



TODAY A READER, TOMORROW A LEADER

ALASKA READS ACT FAMILY RESOURCE



Alaska Reads
#akreads



EDUCATION
& EARLY DEVELOPMENT

The Alaska Reads Act, Alaska's Strategic Reading Plan, and Alaska's Education Challenge are interwoven plans with a focus on one common goal; reading proficiency for all of Alaska's Students.

This resource is a brief summary of information for parents. It provides resources for what to expect and how to help support developing strong readers.

June 2022 *The Alaska Reads Act*

What is the Alaska Reads Act?

In June 2022, Governor Mike Dunleavy signed the Alaska Reads Act into law, creating four new programs to support early literacy.

- Department Reading Program
- District Reading Intervention
- Early Education Programs/Parents as Teachers
- Virtual Education Consortium

The new programs of the Alaska Reads Act, together with Department efforts previously underway, are both incorporated into Alaska's Strategic Reading Plan, and align with Alaska's Education Challenge #1: Support all students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.

INDIVIDUAL READING IMPROVEMENT PLAN (IRIP)

The Alaska Reads Act requires districts and schools to set in motion procedures to identify and support students who demonstrate challenges with early reading. These include early and frequent screening, parental notification, the design of an Individualized Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP), and supplemental reading intervention services. This supportive plan is designed to describe the processes by which struggling students are identified and the targeted system of supports that will accelerate literacy development. The creation and implementation of the plan should, above all, consider the unique strengths and needs of the individual student it is designed to support.

What Should You Know as a Parent?

- Best practice states kindergarten through third grade students be assessed every year for their reading level proficiency three times per school year. The first assessment will be given in the fall. The literacy screener is a short (5-7 minutes) assessment.
- The literacy screener is meant to help the teacher determine learning needs.
- The IRIP is a collaboration between your child's school team and you. Together, you will work with your child to find where your child needs support and create a plan to support your child. The plan will include:
 - 1) extra instruction or support in areas of need
 - 2) ongoing progress checks
 - 3) at home reading support
 - 4) Your child may be encouraged to participate in a summer reading program.
- The IRIP will be implemented within 30 days of identification.

Extra support in your child's individualized reading improvement plan will occur in small group or one-on-one instruction during the school day. Your child should not miss regular reading instruction.



The Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP) is a tool designed to document a variety of information such as the student's level of reading proficiency, the evidence-based interventions that will be used to help the student improve, diagnostic data, and ideas for home support.

While the IRIP serves as the primary documentation tool to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the law, the process of creating an IRIP should be driven by student need. The IRIP presents an opportunity to implement a thoughtful and coordinated effort to increase literacy growth. The success of the IRIP lies not in compliance nor documentation, but in the collaborative analysis of how to improve instruction for the students most in need.

In addition to being student-centered, an IRIP has the greatest capacity for success when it is viewed as a process rather than a product. Though the IRIP serves as written documentation, it is only one step in supporting students. Identifying areas of need, providing appropriate instruction with appropriate materials and resources, providing evidence-based interventions, and monitoring progress are all critical components of the process

The IRIP process should be grounded in the effective use of data. The IRIP is a document that contains results of screeners and other diagnostic tools. As such, it provides an opportunity to pair evidence-based interventions to the areas of need identified by those assessments. The IRIP should reflect the ongoing use of data in the decision-making process as the student gains increasing levels of reading proficiency.

*Attendance is a great predictor of academic success.
Please ensure that your child is in school whenever possible.*

COMMUNICATION

The IRIP presents an opportunity to both share the results of the screener as well as to define the essential components of early reading:

Phonemic awareness: the knowledge that written and spoken words are made up of phonemes, or smaller parts; phonemic awareness provides a foundation for being able to read and spell

Phonics: also known as the alphabetic principle, an understanding of the relationship between written letters and the sounds they are associated with in the spoken language

Vocabulary: the ability to recognize and understand a wide range of words; explicit and systematic vocabulary instruction

Reading fluency: the ability to read quickly and with ease; fluency also includes the ability to interpret emotions in the text and use the voice accordingly to represent them, or to use the voice to emphasize words.

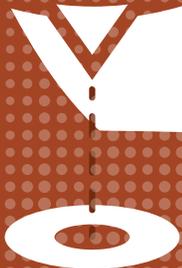
Comprehension: the ability to understand a text



Getting *ready* for school

IDEAS TO HELP YOUR CHILD AT HOME

- Read aloud of age-appropriate books and other materials, print or digital. Before reading, model or ask the child to make predictions about the story based on the title, the cover, headings, and/or illustrations.
- Allowing your child to choose interesting books will increase motivation and engagement. If you have a local library or book exchange, this can provide an excellent collection of children's literature full of various topics.
- The best way to develop language skills is through communication. Talking, rhyming, and singing with your child will develop vital language skills including phonemic awareness.
- As your child learns how words work, encourage daily writing. This will develop phonics skills and the understanding that print conveys meaning.
- Re-reading texts often will build fluency. Repeat exposures to favorite songs, stories, poems, and images.
- Encourage the child to make connections between the story and his/her own life, other books, and/or the world.
- Ask the child to retell specific portions of the story to improve understanding/comprehension.
- Provide spaces for your child to investigate worlds, real and imagined, through the act of role play. Imaginative play such as role-play, with puppets, costumes, or props, give children opportunities for exploration of stories and characters.



Parents *Supporting* Each Area of Reading

Phonological Awareness

K-1st

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/." Have your child do the same.

Play a game in which you say a word and your child has to break apart all the sounds. Ask your child to stretch out a word like 'dog' and he/she can pretend to stretch a word with a rubber band. Your child should say /d/ /o/ /g/.



Phonological Awareness
*is all about sounds-
we "write" the sounds
with the /m/,
we "read" the /m/ as
"mmm"*

Say a sentence aloud and ask your child to determine how many words were in the sentence.

Explain that rhymes are words that sound the same at the end. Read books over and over again containing rhymes. As you read, have your child complete the rhyming word at the end of each line.

Orally provide pairs of words that rhyme and pairs that do not rhyme (Ex. pan/man; pat/boy). Ask, "Do 'pan' and 'man' rhyme? Why? Do 'pat' and 'boy' rhyme? Why not?"

Prompt your child to produce rhymes. Ask, "Can you tell me a word that rhymes with 'cake'?"

Sing rhyming songs like "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

To help your child segment (separate) sounds in words: 1) Give your child 3-5 blocks, beads, bingo chips, or similar items. Say a word and have your child move an object for each sound in the word; 2) Play "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" with sounds. Say a word and have your child touch his/her head for the first sound, shoulders for the second sound, and knees for the third while saying each sound; 3) Jump for sounds! Say a word and have your child jump for each sound in the word while saying the sound.

Parents *Supporting* Each Area of
Reading

Phonological Awareness

2nd - 3rd

Demonstrate clapping a word into its syllables. Ask your child to clap words into syllables.

Make tally marks for the number of syllables in the names of people in your family, favorite foods, etc.



Phonological Awareness

*is all about sounds-
we "write" the sounds
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"mmm"*

Give your child a small car (such as a Matchbox car). Write a 5+ letter word on a piece of paper with the letters spaced apart. Have your child drive the car over each letter saying the letter sound. Have your child begin driving the car slowly over the letters and then drive over them again slightly faster. Continue until the word is said at a good rate.

Make up silly sentences with words that begin with the same sound, such as "Sally the seal slid down a slide in Seward".

Delete sounds in words. Tell your child to say "snoop" but don't say /n/ or say "cling" but don't say /l/.

Exchange sounds to build new words. Examples to tell your child:

- Exchange /p/ for /m/ in path
- Exchange /b/ for /g/ in glue
- Exchange /t/ for /d/ in sat
- Exchange /i/ for /a/ in hit

Reversing the sounds in a single syllable word. Use paper squares or your fingers to tap and make the reversals as you listen to the directions:

Parent says /eat/, now you say /eat/ backwards - child says tea

Parents *Supporting* Each Area of Reading

Phonics

K-1st

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 (for 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).

Teach your child to match the letters in his/her name with the sounds in his/her name.

Point out words that begin with the same letter as your child's names (for example, John and jump). Talk about how the beginning sounds of the words are alike.

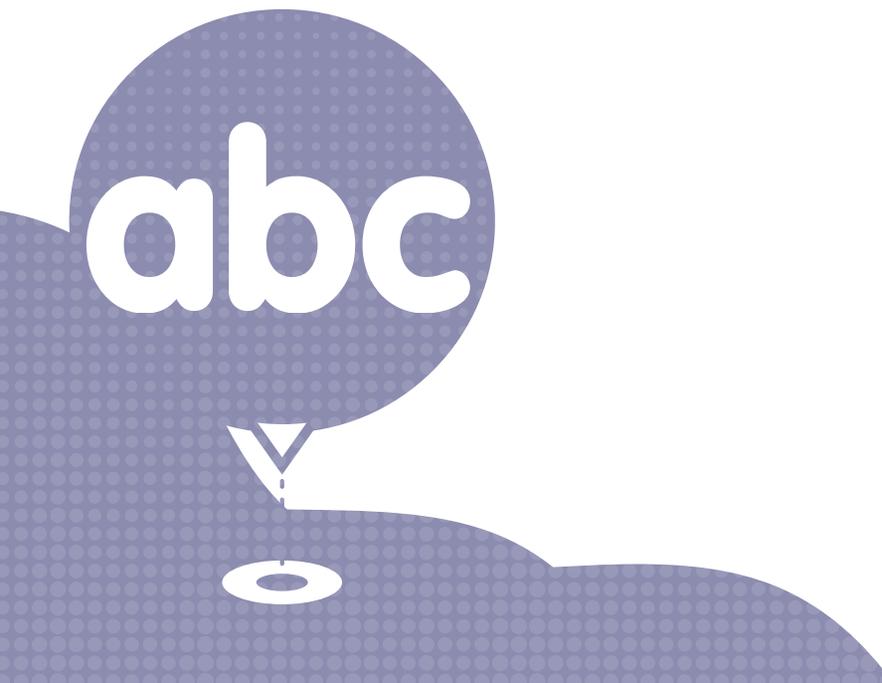
Use alphabet books and guessing games to give your child practice in matching letters and sounds. A good example is the game, "I am thinking of something that starts with /t/."

Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your child reach into the bag and take out the letters. Have your child say the sounds that match the letters.

Take a letter and hide it in your hand. Let your child guess in which hand is the letter. Then show the letter and have your child say the letter name and make the sound (for example, the letter m matches the /m/ sound as in man).

Make letter sounds and ask your child to draw the matching letters in shaving cream or sand.

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.



abc

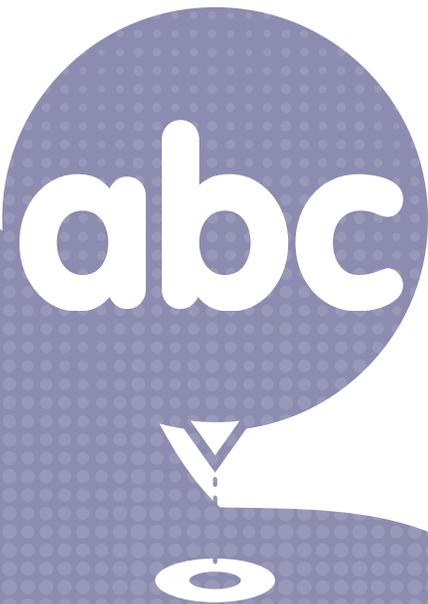
Parents *Supporting* Each Area of Reading

Phonics

2nd - 3rd

Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words (for example, if the letters "l-a-t-e-r" spell later, how do you spell later? How many syllables are in later?).

Write vowel and consonant digraphs, trigraphs, and blends on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds (for example, the long sound /e/ for the vowel digraphs ea and ee).



Writing words - Many children love to send and receive notes, and writing is a great way to reinforce phonics skills. Send your child notes in their backpack or place notes on their pillow. Have a relative or friend send a letter or email to your child. Whenever your child receives a note, have them write back. Don't be concerned about spelling. Instead, have your child sound out the words to the best of his/her ability.

Hunting for words - Choose a blend and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is "bl," he child might find write blanket, blood, blue, blizzard, blast.

Tips for helping your child sound out words:

1) Sound and Blend - Have your child say each sound separately (ssss aaa t). This is called "sounding it out." Then say the sounds together (sat). This is "blending."

2) Familiar Parts - When your child starts reading longer words, have him notice the parts of the word that he already knows. For example, in a word such as "presenting," your child may already know the prefix pre-, the word "sent," and the word ending -ing.

Play "Memory" or "Go Fish" using consonant and vowel digraphs, trigraphs, and blends.

Parents *Supporting* Each Area of Reading

Vocabulary

K-1st

Preview words - Before reading to or with your child, scan through the book, 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.

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?).



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.

Discuss ordinal words such as first, last, beginning, middle, etc.

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. For example, you may say, "cold," and your child might say, "freezing." Then you could say, "chilly," and so on. Try the game again with antonyms (opposites).

Hot potato (version 2) - Play hot potato with categories. For younger children, the categories can be simple: pets, clothes, family members.

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 correct the meaning. Try to use some of the words in conversation.

Parents *Supporting* Each Area of Reading

Vocabulary

2nd - 3rd

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, 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 2) - Play hot potato with categories. For older children, the categories can be quite complex: Alaska animals, astronomy, math terms, fishing tools.

Hot potato (version 3) - 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.

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 correct the meaning. Try to use some of the words in conversation.

Play "categories" with your child. Name a topic such as "ecosystems" and ask your child to think of all the words he/she can related to that topic. This is a great way to build word knowledge! When you read a book about a topic, ask him/her to tell you all the words related to it (example: If you read a book about dinosaurs, he/she might say Tyrannosaurus Res, paleontologist, herbivore, carnivore, fossil. Add other words to help expand upon what he/she says.

Parents *Supporting* Each Area of Reading Fluency

K- 1st

Repeated reading - Choose a passage that will not be very difficult for your child. Read the passage aloud to your child, and then read it together, helping your child figure out any tricky 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.

Use different voices - When reading a familiar story or passage, try having your child use different voices. Read the story in a mouse voice, cowboy voice, or a princess voice.



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.)

Recite nursery rhymes and poems to build familiar phrases in speech.

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.

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.

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.)

Parents *Supporting* Each Area of Reading

Fluency

2nd - 3rd

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. For older students, they can recall an activity or memory for their book.

Alternate repeating the favorite lines of a poem with your child. He/she will mimic your phrasing and expression.



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.

Record the reading - After your child has practiced have him/her record it with a smartphone or other 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!

Reader's theater- You don't need a script or costumes or props. Just choose a favorite picture book that your child is familiar with, and one that has lots of dialogue. Take turns reading the passages aloud, using dramatic voices and gestures appropriate to the story. This activity can get pretty silly right away, but it's a great way to practice expression in reading aloud.

Echo game- Choose a book at your child's reading level and read a sentence aloud using appropriate expression and pauses. Then, have your child mimic you, reading the same sentence and using the same expression and pauses. Repeat the game every few paragraphs as you read through the book.

Parents *Supporting* Each Area of Reading

Comprehension

K-1st

Sequencing errands - Talk about errands that you will run today. Use sequencing words (sequence, first, next, last, finally, beginning, middle, end) when describing your trip. For example, you might say, "We are going to make three stops. First we will go to the gas station. Next, we will go to the bank. Finally, we will go to the grocery store."

Take a quick "book look" and encourage your child to talk about what he/she thinks about what might happen in the story.

Discuss words related to stories such as characters, problem, and solution. For example, "How did the characters of The Three Bears solve the problem of the porridge being too hot?" If the child does not know, show the picture or read the page.

After reading, ask your child, "What was your favorite part? Show me. Why do you like that part?"

Ask questions about character traits. For example, "Which character do you think was kind? which character was bossy? How do you know?" If your child does not know, give your answer. You may need to do this many times before your child can do it. He/she may also "mimic" your answer. Encourage your child's attempts. Encourage deeper thinking by asking, "If the story kept going, what do you think would happen next?"

Help your child make connections to his/her life experience while reading. You could say, "Is there anything you read in the story that reminds you of something? The boy who went to the zoo with his family reminds me of when we went to the zoo over the summer. What do you think?"

As you are reading, think out loud to your child. Ask questions such as, "I wonder why the boy is crying in the picture? Will he find his lost toy?" This demonstrates that reading and comprehension is an active process, not passive.



Parents *Supporting* Each Area of Reading

Comprehension

2nd - 3rd

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 opinions, too. "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?"



Read non-fiction texts- Don't forget the captions, headings, sidebars, or any other information on the page. Young readers tend to overlook these, so it's a good idea to show that the author includes lots of information in these "extras."

Discuss words related to stories such as characters, problem, and solution. For example, "How did the Wright Brothers find a solution to help their plane fly longer?" If the child does not know, show the picture or reread the page.

Ask questions about character traits. For example, "Which character do you think was kind? Which character was bossy? How do you know?" If your child does not know, give your answer. You may need to do this many times before your child can do it.

Encourage deeper thinking by asking, "If the story kept going, what do you think would happen next?"

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Every day comprehension - Ask your child who, what, when, where, why, how questions about an event in his/her day. Once your child is comfortable answering these questions about his/her experiences, try asking these questions about a book you've read together.

“At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child’s success is the positive involvement of parents.”

Jane D. Hull



Alaska Reads
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EDUCATION
& EARLY DEVELOPMENT