

Foundational Skills: Defined.

The MCPS report card has a few changes this year. One change is the addition of the Foundational Skills measurement topic for grades 1 through 5 (Kindergarten had, and continues to have, this measurement topic reported out). Each of the four marking periods is shaded gray - yet some students will receive a grade in one or more marking periods. In order to understand the reading grades on your child's report card, it is important to understand your child's strengths in reading.

First let's define the term "Foundational Skills." Each skill is linked to a parent-friendly explanation on WETA's website *Reading Rockets*.

- [Print Concepts](#) - understanding the organization and basic features of print.
- [Phonological Awareness](#) - understanding spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).
- [Phonics and Word Recognition](#) - being able to read grade-level words and applying word analysis skills when decoding words.
- [Fluency](#) - reading with the appropriate expression and rate.

Often, mastery of these skills is needed for a child to comprehend **grade-level** text. Students need to be able to decode words and read them at an appropriate pace in order to understand what they are reading. Each grade level, K-5, has a set of common core standards for foundational skills. These are the [foundational skills](#) that are taught in all MCPS classrooms, grades K-5.

For some children, foundational skills are their strength. They are secure with phonics and word recognition. In kindergarten, first, and second grades, your child may have been reading above the benchmark. Mastering sight words was easy! You may have questioned the books that your child brought home - thinking: *aren't these too easy?* And now, your child is reading on or below grade level or is receiving Cs, Ds, Is, and Ns in the remaining reading measurement topics - Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use, Informational Text, and Literature.

Why does this happen? As children move up through the grades, the standards become increasingly complex ([Find the Standards here](#)) and require the reader to think deeply about the words, paragraphs, and the text as a whole.

Your child may receive a low grade in Foundational Skills but a higher grade in Informational Text and Literature. This means your child is a good comprehender and needs work with decoding or fluency. If your child does not

receive a foundational skills grade, his or her knowledge of foundational skills is reflected in the Instructional Reading Level box. Foundational skills are mandatory for students reading *more than* 6 months below grade level.

Reading-Grade 3 Overall Grade				
Foundational Skills				
Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use				
Informational Text				
Literature				

Instructional Reading Level				
Accuracy, Fluency and Comprehension of text				
<i>Your child is reading a year or more above the current reading target.</i> Or <i>Your child is reading a half year or more below the current reading target.</i>				

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

~ [Kristy Delikat](#),
 Reading Specialist