational books about different topics they may be interested in – such as space, shells, dinosaurs, etc. (Borrow them from your local library.) Give children hands-on opportunities to further explore these topics. For example, provide shovels/paint brushes and small toy dinosaurs hidden in sand for the children to explore being a paleontologist digging for dinosaur bones. In addition, talk to them about the uses of objects and ask, “Why do we use a shovel?”

Vocabulary

- **Infants** – Notice things that an infant looks at or reaches for, then name and describe them. For example, you can say, “This is a cow. The cow is brown. It is so soft. The cow says *moooo*.”
- **Toddlers** – Watch as toddlers move around and use this opportunity to name their actions (e.g., “You are pushing your red chair,” and use positional words too (e.g., “You are climbing over the pillow”).

- **Preschoolers** – Broaden a child’s vocabulary by intentionally using more complex words (e.g., “exhausted,” “collapsed”). When reading a story to children and you come across a new word, teach the word by doing the following: 1) Have them repeat the word – for example, “Say ‘fretting.’” 2) Talk about its use in the story – “In our story, Camilla was fretting over what to wear.” 3) Tell them what it means – “Fretting over something means you are worried.” 4) Apply the word and use some examples – “You might fret if you lost your favorite toy.”

Other Language Comprehension Skills

- **Infants** – Build *Literacy Knowledge* in infants by giving them opportunities to handle books – hold it, mouth it, turn pages. This helps them learn how a book works. Read books with clear pictures of common objects. As you read, point to the word and say it aloud.
- **Toddlers** – Help toddlers learn *Language Structures* (that the order of words matters) by talking, modeling, and gently repeating a correct phrase when a child mixes up the order of words. For example, if she says, “Up go,” instead of “Go up,” you can say, “You want to go up!” and then lift her and say, “Go up!”



- **Preschoolers** – *Verbal Reasoning* is the ability to understand language beyond the words spoken. For example, if you read, “Her pet is wagging its tail and barking,” by using verbal reasoning, you would know that the story is referring to a dog, without even the mention of a dog. Help preschoolers gain verbal reasoning skills by making comments and asking questions such as, “Johnny looks tired today. How can we tell?” or “It looks windy outside. How do we know?”

Citations

Reading Rockets. (n.d.). Scarborough’s Reading Rope (from Calgary Reads). [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.readingrockets.org/videos/meet-experts/scarboroughs-reading-rope>

Training Opportunity

A Deep Dive into Language Comprehension: Research and Classroom Implications

View this recorded to earn a 1.0-hour certificate of completion. Learn more about Scarborough’s Reading Rope and strategies and techniques that support children’s language comprehension skills.

<https://home.edweb.net/webinar/literacyhero20250715/>

Featured Activity

Reading Readiness

While Making Pancakes

What you need:

- 1 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons melted butter, room temperature



Directions:

1. Show children the directions to build their literacy knowledge.
2. Mix dry ingredients in a large bowl. Name each ingredient to build their vocabulary.
3. Mix wet ingredients in a medium bowl. Talk about where milk and eggs come from to build background knowledge.
4. Combine wet and dry ingredients and mix until just combined.
5. Pour about ¼ cup of batter onto a hot, lightly greased griddle.
6. Cook over medium heat until you see bubbles form on the top and the bottom is brown.
7. Flip, and cook 1–2 minutes more, or until the other side is brown. Ask, “How do we know it’s done?” to build verbal reasoning skills.
8. Enjoy! While eating, talk about the steps you used to make the pancakes – to build knowledge of language structures.

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Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the Hawai'i State Public Library www.librarieshawaii.org

Infants and Toddlers

See, Touch, Feel 1 2 3

by Roger Priddy

“One happy baby smiling at you... Two furry teddies with bows big and blue...”

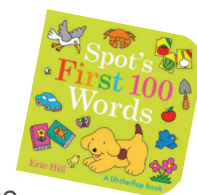
This is a great first book for young children, with raised textures to explore, real photos, and rich language. It's sure to be a favorite for infants and toddlers!



Spot's First 100 Words

by Eric Hill

Little ones will love this engaging lift-the-flap book as they join Spot and his family and friends on adventures to the park, the beach, the playground, and more – and discover key words along the way.



Preschoolers

Who What Where?

by Olivier Tallec

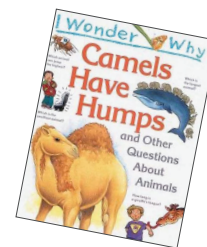
In this charming interactive book, each page asks a question about the characters featured, such as “Who left a jacket at home?” “Who’s under the tablecloth?” Children must hunt for clues and use verbal reasoning skills to find the answer.



I Wonder Why Camels Have Humps and Other Questions About Animals

by Anita Ganeri

Children learn the answers to questions about animals, such as, “Why do leopards have spots?” This fascinating question and answer book about animals builds children’s background knowledge about animals!



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