

THE YEAR 2 DIAGNOSTIC NET

Supporting your child's reading development

A Queensland Government Initiative
Supporting Literacy and
Numeracy Development
in the Early Years
of Schooling



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Reading

How reading develops — some notes for parents

Reading is a critical life skill that helps us to function in today's complex society. Many of our daily activities include reading — for example, deciding which bus or train to catch, following directions, interpreting the news of the day, trying a new recipe. We not only acquire information through reading; we are also entertained and we have our minds and horizons expanded.

To become effective readers, our children need to develop the skills that allow them to read fluently and to understand the meaning of what they read. To help in this process, a *Reading Developmental Continuum* has been supplied to early childhood teachers as part of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net.

The *Continuum* provides an explanation of how reading develops. It also lists the key behaviours, or milestones, that children typically display as their reading improves. The *Continuum* groups these behaviours into different phases. Your child's teacher will use the *Continuum* to chart your child's reading development and to report to you about your child's progress.

The first four phases of the *Reading Developmental Continuum* are explained in this pamphlet. For each phase, some activities are suggested that will help you to help your child become a better reader.

Children will usually spend a considerable period of time in each of the early reading phases. Therefore, few children in the early school years will be operating in Phase D, the Transitional Reading phase.

No matter what reading phase your child is in, you and your child's teacher can help by:

- providing your child with real purposes for reading;
- providing your child with opportunities to read;
- serving as a 'model reader' by reading for yourself and reading to your child;
- praising and valuing your child's reading efforts so that he or she will continue to read.

If you and your child speak a language other than English at home, you can try any of these reading activities using your home language. The reading skills your child acquires in another language will actually help your child to become a better reader in English.

If you have any questions about reading or would like more information, please contact your child's teacher.

Phase A **Role Play Reading**

In this phase children show an interest in books and the print they see around them. They imitate what they see adult readers doing, such as holding the book carefully, turning the pages and talking out loud as they do so. They often retell stories they have heard as they pretend to read.

Behaviours

Readers:

- imitate 'adult' reading behaviours
 - hold the book the right way up
 - turn the pages
 - look at words and pictures
 - talk about the pictures, sometimes making up or retelling stories as they turn pages
- realise that print carries a message but may read the writing differently every time, such as when 'reading' a scribble message to parents
- show that they know that writing and drawing are different — for example, *Mummy reads the black bits*
- begin to recognise their own names, or parts of them, in print
- begin to recognise and name some letters
- may react to the printed messages they see around them — for example, noticing the fast food sign, may say *Are we having pizza?*
- are curious about print, wanting to know *What does this say?*
- enjoy stories and ask for them to be read and re-read
- talk about their own experiences and relate them to the story being read, such as *That looks like my dog*
- will often be prompted by a picture to talk about a related story

Ways to help your child in this phase:

Read to your child every day. If you speak a language other than English at home, read to your child in the home language.

Put books in baskets where your child plays.

Give books as presents.

Choose different books for your child: pop-up books; picture books with no text; funny books; books about children the same age as your child.

Talk to your child about the stories you have shared.

When out driving or walking, make up stories about things you are seeing and doing.

Point out signs in shops that tell you where to buy products and what is available. Let your child see you using print to get information.

Encourage your child to tell stories about his or her day: going shopping; seeing grandparents; playing.

Join the library and visit it each week to get new books.

Share picture books that have rhyming or repetitive text and ask your child to read to you or with you.

Make a book bag with your child. Write his or her name on it and take books on car trips and to places where the child might have to wait for a while.

Always hold a book so that your child can see the pictures and the text. From time to time, accent some distinctive words such as *elephant* or *umbrella*, by pointing them out with your finger and ask the child to read the words when they appear again.

Write simple stories for your child. If your home language is not English, write for your child in your language.

Let your child hold the book during readings, telling him or her when to turn the page at first. Then ask your child to watch the words and turn the page when you are finished.

Make a place for your child's own library.

Encourage your child to tell a whole known story from the pictures. Suggest that he or she tell the story to a favourite toy animal or doll.

Sing songs and rhymes to your child. Encourage him or her to sing along.

Phase B **Experimental Reading**

In this phase children can memorise familiar stories and match some spoken words and written words. They realise that words in print always stay the same and they begin pointing to words as they read.

Behaviours

Readers:

- begin to match some spoken words with written words
- realise that printed words always stay the same and will tell adults if they leave out a word or page when reading
- recognise some familiar words and letters, especially letters from their own names and print they see around them
- begin to use words relating to books, such as cover, page, picture
- demonstrate an increasing knowledge of letter names and the links between letters and the sounds they represent
- use their own background knowledge and the book's pictures to help understand the meaning of what they read
- attempt to identify some words using the initial letter
- recognise distinctive words that catch the imagination, such as *engine, helicopter, dinosaur*
- focus entirely on meaning and are not concerned with accuracy
- see themselves as readers and talk about their own reading
- show that they know that the reading of text goes from left to right and generally from top to bottom of page

Ways to help your child in this phase:

When reading to your child, ask what might happen over the page or ask some 'why' questions.

Ask what the book might be about from looking at the cover. Discuss the clues that are given by the cover.

Make a space in your child's room, or where he or she plays inside, to use as a library.

Ask your child to bring a particular book from the library shelf for reading.

Surprise your child from time to time with some new books that you buy or borrow.

Encourage your child to read simple messages that you leave for him or her.

Talk about parts of books that can be related to your child's own experiences: when he or she has felt happy or sad, frightened or curious.

Make up simple stories with your child and write them down. Encourage your child to read the story back to you. One or two sentences can be enough to begin with. Your child could illustrate the story with drawings or pictures cut from magazines and help you make it into a simple book by stapling or pasting the pages together.

Discuss your child's preferred stories. Ask why some books are favourites. Talk to your child about your favourite childhood stories.

Let the child see you reading for information and pleasure. For example, discuss how you find out what is on television.

Discuss labels on packaged goods and jars. Show the child where the print tells what the product is called, and other print that describes it. Discuss why people need this information.

Ask your child to find products when shopping in the supermarket with you. Ask him or her to find the brand you use and sometimes ask what the labels say.

Encourage your child to read to you as often as possible. This might mean guessing at some parts, reading a few words, missing out parts or making up others. Praise his or her efforts to read.

Supply a box for paper, crayons, pencils etc. Ask your child to write you a 'letter' from time to time. Write a letter back and share the reading together.

Phase C **Early Reading**

In this phase children may read slowly and deliberately as they try to read exactly what is on the page, rather than concentrate on meaning. They are beginning to comment on books they have read or listened to.

Behaviours

Readers:

- can read some common words in a variety of situations, such as in a book, on a sign, on a card
- retell events in a story with a good deal of accuracy and detail, and talk about characters, settings and events, comparing them with their own experiences
- may read word by word when reading unfamiliar books; fluency and expression may suffer as they focus on sounding out words
- rely heavily on the beginning letters when sounding out words
- rely on 'sounding out' for word identification and may not always use the important strategies of taking risks and 'having a go'
- sometimes make sensible guesses about unknown words and then, if not interrupted, will continue to read effectively
- if prompted, will re-read to clarify meaning that has been lost due to word-by-word reading
- talk about texts written by different authors
- can identify and talk about different forms of texts, such as recipes, lists, letters, newspaper articles
- read familiar texts confidently but may lose fluency when reading unfamiliar texts

Ways to help your child in this phase:

Continue reading to your child every day.

Increase your child's role in reading as confidence grows. Read a page each or encourage your child to start and end the story while you read the middle.

Talk about how readers use the clues in books — for example, illustrations, bold printing, colour.

Cover up the text and 'read' the book from the pictures. Read the text and discuss the differences.

Encourage your child to write a list of the books he or she owns, and pin it on a noticeboard. Encourage your child to mark the title of the story to be read that night.

Discuss how to find particular books in bookshops and libraries, pointing out books are shelved in sections.

Encourage your child to write notes and letters to family members and friends. Read these attempts with him or her and praise all efforts.

Begin to call your child's attention to the author and illustrator of a book. Point out 'styles' of illustration and encourage your child to make connections.

Write notes for your child — for example, reminding him/her to take special clothes to school for sports or to take a book back to the library. Leave these notes pinned to a noticeboard in your child's room or pin the note to his or her pillow.

Make a diary with your child. Help to put in the dates for school holidays, birthdays and special events.

Encourage your child to decorate the diary, to write about what's happening and refer to it each day to see if anything special is about to take place.

Talk about the books your child's teacher reads at school. Ask your child to tell you some of the stories.

When you play games that have instructions, read the rules with your child and talk about what they mean.

Encourage your child to make birthday and celebration cards. Help your child practise writing on a spare piece of paper before transferring the message to the card.

Sometimes a child loses the concentration necessary for reading during this phase. Watch for signs that tell you this is happening and read to your child without asking for his or her help. Simply let your child enjoy the story.

Phase D **Transitional Reading**

In this phase readers are relying less on 'sounding out' as a way of working out unfamiliar words. They are able to use other methods, such as substituting a word that makes sense, reading on past the unfamiliar word to discover the meaning, slowing down, or using their background knowledge. They are able to change their reading style to meet the demands of different types of text — for example, looking for information by skimming, or scanning headings and subheadings.

Behaviours

Readers:

- recognise an increasing number of common words
- use a range of different methods to obtain meaning, such as reading on when text seems difficult, looking for hints in pictures etc.
- self-correct when reading
- 'have a go' at unfamiliar words
- read again to clarify meaning
- slow down when reading difficult text
- read aloud when reading difficult text
- use own knowledge to understand what is read
- use knowledge of different print layouts to help understanding — for example, look for headings in a textbook, use index to locate information
- may read a word incorrectly but substitute a word that fits the sentence grammatically and captures the original meaning, such as 'cool' drink for 'cold' drink
- pay attention to punctuation when reading aloud
- read fluently and with expression when reading rehearsed material for an audience
- read for a range of purposes — for information and for pleasure
- may have favourite authors and show preferences for certain types of books
- sound out or syllabify to help work out an unfamiliar word
- can discuss how characters can be stereotyped in text and how real life may be different — for example, not all mothers stay home to look after children while fathers go to work
- talk about their own interpretations of texts

Ways to help your child in this phase:

Recognise that some children will show growing independence in this phase and may be uninterested in being read to each night. Encourage conversation as an alternative to bedtime story reading and ask for funny stories to be told or jokes to be shared.

Ask your child to read to you while you iron or prepare meals. Tell him or her how much you enjoy the reading.

Encourage your child to make labels for shelves in his or her room or the family's storeroom. Discuss how you would like the labels to look.

Encourage your child to enter competitions and take the time to help him or her fill out the forms and understand rules.

Write some long words for your child and ask him or her to find other words that can be made from the letters. Give small rewards for finding five or ten words.

Let your child see that you rely on their reading for your information — for example, ask what is on TV at a certain time.

Discuss favourite authors and look for information about books by that author. Ask the library to save books by favourite authors that you haven't read yet.

Encourage your child to write thankyou letters after birthday parties or after receiving gifts.

Encourage your child to make up plays or stories.

When you need a shopping list, ask your child to write one while you dictate the items that you need.

Ask your child to read the recipe when you cook together.

Begin to draw your child's attention to graphic information, such as weather patterns in the paper.

Make a chart for your child showing his or her growth.