

Early Start



Early start: Literacy — A parent's guide

Long before children start school they begin to learn about literacy. The experiences they have every day from birth help them to develop their literacy skills.

Literacy is about how we use our language to:

- speak and listen
- read
- write, spell and draw
- tell stories
- watch and use electronic devices.

The *Early Start* literacy materials support teachers to find out your child's early literacy skills by using a series of tasks developed specifically for Queensland.

It is important to remember that the *Early Start* literacy tasks are designed to gather information about students' abilities, and their learning needs, so teachers can plan effective learning programs during the early years of school. Don't be concerned if your child can't answer all of these questions. These tasks are designed to gather information about what your child knows and what needs to be taught next for their learning.

While schools do not report on *Early Start* results, teachers are able to provide you with feedback on how you can further support the development of your child's early literacy skills.

What does your child do during the *Early Start* literacy tasks?

From the start of Prep until the end of Year 2, your child will complete a series of *Early Start* literacy tasks one-on-one with their teacher. These happen at the:

- beginning of Prep
- end of Prep
- end of Year 1
- end of Year 2.

Each set of tasks is designed to gather information about what your child knows and what they need to be taught next for their learning. Depending on whether your child is in Prep, Year 1 or Year 2, they may be asked to:

- use their knowledge of sounds to read and spell unknown words
- comprehend stories that have been read aloud
- write simple sentences
- read aloud with some accuracy and fluency.



Knowledge of sounds

To find out whether your child is recognising and using letter sounds a teacher may, on entry to Prep, show your child a picture of a community sign 'NO SWIMMING', point to the /m/ in the middle of SWIMMING and ask, 'What sound does this letter make?'

At the end of Prep, a teacher may ask your child to say the first sound in words such as SOCK, BED, MOON.

At the end of Year 1, a teacher may:

- ask your child, 'What are all the sounds in NEST?'
- ask your child to listen to the word STAND and then say, 'Take the /t/ out of STAND. What word is left?'

Comprehension

To find out whether your child can comprehend a story that has been read aloud the teacher may, on entry to Prep, ask them to:

- predict a character's plan
- explain how a character helps another character.

At the end of Prep, the teacher may ask them to identify information about main characters directly stated in the story.

At the end of Year 1, the teacher may ask them to connect information in a book with their own experiences.

At the end of Year 2, the teacher may ask them to explain how the problem was solved at the end of a story.

Writing

To find out whether your child can write a simple sentence the teacher may, at the end of Prep, ask them to draw a picture about a story that has just been read and then write something about the picture.

At the end of Year 2, the teacher may provide them with the opportunity to look through the book that has just been read and then ask, 'Which part of this book did you like best? Why?' Your child then writes their response.

Reading

To find out whether your child can read a simple text with some accuracy and fluency, at the end of Prep, the teacher may provide them with a simple book and say, 'Look at the pictures to see what happens in this story.' Once your child has briefly looked through the book, the teacher asks them to read the story aloud encouraging them to have a go and keep reading.

