



Home Literacy Support

How Children Learn to Read & How You Can Help at Home

Science Of Reading

The science of reading is a large body of scientific research that explains a great deal about how we learn to read (and write).

Over the past few years, the Calgary Board of Education has been shifting teaching practices to align with the most current research findings connected to the science of reading. (A foundational document that supports both schools and families in these shifts is the [CBE Literacy Framework](#).) If your family has been with CBE for a while, you may be noticing a change in how reading and writing are taught, and what your child is bringing home to read and share with you in the evenings. If your family is new to the CBE, this will be an exciting start to your family's literacy learning adventure. Either way, this is a powerful time to be a part of an emergent reader's life!

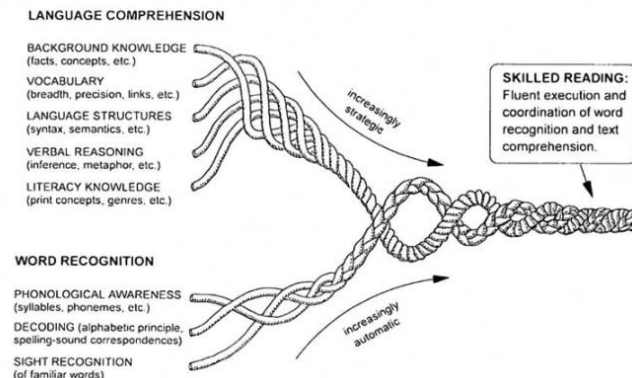
Early reading instruction within CBE is now based on what is known as a "structured literacy approach." This means that there is a specific order of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) knowledge and skills that progress from simple to more complex over the first three to four years of school. This specific order of sounds and letters is referred to as a scope and sequence.

Following the phonics scope and sequence allows children to learn the alphabetic code in a systematic way. Once children learn a few pieces of "the code", such as the letter M spells the /m/ sound, the letter A can spell the /a/ sound and the letter T can spell the /t/ sound, students can DECODE words like 'mat' and 'tam'.

Because CBE schools are now committed to this evidence-based practice, your child will no longer be bringing home reading books with a letter-designated level on it, as this practice does not align with a structured literacy approach. They will be engaging with a variety of text, including decodable texts, as well as being encouraged to broaden their knowledge and understanding of words (sounds in words, meaning of words, playing with words) and knowledge building by exploring the world around.

Explicit reading instruction is just one piece of your child's broader literacy development. Below is an image of "Scarborough's Reading Rope", which is a model created to help us visualize many of the components that are required for someone to become a strong reader.

THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING

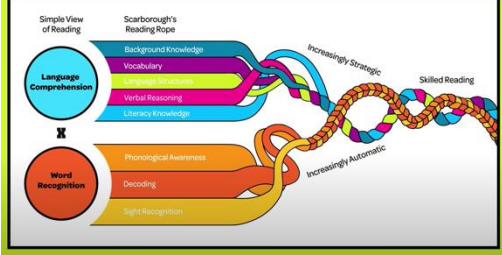
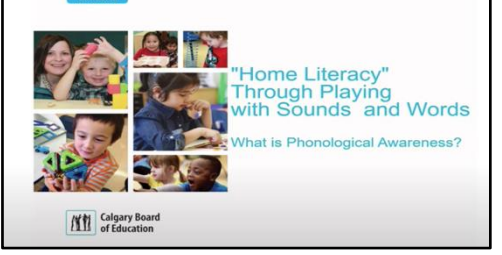


This rope visual reminds us that there are many ways to support our children in becoming good readers and writers at home.

Sharing books together is such an important way to build literacy skills in our beginning readers. Books can be read aloud in your home language by a family member. Following along together to an audio book is another great way to share books in a meaningful way. Even just looking at the pictures together and talking about what you see builds vocabulary, background knowledge and joy and curiosity with books and reading.

Reading and writing are essential, but so is developing social and oral language skills through questions and conversations. This, again, creates spaces for authentic and powerful literacy development and home, in any language. Oral storytelling and learning from time outside on the land also creates opportunity to enrich our children's language development.

The resources shared below can support this plan and provide positive and fun learning opportunities for you to share in with your child. Please work together with your child's teacher to develop a plan that will create a positive home literacy routine.

 Sc Scarborough's Reading Rope - Video	 Oral Language CBE Flatsheet
 Links to CBE Phonological Awareness Videos (5 Videos)	 CBE Digital Decodable Library (Available November 2023)

Thank you to Crystal Lenhart, Reading Specialist from Big Horn Elementary School in Big Horn, Wyoming, U.S.A. for creating [the document](#) that inspired this flatsheet.