

## Reading: What to Expect and How to Help Your Child

It is common for parents to have concerns about their children's reading skills. Reading is important in today's world, and no parent wants their child to struggle!

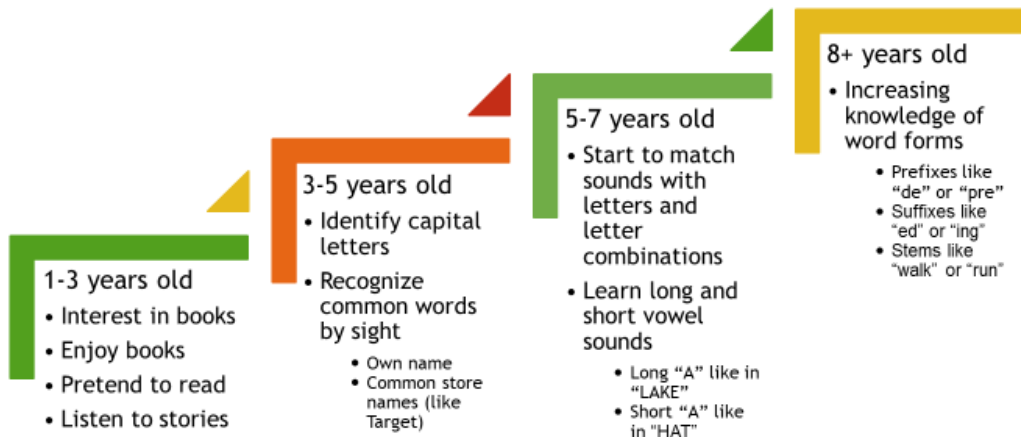
Learning to read takes time and doesn't come automatically for most of us. Making it fun and supporting the basic skills needed for reading are most important.

Important terms related to your child's reading development include:

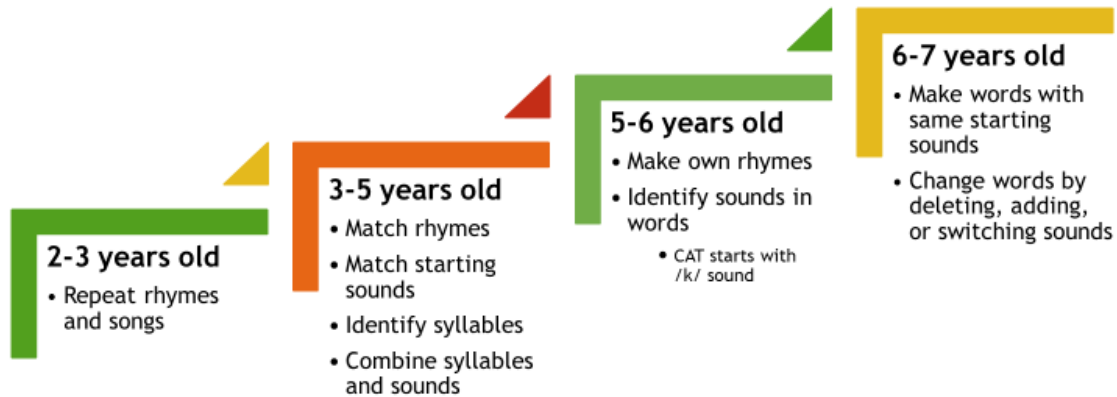
- **Phonics:** This is the sounds that letters and letter combinations make. It links the /S/ sound in the word "snake" specifically with the letter "S." Or linking the /ch/ sound in the word "cheese" specifically with the "ch" letter combination.
- **Phonological Awareness:** This is the ability to process and use the sounds that go into words. It is the ability to understand that the sounds /k/ and /a/ and /t/ make the word "cat" when they are pushed together.

Here is what to expect at different ages for these skills:

## Typical Phonics Development:

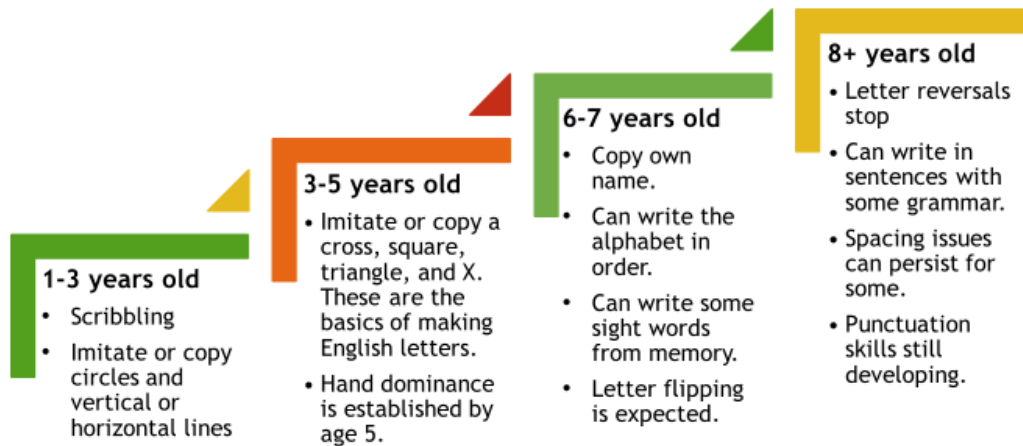


# Typical Phonological Awareness Development



2

# Typical Writing Development:



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Concerns for dyslexia are common, but it isn't what pop culture would have us believe. It isn't just flipping letters. It is more related to trouble sounding out words someone sees and being able to hear and blend sounds together. Many kids struggle with learning to read but that can be normal and doesn't mean that a child has dyslexia.

Reading is a hard and complex skill that takes time for most kids to develop! It is very rare for children to "teach themselves" to read – we do not expect this!

**The best things parents can do to help their child’s reading skills are:**

- Sing the alphabet song often.
- Play rhyming and letter games.
- **Read to them.** Make this “active!” Talk about the stories you read. Link words or sentences to pictures. Ask what might happen next. Ask about what the characters might be thinking and feeling. Choose books that are of interest to them. Point out rhymes you find.
- Play “phonics” games such as “I Spy” and look for items that start with a /ch/ sound. Children can put stickers on every item in the house they can find that starts with a specific letter. Children can create labels and tape them to the common items in their room, such as “Sock Drawer” or “Bed.”
- Sing interactive songs like “Wheels on the Bus” or “Pat-A-Cake” and encourage them to sing along with you.
- Make letters out of lots of different things – noodles, sticks, play dough, shaving cream, your bodies, or anything else you can think of.
- Talk about what sounds letters and letter combinations make.
- The more you can make the activities fun and incorporate them into routine daily life, the easier learning will be for them.
- For older kids, offer audiobooks to read along with the books.

These strategies are helpful for ALL kids – whether they end up diagnosed with dyslexia later in life or not.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 6/2023 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#8287.