

Science of Reading

A Guide for Families

In the last few years, you may have heard the term, “Science of Reading.” You will be hearing about it even more in our classrooms this year! The Science of Reading refers to the body of research that has been done over the last several decades by reading experts and cognitive scientists who study the brain and how people learn to read. This research has shown us some of the best methods for teaching our students how to read. The good news is that our teachers have already been teaching many of these methods and working on implementing even more of them into their classrooms.

Below are some of the terms you may encounter with your student’s reading instruction this year:

- **Phonemic Awareness** - the ability to identify, hear and manipulate sounds in the spoken language
- **Phonological Awareness** - the SKILLS to identify, hear, and manipulate sounds in the spoken language that include rhyming and syllables
- **Tapping & Blending** - using the fingertips to “tap” each individual sound/phoneme in a word (cat would be 3 taps) then blending the sounds all together without tapping
- **Trick Words** - high frequency words that can’t be sounded out or tapped out because they are “tricky” and do not follow the rules
- **Decoding** - a child’s ability to look at letters and words on a page and turn it into speech (reading)
- **Language Comprehension** - a child’s ability to understand the meaning of words and speech

A Change In The Way We Assess

Old Way	New Way
Students took the STAR test and the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) to determine an A-Z Reading Level.	The STAR test, Foundations Unit Assessments, Oral Reading Fluency Scores, Curriculum Based Measurements, and possible screenings will be used to determine if a student is: ABOVE, AT, or BELOW his or her grade level.

What Can I Do At Home?

Work on DECODING SKILLS:

- Ask your child what letter a specific sound represents
 - “What letter would represent /ă/? – A
 - “What letter would represent /k/? – C or K
 - Segment words to build phonemic awareness
- Start with simple words for young students or struggling students - say “cat”
- Talk about the meaning of the word, how to use it in a sentence.
- Tap out each phoneme (/k/ /ă/ /t/)
- Ask how many sounds the word has - 3 (3 taps = 3 sounds)
- Say the word again

Work on LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION SKILLS:

★ *There are two different types of reading that may come home with your child this year.*

- DECODABLE BOOKS/SHORT PASSAGES- This means that most of the words in the text are words that the student can tap out or sound out on their own with little to no help from the teacher or the adult at home. The student should be able to read mostly independently then read again to the adult at home.
- STUDENT INTEREST BOOKS - Your child may come home with a book or books that seem far above or far below his or her reading level or it may be JUST RIGHT. Please know that **THIS IS OKAY**. These are books that the student chose because he or she had interest in them. These are the types of books and stories that we want students to share with the adult or older sibling at home. Simply spend a few minutes reading together. Make it fun!

OTHER WAYS TO HELP WITH LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION:

- Help expand your child’s vocabulary and try using higher level vocabulary around the house - Instead of asking them to “clean” their bedroom, ask them to “tidy” up.
- As a parent or caregiver, you can choose a book that is above their reading level to read aloud to them a little each day. This will provide high level vocabulary exposure, discuss what the words mean. Characters are also more complex and may lead to more discussion.