

## Learning Progression: *Phonics and Letter Recognition*

**Ways to Support Phonics and Letter Recognition:** Create a print-rich environment. Read aloud to children daily including alphabet books. Label objects and places around your classroom. Have children bring environmental print from home such as a cereal box label. In playful ways explore letter names, shapes, and sounds. Introduce features of letters such as those with long sticks (i.e., l, h) and those with short sticks (i.e., i, m, n). Label cubbies with names and write children's names on felt rectangles as "sit upon" in center time. Move these labels and felt pieces each day so children have to look for their own names by paying attention to features of the letters. Play alphabet games. Put together alphabet puzzles to see and compare letters.

### Data-informed decision making directions:

- 1. Gather** information by observing and interacting with the child to determine which letters/letter sounds they know.
  - Gather information across at least three different sessions. A session can be a particular situation (e.g., the child is looking for his name on a cubby), location (e.g., art center), and/or activity (e.g., reading a big book).
  - Talk with family members and/or other caregivers about ways the child demonstrates their understanding of letters and letter sounds at home.
  - For additional information, see Key Terms and Additional Supports.
- 2. Document** a child's phonics and letter recognition skills on the recording form, For each date that you observe or interact with a child, choose a different color ink to mark the recording form. This will allow you to visually track the child's progress in learning letters and letter sounds.
  - Mark the letters that a child consistently identifies and names (uppercase and lowercase). Note any letters that the child tends to confuse. Some commonly confused letters are ones that look similar such as p, b, and d.
  - Mark the letter sounds that a child consistently identifies and produces. Note any letter sounds that the child tends to confuse.
  - For children who are able to connect letters to words, note any words that the child is able to produce when prompted to share a word that begins with a specific letter.
- 3. Summarize** the information narratively.
  - Craft a summary statement that lists the letters the child knows (uppercase, lowercase) and any corresponding letter sounds the child identifies and produces. Also note any common confusions that the child may have as this will help inform your instruction as well.
  - For additional information, see Key Terms and Additional Supports.
- 4. Analyze** the information on the recording form and any additional information you may have gathered from other sources such as interviews with families or caregivers, other relevant assessments, or interactions with the child. Look for patterns and trends by asking questions such as:
  - Does the child consistently recognize specific letters in his or her name? If so, which ones?
  - Does the child notice letters in books or environmental print? If so, does she/he point letters out?
  - Can the child quickly and accurately name letters?
  - Can the child use known letters and other clues (picture or context) to figure out words?
  - For additional information, see Key Terms and Additional Supports.
- 5. Interpret** by drawing conclusions about the child's phonics and letter recognition skills.
  - Draw conclusions using the information you analyzed in the step above.
  - Use conclusions to rate the child's performance on the *Phonics and Letter Recognition Learning Progression*.

## Phonics and Letter Recognition Recording Form

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Mark the letters the child names and the letter sounds the child produces. In the Notes column, list any confusions that the child may have about letter names or sounds as well as any words that the child produces when asked if she/he knows a word that starts with a specific letter. Use different color ink to track children's progress as they learn letters and letter sounds.

Letter	Letter Name	Letter Sound	Letter	Letter Name	Letter Sound	Notes
A			a			
			a			
B			b			
C			c			
D			d			
E			e			
F			f			
G			g			
			g			
H			h			
I			i			
J			j			
K			k			
L			l			
M			m			
N			n			
O			o			
P			p			
Q			q			
R			r			
S			s			
T			t			
U			u			
V			v			
W			w			
X			x			
Y			y			
Z			z			

## Key Terms and Additional Supports

### Key Terms

- **Alphabetic principle** is the understanding that there is a systematic relationship between written letters and spoken sounds.
- **Phonics instruction** in kindergarten and first grade helps children learn and use the alphabetic principle. Children use the understanding of these relationships to read and write words.
- **Letter name** simply refers to the name of the letter. It is important to keep in mind that some letters can be visually confusing for children such as the letters b, p, d, q, and g.
- **Letter sound** means the sound that the letter makes in isolation. Remember learning letter sounds comes after learning letter names. And, some letter sounds are very similar to one another and can be confusing for young children, such as /b/ and /v/ and /i/ and /e/.

### Support for Gathering

- Allow a child to use verbal and nonverbal expressions to demonstrate *phonics and letter recognition* skills and behaviors.  
**Verbal expressions** include among other expressions naming, labeling, describing, and dictating  
**Non-verbal expressions** include among other expressions drawing, scribbling, printing, and painting

### Support for Summarizing (Alternatives)

- **Numerical summary idea:** Generate a numerical summary of the total number of letters a child can identify and name as well as the total number of sounds that a child can identify and produce.
- **Visual summary idea:** Review the colors on the recording form for each of your observation/interaction sessions to gauge the child's progress in learning letters and sounds.

### Support for Analyzing (Identifying Patterns and Trends)

- **Patterns** are behaviors that repeat in predictable ways. For example, does the child demonstrate an understanding of specific letters when they see them in different places? If so, which ones? Does the child produce common sounds for specific letters? If so, which ones?
- **Trends** are the general direction that something is headed (i.e., determine if the child's skills and behaviors are increasing, decreasing, or staying the same). For example, is the child continuing to learn to identify and name more letters? Is the child learning to identify and produce the sounds of letters?