

literacy
begins at
home

When you send them back
to school, give your children
the gift of a lifetime...

TEACH THEM
TO READ



National Institute for Literacy

Dear Parents:

You are your child's first and most important teacher. When you send them back to school, give your children the gift of a lifetime...

TEACH THEM TO READ.

The National Institute for Literacy has developed the *Shining Stars* booklet series for parents of children in preschool through grade three who are getting ready or learning to read. To order free copies: write to EdPubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398 or call 1 (800) 228-8813 or e-mail: edpubs@inet.ed.gov. These and other booklets on reading instruction can also be downloaded. Visit <http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/publications.html>.



Checklist for Parents of TODDLERS



Here are some ways you can help your child “get ready to read” during the ages of 2 and 3.

- I read with my child every day, even if it’s only for a few minutes.
- I encourage my child to bring his favorite books to me so that we can read together.
- I point to pictures and name them out loud, and encourage my child to point to pictures while we read.
- I watch to see if my child sometimes makes eye contact with me when I read aloud. That tells me she is paying attention to me and the story.
- I talk with my child throughout the day about things we are doing and things that are happening around us.
- I try to be patient when my child wants to read the same book over and over again.
- I encourage my child to “play” with books—pick them up, flip them from front to back, and turn the pages.
- Sometimes I listen when my child “pretends” to read a book—he holds the book, goes from page to page, and says words, even though they’re not the words on the page.
- I give my child paper and crayons so she can scribble, make pictures, and pretend to write.



Checklist for Parents of PRESCHOOLERS



Here are some ways you can help your child “get ready to read” during the ages of 4 and 5.

- I help my child hear and say the first sound in words (like “b” in boat), and notice when different words start with the same sound (like “boat” and “book”).
- I help my child hear words that rhyme (like moose, goose, and caboose).
- I introduce new words to my child, like “bow” and “stern,” which mean the front of a boat and the back of a boat.
- I talk with my child about the letters of the alphabet and notice them in books, like “c” for canoe.
- I point out signs and labels that have letters, like street signs and foods in the grocery store.
- I encourage my child to find the joy and fun in reading. Usually, I let my child choose the books we read.
- I let my child pretend to read parts of the book when we read together.
- I talk with my child about stories and make connections to things that happen in our own lives.
- I ask “what,” “where,” and “how” questions when I read with my child to help her follow along and understand the stories.
- I help my child write notes or make books (like an alphabet book), even if his writing only looks like scribbles or marks.



Checklist for Parents of KINDERGARTENERS

*These skills usually develop when a child is in kindergarten.
Talk with your child's teacher if you have questions.*

- My child listens carefully to books read aloud.
- My child knows the shapes and names for the letters of the alphabet and writes many uppercase and lowercase letters on his own.
- My child knows that spoken words are made of separate sounds.
- My child recognizes and makes rhymes, can tell when words begin with the same sound, and can put together, or blend, spoken sounds.
- My child can sound out some letters.
- My child knows that the order of letters in a written word stands for the order of sounds in a spoken word.
- My child knows some common words such as a, the, I, and you, on sight.
- My child knows how to hold a book, and follows print from left to right and from top to bottom of a page when she is read to.
- My child asks and answers questions about stories and uses what she already knows to understand a story.
- My child knows the parts of a book and understands that authors write words and text and illustrators create pictures.
- My child knows that in most books the main message is in the print, not the pictures.
- My child predicts what will happen in a story and retells or acts out stories.
- My child knows the difference between "made up" fiction and "real" nonfiction books and the difference between stories and poems.
- My child uses what he knows about letters and sounds to write words.
- My child writes some letters and words as they are said to her and begins to spell some words correctly.
- My child writes his own first and last name and the first names of some friends and family.
- My child plays with words and uses new words in her own speech.
- My child knows and uses words that are important to school work, such as the names for colors, shapes, and numbers.
- My child knows and uses words from daily life, such as street names and the names for community workers—teacher, mail carrier, etc.



Checklist for Parents of FIRST GRADERS



These skills usually develop during first grade.

Talk with your child's teacher if you have questions.

- My child knows all the letters of the alphabet.
- My child knows the difference between letters and words, and knows there are spaces between words in print.
- My child knows that written words represent speech and can show how words are represented by letters arranged in a specific order.
- My child knows some punctuation marks and where sentences and paragraphs begin and end.
- My child is beginning to understand and explain why people read.
- My child can put together (blend) and break apart the sounds of most one-syllable words and can count the number of syllables in a word.
- My child can sound out words he doesn't know, and recognize some irregularly spelled words, such as have, said, you, and are.
- My child reads first grade books aloud, and can tell when she cannot understand what she is reading.
- My child reads and understands simple written instructions.
- My child uses what he already knows to enrich what he is reading.
- My child predicts what will happen next in a story
- My child asks questions (how, why, what if?) about books she is reading and can describe what she has learned from a book.
- My child uses invented spelling in his writing and also understands that there is a correct way to spell words.
- My child uses simple punctuation marks and capital letters.
- My child writes for different purposes—stories, explanations, lists, letters—and reads and revises her writing.
- My child uses language with more control, speaks in complete sentences, and uses more formal language at school than at home and with friends.
- My child is curious about words and uses new words when he speaks and writes.
- My child is beginning to see that some words mean the same thing (synonyms) and some mean the opposite (antonyms).
- My child is learning that words play different roles in sentences—that nouns name things and verbs show action, for example.

Checklist for Parents of SECOND GRADERS

*These skills usually develop during grades two and three.
Talk with your child's teacher if you have questions.*

- My child reads and understands second grade fiction and nonfiction, and compares and connects information from different sources.
- My child reads for specific purposes and specific questions, and explores topics of interest on her own.
- My child answers "how," "why," and "what-if" questions, and recalls information, main ideas, and details after reading.
- My child interprets information from diagrams, charts, and graphs.
- My child takes part in creative responses to stories, such as dramatizations and oral presentations.
- My child pays attention to how words are spelled and correctly spells words he has studied.
- My child spells a word the way it sounds if she doesn't know its spelling.
- My child writes for many different purposes and writes different types of compositions (for example, stories, reports, and letters).
- My child makes thoughtful choices about what to include in his writing.
- My child takes part in writing conferences, revises and edits what she has written, and attends to the mechanics of writing (spelling, capitalization, and punctuation) in her final versions.
- My child learns new words and shares them at school and at home.
- My child uses clues from the context and his knowledge of word parts (roots, prefixes, suffixes) to figure out what words mean.
- My child is increasing his vocabulary with synonyms and antonyms.
- My child uses parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) correctly.
- My child learns new words through independent reading.



Checklist for Parents of THIRD GRADERS



*These skills usually develop during grades two and three.
Talk with your child's teacher if you have questions.*

- My child uses what he knows of phonics and word parts (prefixes, roots, suffixes) to sound out unfamiliar words.
- My child reads third grade level texts (stories, non-fiction, magazine articles, computer screens) with fluency and comprehension.
- My child explores topics of interest and reads longer stories and chapter books independently.
- My child can explain the major points in fiction and non-fiction books.
- My child identifies and discusses words or phrases she does not understand.
- My child asks "how," "why," and "what if" questions and discusses the themes or messages of stories.
- My child uses information he has gathered and his own reasoning to judge explanations and opinions and distinguishes cause from effect, fact from opinion, and main ideas from supporting details.
- My child understands and reads graphs and charts.
- My child uses context to gain meaning from what she reads.
- My child correctly spells words he has studied.
- My child gathers information from a variety of sources, including books, articles, and computers, and uses it in his writing.
- My child reviews her own written work for errors and works with teachers and classmates to edit and revise her work to make it clearer.
- My child is starting to use metaphors and other literary forms in his writing.
- My child discusses her writing with other children and responds helpfully to their writing.
- My child develops his vocabulary and knowledge through independent reading.
- My child builds her vocabulary through synonyms and antonyms.
- My child uses parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) correctly.

