

# Phonics and Spelling in Kindergarten

*This document informs teachers about the stages of phonics and spelling development. It also provides suggestions for the role of the teacher at each stage.*

Supporting Kindergarten

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It is important to note that in Kindergarten, children's phonetic and spelling abilities develop naturally in a rich and engaging environment. Initially, children will experiment with drawings and scribbles before moving on to using letter-like symbols and letters. Children are encouraged to explore and develop their interest in words, letters, and invented spelling through play. The following chart is to be used by teachers to help facilitate scaffolding an individual's needs.

## Development of Phonics and Spelling Knowledge

Prephonemic Stage	Early Phonemic Stage
<p>(PreKindergarten, Kindergarten, Grade 1)</p> <p>During this stage, children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• recognize that printed symbols carry meaning</li><li>• understand that speech can be written</li><li>• understand that pictures extend and clarify the meaning of print</li><li>• use letter-like symbols frequently in combination with numbers, drawings, and designs to convey meaning</li><li>• use letter-like formations at random</li><li>• show eagerness to dictate ideas for others to write down</li><li>• attempt first "messages" which are typically own names</li><li>• realize there is a relationship between oral and written versions of words.</li></ul>	<p>(Kindergarten, Grade 1)</p> <p>During this stage, children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• are developing the "alphabetic principle" – they know that letters correspond to sounds but cannot necessarily match sounds to letters</li><li>• can form some, but not all, letters of the alphabet</li><li>• understand left-to-right directionality</li><li>• string letters together to look like printed language</li><li>• frequently code or spell accurately the initial and final sounds in words.</li></ul>

## Prephonemic Stage

### Teacher's Role

- Read to children daily.
- Display and read printed charts, stories, classroom labels and directions with children.
- Encourage children to contribute to environmental print displays.
- Track print during shared reading experiences to develop concepts of directionality, lines and sentences, words, and punctuation, and its purpose.
- Focus on words as language units (framing).
- Model reading and writing daily.
- Have a variety of writing tools and paper accessible.
- Provide daily opportunities for students to "write".
- Encourage children to communicate by "putting on paper" what best represents or looks like what they want to say.
- Observe, document, and interpret children's interest in printed language.

## Early Phonemic Stage

### Teacher's Role

- Read to children daily.
- Continue to develop "word" concept.
- Display and discuss key vocabulary words.
- Encourage children to "write" what they want to say using pictures, scribbles, letters, or sounds they know, leaving blanks for unknown parts.
- Ask children to read back "what their writing says."
- Explore rhyming words and word families (*at, cat, mat, hat*).
- Model writing during collaborative writing activities.
- Compose and sing rhymes and songs with children.
- Compile files of dated "writing" samples.
- Observe, record, and report to children and parents, children's knowledge of phonics and the extent to which this knowledge is applied during "reading" and "writing" activities.
- Praise accurate letter-for-sound applications in "writing", and accurate sounding of words, word parts and letters in "reading".
- Explain to colleagues and parents that the developmental approach to spelling recognizes children's early invented spelling as their efforts to apply phonics and language rules to the print system. These spelling efforts cannot be regarded as mistakes during these early stages of development.