

Stages of Reading Development

- Stage 1. Children enjoy listening to short stories and rhymes; they point to and talk about the pictures and photographs; read the pictures rather than the print; understand that their written name signifies something; read some environmental print; begin to turn the book pages; search for objects in the pictures that are hidden or missing; and they respond enthusiastically to their favorite read-alouds (18 months to 3 years).
- Stage 2. Children display an interest in handling books; see the construction of meaning from books as magical; listen to words read to them; play orally with letters or words; begin to notice print in an environmental context; sometimes incorporate letters in their drawings; and mishandle books, like reading them upside down (3 to 4 years old).
- Stage 3. Children engage in reading-like behaviors; try to magically impose meaning on new print; “read” contents of familiar story books; recognize their names; recognize words in environmental contexts; construct word meaning from pictorial clues; pick known words from print consistently; rhyme words; speak words that begin similarly; display an increasing knowledge of book handling; recall key words from poems and stories; and they begin to internalize story grammar (4 and 5 years old).
- Stage 4. Children write and read back their own words; pick out individual words and letters; read familiar books or poems (that they could not repeat without the print); understand the purposes and conventions of print; use picture clues to supplement print; read words in one context that they may not be able to read in another; show increasing control over a visual cueing system; enjoy chants and poems chorally read; detect the beginning and ending sounds in spoken words; blend phonemes; delete initial phonemes; recognize the letters of the alphabet; observe the differences between upper and lower case letters; and, match words in poems and chants that have been internalized (4, 5, and 6 year olds).