

Student Success

KINDERGARTEN – 3RD GRADE

Dear Parent/Guardian,

You are your child's first and most important teacher, playing an integral role in your child's academic success! Reading with your child, even for just 20 minutes a day, is a proven way to promote early literacy and language development. Helping to make sure your child is reading on grade level by third grade is one of the most important things you can do to prepare your child for his/her future. In addition to reading with your child for 20 minutes every day, we encourage you to implement some simple strategies as part of your daily home routine.

Houston County Schools (HCS) is dedicated to helping children reach their maximum potential as lifelong learners and proficient readers by the end of third grade. To support this development in language and early literacy, HCS has developed a Read-at-Home Plan. The purpose of the Read-at-Home plan is to provide parents/guardians with guidance and resources needed to help ensure their child is successful in school.

This Read-at-Home Plan includes daily reading and strategies to help your child become a proficient reader. Please focus on the strategies that are specific to your child's needs, as discussed during the Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP) meeting.

We encourage you to speak with your child's teacher for additional information and strategies.

Watch this video about how to "READ" with your child and try it at home:

<https://youtu.be/FjJD1UDwVKg>

R = Repeat the book

E = Engage and enjoy

A = Ask questions

D = Do more



1. How parents can help

Read at home with your child daily (at least 20 minutes) with books they enjoy. Some ways to do this:

- Read out loud with your child.
- Listen to your child read.
- Echo read (you read a line, then your child repeats it)
- Choral read (Read together at the same time).
- Be playful—use different voices for different characters (EX: squeaky voice for a mouse)
- Reread or retell favorite stories.
- Talk to your child about the stories you have read.

As you read:

- Ask your child to share what they remember.
- Ask questions about the story.
- Talk about your favorite parts.
- Talk about what you have learned, who is in the book and what do they do.
- Talk about how the pictures in the book connect to the words on the page.
- Help connect the story to your child's life or other books they have read.

And, lastly:

- Talk with your child often: Knowing more words helps children to understand the words they read better. This also helps to build their vocabulary.
- Encourage writing: Encourage your child to write the sounds they hear. Spelling is developmental and a work in progress.
- Stay involved: Participate in your child's education and support the reading plan if your child has one.

Research shows that reading with your child—not to them—greatly increases children's language and literacy, and puts them on a path to grade level reading.

2. About the Law

- Alabama lawmakers passed the Alabama Literacy Act #2019-523 in June 2019. This Act is designed to improve the reading proficiency of kindergarten to third grade students and ensure that those students are able to read at or above grade level by the end of the third grade.
- Commencing with the 2021-2022 school year, third grade students shall demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to fourth grade. While statewide reading assessment is the initial determinant for promotion, the assessment is not the sole determiner at the end of third grade.
- Good Cause Exemption – Demonstrating mastery of third grade minimum essential state reading standards as evidenced by a test-based student reading portfolio; earning an acceptable score on an alternative standardized reading assessment; English language learners who have had less than two years of instruction in English as a second language; students with disabilities and who have an IEP or Section 504 plan as stated on page 23 of HB388; Student who have received intensive reading intervention for two or more years and who still demonstrate a deficiency in reading AND who were previously retained in K-3 for a total of two year as specified on page 23 of HB388.

3. How Schools will Help

- Any K-3 student who exhibits a reading deficiency will receive an individual reading improvement plan.
 - Extra instruction or support will be given during the school day
 - Ongoing progress monitoring
 - Daily targeted small group reading intervention
 - At-Home Reading Plan that encourages you and your child to read and write outside of the school day and throughout the summer.
 - Invitation to participate in summer reading camp
- Monitor the progression of each student from one grade to another, in part, by his or her proficiency in reading.
- Provide appropriate reading intervention program to address specific deficiencies for each K-3 student who exhibits a reading deficiency, or characteristic of dyslexia.
- Provide intensive acceleration for all retained students.
- Provide Before/after school (or both) supplemental evidence-based reading intervention delivered by teacher or tutor with specialized reading training.

Your child will receive regular classroom instruction and additional reading support. Starting with the 2021-2022 school year, in order to be promoted from 3rd grade to 4th grade, your child must demonstrate sufficient reading skills. Together, we can make a positive impact on your child's success in school!



Houston County Schools
PARENT READ-AT-HOME PLAN



Student _____
 Grade ____ Teacher _____ Date: _____
 Current Intervention _____
 Completed by _____

Identified Reading Deficiencies: (Check all areas that apply)

- Phonemic Awareness _____
- Phonics _____
- Fluency _____
- Vocabulary _____
- Comprehension _____

Suggested Activities

Phonemic Awareness

- Play “I Spy” with your child, but instead of giving a color, say, “I spy something that starts with /b/” or “I spy something with these sounds, /d//o//g/.” (Be sure to use letter SOUNDS with this activity).
- Play the “Silly Name Game.” Replace the first letter of each family member’s name with a different sound/letter. For example, ‘Tob’ for ‘Bob’ or ‘Bim’ for ‘Jim.’
- Explain that rhymes are words that sound the same at the end. Read books over and over again that contains rhymes (such as Mother Goose Nursery rhymes).
- As you read and reread books containing rhymes, have your child complete the rhyming word at the end of each line.
- Prompt your child to produce rhymes. Ask, “Can you tell me a word that rhymes with ‘cake’?” (bake, sake)
- Sing rhyming songs. Examples include “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” or “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”.
- Say a sentence aloud and ask your child to determine how many words were in the sentence.
- Orally provide pairs of words that rhyme and pairs that do not rhyme (Example: pan/man; pat/boy). Ask, “Do ‘pan’ and ‘man’ rhyme? (yes) Why?” (because they end with the same sound of –an) “Do ‘pat’ and ‘boy’ rhyme? (no) Why not?”
- Demonstrate clapping a word into its syllables. Ask your child to clap words into syllables. Example: sit (one clap); fam-i-ly (3 claps); run-ning (2 claps); etc.
- Make tally marks for the number of syllables in the names of people in your family, favorite foods, etc.
- To help your child segment (separate) sounds in words:
 - Give your child 3-5 blocks, beads, bingo chips or similar items. Say a word and have your child move the object for each sound in the word. (Example: cat, c-aaaaa-t, will have 3 chips/items moved)
 - Play Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes with sounds. Say a word and have your child touch while saying each sound: HEAD for the first sound, SHOULDERS for the second sound, KNEES for the third sound, and TOES if there is a fourth sound (such as f-l-a-t, flat)
 - Jump for Sounds. Say a word and have your child jump for each sound in the word while saying the sound.

Phonics

- Make letter-sounds and have your child write the letter or letters that match the sounds.
- Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words (Example: if the letters “p-e-n” spell *pen*, how do you spell *hen*?).
- Write letters on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds (for example, the /d/ sound for the letter *d*).
- Point out words that begin with the same letter as your child’s names (Example: *John* and *jump*). Talk about how the beginning sounds of the words are alike.
- Play a guessing game to give your child practice in matching letters and sounds. (Example: “I am thinking of something that starts with /t/.” The answer could be *table*.)
- Write letters on pieces of paper (index cards work well) and put them in a paper bag. Let your child reach into the bag and take out a letter. Have your child say the name of the letter and its sound. (Example: D says /d/).
- Take a letter and hide it in your hand. Let your child guess which hand holds the letter. Then show the letter and have your child say the letter name and make the sound. (Example: the letter *m* matches the /m/ sound as in *man*).
- Make letter-sounds and ask your child to draw the matching letters in sand, salt, or cornmeal (something with a grainy texture).
- Take egg cartons and put a paper letter in each slot until you have all the letters of the alphabet in order. Say letter sounds and ask your child to pick out the letters that match those sounds.
- Building Words – Using magnetic letters, make a three letter word on the refrigerator (cat). Have your child read the word and use it in a sentence. Every day, change one letter to make a new word. Start by changing only the beginning letter (cat, bat, hat, mat, sat, rat, pat, fat). Then change only the ending letter (pat, pal, pad, pan, pam). Finally, change only the middle letter (pan, pen, pin, pun).
- Making words – For this game, you will need magnetic letters and three bags. Put half of the consonants into the first bag. Put the vowels (a, e, i, o, u) into the middle bag, and put the remaining consonants into the last bag. Have your child pull one letter from the first bag. This will be the first letter of their word. Then have your child pull one letter from the vowel (middle) bag for the second letter of the word. Pull from the other consonant bag (third bag) for the final or last letter of the word. Next, the child will read the word and decide if it is a real word or a nonsense word. Take turns, replacing the vowels as needed until there are no more consonants left.
- Practicing words with pictures – Choose pictures from a magazine, catalog, or sale paper. Say the name of the picture, have your child say the sound that the picture begins with and the name of that letter.
- Hunting for Words – Choose a letter and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that letter sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. Example: If the target letter is *m*, the child might find and write *mop*, *mat*, *Mom*, *money*, and *microwave* (do not be concerned about misspelled words).
- Use magnetic letters to spell words on the refrigerator or spell their name.
- Use stores as an opportunity for learning! Ask questions like, “Can you find something that has a letter C? Can you find a word that begins with M? Can you find something with 4 letters?” Praise all efforts and keep it like a game.
- Make alphabet letters out of Play-doh.
- Recognizing shapes is the beginning of recognizing the features of letters and objects.
- Ask your child to name stores, restaurants, and other places that have signs. This is called environmental print.
- Write letters with your finger on your child’s back. Have your child identify the letters that you write. Have your child then do the same to you.
- Play “Memory” or “Go Fish” using alphabet cards.
- Read alphabet books to your child and eventually ask him/her to name the items on the page that you know he/she can successfully tell you.

Fluency

- Repeated reading – Choose a passage that will not be very difficult for your child. Read the passage aloud to your child, then read it together, helping your child figure out any trick words. Next, have your child read the passage to you with a focus on accuracy. Finally, have your child read the passage to you again, paying attention to fluency and expression. The goal is to sound smooth and natural.

- Use different voices – When reading aloud, try having your child use different voices. Read the story in a mouse voice, cowboy voice, or a princess voice. This is another way to do repeated reading, and it adds some fun to reading practice.
- Recite nursery rhymes and poems to build familiar phrases in speech.
- Record the reading – After your child has practiced a passage, have him/her record it with a tape player, phone, or other recording device. Once recorded, your child can listen to his/her reading and follow along in the book. Often, he/she will want to record it again and make it even better!
- When you read a story, use appropriate expression during dialogue. Encourage your child to mimic your expression. Talk with him/her about what that expression means. Example: If the character is excited about going to the park, he/she should sound like that in his/her voice. Encourage your child to repeat key phrases or dialogue.
- Point out punctuation marks that aid in expression such as question marks, exclamation points, and quotation marks. Demonstrate how your voice changes as you read for each. Only focus on one during a book. Remember, it is important to enjoy it first and foremost.
- Encourage your child to sing favorite songs and repeat favorite lines of songs.
- Say a sentence to your child and ask him/her to repeat it to you. Challenge your child to increase the number of words he/she can repeat. As you say it, put it in meaningful phrases. Example: The boy went/ to the store/ with his mother/ to buy milk.
- Alternate repeating the favorite lines of a poem or nursery rhyme with your child. He/she will mimic your phrasing and expression.
- Make your own books of favorite songs for your child to practice 'reading'. This builds confidence and helps your child identify him/herself as a reader.
- Read to different audiences – Reading aloud is a way to communicate to an audience. When a reader keeps the audience in mind, he/she knows that his reading must be fluent and expressive. Provide a variety of opportunities for your child to read to an audience. Your child can read to stuffed animals, pets, siblings, neighbors, grandparents – anyone who is willing to listen. This is a good way to show off what was practiced with repeated reading.

Vocabulary

- Read aloud – Continue to read aloud to your child, even after he/she is able to read independently. Choose books above your child's level because they are likely to contain broader vocabulary. This way, you are actually teaching him/her new words and how they are used in context.
- Preview words – Before reading to or with your child, scan through the book and choose two words that you think might be interesting or unfamiliar to your child. Tell your child what the words are and what they mean. As you read the book, have your child listen for those words.
- Hot Potato (Version 1) – Play Hot Potato with synonyms. Choose a word, and then your child has to think of another word that means the same thing. Take turns until neither player can think of another word. Example: You may say "Cold" and your child might say "Freezing." Then you could say "Chilly" and so on. Try the game again using antonyms (opposites).
- Hot Potato (Version 2) – Play Hot Potato with prefixes or suffixes. The prefixes dis-, ex-, mis-, non-, pre-, re-, and un- are common. Common suffixes include -able/-ible, -ed, -er, -est, -ful, -ish, -less, -ly, -ment, and -ness.
- Hot Potato (Version 3) – Play Hot Potato with categories. For younger children, the categories can be simple: pets, clothes, family members. For older children, the categories can be quite complex: The Revolutionary War, astronomy, math terms, etc.
- Word Collecting – Have each family member be on the look out for interesting words that they heard that day. At dinner or bedtime, have everyone share the word they collected and tell what they think it means. If the child shares an incorrect meaning, guide him/her to the correct meaning. Try to use some of the words in conversation.
- Introduce your child to a variety of experiences to help build background knowledge he/she can use while making sense of print.
- Play "categories" with your child. Name a topic such as "farms" and ask your child to think of all the words he/she can relate to that topic. This is a great way to build word knowledge!

- Discuss positional words such as beside, below, under, over, etc. Make it into a game at dinner by asking your child to place his/her fork in different places in relation to his/her plate. Example: Put your fork above your plate.
- Use the language of books such as author, title, illustrator, title page, etc.
- Discuss ordinal words such as first, last, beginning, middle, etc.
- Talk about how things are similar/alike as well as how things are different. Example: How is a dog like a cat? How is a dog different from a cat?
- Plant “Word Seeds” by using a variety of words to describe feelings and emotions. Example: Your child says he/she is happy. You can validate that by saying, “I’m so glad that you are joyful today!” Another example, your child says, “It’s getting hot.” and you validate by saying, “Yes, the temperature is increasing.” This helps your child to grow over the years with vocabulary development.
- Trips to everyday places build vocabulary. Discuss what you are doing and seeing as you are going through the store, park, streets, etc. Example: “I’m here in the bakery. I can find donuts, cookies, and bread.” Ask your child, “What else do you think I could find here?”
- Label Words -- ‘Use Post-It notes to label objects around the house, as this will help your child learn to read new words. Later add adjectives to help broaden his/her vocabulary (example: wooden table)
- Create a Word Wall – This is a great way to help new words sink into your child’s brain. Write each new word they learn on a post-it note and stick them on the wall or mirror in their bedroom. If you prefer, stick them in a notebook or “Word Journal.” (©The SchoolRun 2020)
- Positive reinforcement is known to help children learn, so create an environment where vocabulary is praised and celebrated’ (©The SchoolRun 2020)
- ‘Make a fuss of new words your child uses in speaking and writing: the more enjoyable the experience of learning vocabulary, the more children will be geared to pick it up.’ (©The SchoolRun 2020)

Comprehension

- Every day comprehension – Ask your child who, what, when, where, why, how questions about an event in his/her day. Example: If your child attended a party, you could ask, “Who was there? What did you do? When did you have cake? Where did you go? Why did the invitation have unicorns on it? How did the birthday child like the presents?” Once your child is comfortable answering these questions, try asking these questions about a book that you’ve read together.
- Sequencing comics – Choose a comic strip from the Sunday newspaper. Cut out each square and mix the squares. Have your child put them in order and describe what is happening. Encourage your child to use words like first, second, next, finally, etc.
- Sequencing events/errands – Talk about errands that you will run today. Use sequencing words (first, next, last, finally, beginning, middle, end) when describing your trip. Example: “We are going to make three stops today. First, we will go to the gas station. Next, we will go to the bank. Finally, we will go to the grocery store.”
- Think aloud – When you read aloud to your child, talk about what you are thinking. It is your opportunity to show your child that reading is a lot more than just figuring out the words. Describe how you feel about what’s going on in the book, what you think will happen next, or what you thought about a character’s choice.

Reading Fiction Stories

Before reading – Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, “What do you think is going to happen in this story? Why?” This will help your child set a purpose for reading.

During reading – Stop every now and then to ask your child to tell you what has happened so far or what he/she predicts will happen. You might also ask for your child’s opinion. “Do you think the character did the right thing? How do you feel about that choice?” Explain any unfamiliar words.

After reading – Ask your child to retell the story from the beginning and ask for opinions, too. “What was your favorite part? Would you recommend this to a friend?”

Reading Nonfiction Stories

Before reading – Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, “What do you think is going to happen in this story? Why?” This will help your child consider what he/she already knows about the topic. Look at the table of contents. You and your child may choose to read the book cover to cover or go directly to a certain chapter.

During reading – Don’t forget the captions, headings, sidebars, or other information on the page. Young readers tend to overlook these. Show that the author includes lots of information in these “extras”.

After reading – Ask “What was this story mostly about? What do you still want to know? Where could you find out?”

*This plan was written from the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide, originally adapted from plans developed by Conewago Valley School District, PA; Downers Grove Grade School District 58, IL; and the Blue Valley School District, KS.