

The Literacy Connection Calendar for Elementary School Children (Kindergarten Through Grade 3)

Day	Activity	Literacy Skill	Do You Want to Know More?
1	Name the Sound. As you read with your child, ask her to repeat any words she hears that begin with the same sound as her name.	Phonemic Awareness	Listening carefully to the beginning sounds of words helps your child isolate the different parts of words. Learning that the letters of words stand for individual sounds will help your child become a better reader and speller.
2	Make a List. Ask your child to help you remember all the stops you need to make when running errands. Help her write a list as you name the stops (drug store, library, grocery).	Phonics	Writing helps your child connect letter sounds and words and match specific sounds with specific letters. Word recognition will improve as she practices writing words.
3	Take Turns. Add variety to your reading time with your child by taking turns reading aloud. Have your child read a sentence or paragraph, and then you read the next one.	Fluency	Reading smoothly and with expression is an important part of being able to read well. This takes lots of practice! When your child has difficulty reading a sentence aloud, read along with him, or try reading it first and asking him to repeat after you. Then, encourage him to try it on his own.
4	Take a Walk. Take a walk around your neighborhood with your child and talk about what you see. Read the street signs and the signs on buildings. Talk about the kinds of businesses you see and the people who work in them. Point out interesting things you see.	Vocabulary Comprehension	Children need to be exposed to many words to become good readers. A walk through the neighborhood can provide opportunities to learn new words—dry cleaner, shoe repair, insurance salesman, hydrant, cherry picker. Learning new words and having new experiences also helps children build background knowledge to aid in comprehension.

5	<p>Make a Prediction. Read the weekend weather forecast from the newspaper with your child. Ask him to decide which day will be the best one for your family to go to the zoo, park or neighborhood fair.</p>	Comprehension	<p>Make predictions about everyday events. “What do you think will happen if you miss the school bus?” “What do you think will happen if you don’t do your homework?” Making predictions about everyday events will help prepare your child for making predictions when he reads.</p>
6	<p>Take a Trip. Here’s a fun, portable game. Start by making a sentence using the name of a place and an object that starts with the same sound. <i>I am going to California and I’m taking a cat.</i> The next person adds another object that starts with the same sound. <i>I am going to California and I’m taking a cat and a comb.</i> See how long you can keep the sentence going!</p>	Phonemic Awareness	<p>Playing games with sounds and letters is a fun way to help your child identify the beginning sounds of words. It also encourages good listening skills!</p>
7	<p>Sounds Like? Words that sound alike but have different meanings (such as <i>hear</i> and <i>here</i> and <i>bear</i> and <i>bare</i>) can be confusing to a beginning reader. These words are called homophones. When reading with your child, look for opportunities to point out these words and talk about their meanings and spellings.</p>	Vocabulary	<p>The more word meanings a child understands the better reader he will be. Challenge your child to use pairs of words that sound alike in a sentence. <i>When I stand over here, I cannot hear the radio very well. The wind blew her new blue hat into the puddle.</i></p>
8	<p>Search the Internet. Help your child do an Internet search for her favorite author, sports star or historical figure. Ask her what questions she has about the person and what she hopes to learn. Write down her questions and ask her if her questions were answered after she has read the article.</p>	Comprehension	<p>Asking questions before reading gives your child a reason for reading. The cover, the title, and the pictures in a book can be used to help your child ask questions before reading.</p>

9	<p>Make a Timeline. Read a book or story with your child and then talk about the events in the story. What happened first, next and last? Help your child make a timeline that shows the order of the events.</p>	Comprehension, Vocabulary	<p>Understanding the order of events in a story increases your child’s overall comprehension. Talking about what happens in a story gives your child opportunities to use the new words she’s learned from the story, and to use other words as she describes what happened. You also can make a timeline that shows important family events. Be sure to include your child’s birthday.</p>
10	<p>Read It Again. Let your child pick a favorite book for you to read aloud. Ask him why he likes this book so much. Ask him what he remembers about the story before you read it again and what his favorite part is. Talk about the events in the story as you read.</p>	Comprehension, Fluency	<p>Hearing a book read over and over gives children opportunities to focus on the details in the story and pictures. It also helps children learn that stories have a beginning, middle and end. Hearing stories read aloud smoothly and with expression provides a good model for your child’s own reading.</p>
11	<p>Write a Note. As you write a birthday message or get-well wish for a family member or friend, invite your child to write a note, too. Let her address the envelope and then mail or deliver the card.</p>	Phonics	<p>Help your child make connections between the sounds in words and the written letters that make up those words. Encourage your child to practice her spelling by writing things that are meaningful to her—shopping lists, a thank-you note to her teacher, an e-mail to a friend, short stories about her life. Writing is more important to your child when it has a purpose.</p>
12	<p>Look It Up. As you and your child talk and read during the day, listen for words your child may not be familiar with. What does she think that word means? Help your child look up new words in a dictionary. Read the definitions together. Does the word have more than one meaning?</p>	Vocabulary	<p>The more words a child understands, the more successful reader she will be. Help her learn and practice new words or word meanings by talking about them and using them in conversations.</p>

13	Compare and Contrast. In the grocery store, help your child read the labels of two boxes of cereals he enjoys. What ingredients or nutritional values are the same? What is different?	Comprehension, Vocabulary	Being able to compare and contrast is a good life skill. Being able to recognize similarities and differences in words is a good reading skill. Help your child identify similar and different words on the labels. What does your child think is the difference between distilled vinegar and malt vinegar? What is the difference between cream of wheat and oatmeal?
14	Summarize. Ask your child to read quietly for five minutes and then help her summarize what she read by asking her “wh” questions—who, what, where, when, why (and how).	Comprehension	Telling what a story, movie or TV show is about is one way that your child can demonstrate understanding of what she read or heard and saw. Ask if she can make her summary 5 or 10 words shorter.
15	Recite a Poem. Find a book of poetry at the library. Ask your child to choose a short poem to memorize and share with family or friends. Have her practice reading it aloud until she doesn’t have to look at the words anymore.	Phonemic Awareness, Fluency	Learning a poem (or nursery rhyme or jump rope rhyme) is a great way for your child to practice reading it smoothly. She will also be playing with and listening to the sounds of language. And memorizing and performing what she has learned gives her a chance to be a “star!”
16	Make New Words. Choose one of your child’s spelling words from school. Ask him to say as many words as he can by changing the first sound of the word—nonsense words are okay. Then write new words by changing the first letter.	Phonemic Awareness, Phonics	One way children learn the sounds of language is to play with the sounds. Children have fun making rhyming words. And it makes learning the spelling words more fun, too! When your child connects the sounds to the letters that represent them, he’s building phonics skills, too.

17	Read All Day. Point out letters and words to your child during your daily routines. Look for new words in advertising circulars, menus, bill statements, medicine directions, food packages and billboards. Talk about their meanings.	Vocabulary, Comprehension	Words are everywhere! Knowing many words and how and where they are used is important to your child's reading success. Introduce new words to your child often, talk about their meanings and find opportunities to use them.
18	Make a Travel Dictionary. Read about another part of the country or world. Look for special words and start a travel dictionary with new words you come across, such as delta, equator, Eiffel Tower, Statue of Liberty, kimono or luau. You and your child can list the words and write their meanings.	Vocabulary, Phonics	Children who have lots of background knowledge to draw from are more successful readers. Point out words in newspapers and magazines and words you hear on television or the radio that your child can add to his dictionary. See if he can remember the meaning and spelling of "his" words as you eat together or walk to the store.
19	Tell a Story. Point out a picture in the newspaper or a magazine to your child. Ask her to make up a story about the picture. Encourage her to describe the details in the picture.	Comprehension, Vocabulary	Pictures offer your child a chance to use her imagination and practice using descriptive words. Ask her what she thinks happened before the picture was taken and after it was taken.
20	Name that Rhyme. Help your child work through the alphabet, changing the first letter of his name to make rhyming words—Billy, chilly, dilly, frilly... How many can you think of together? Help your child write the words.	Phonemic Awareness, Phonics	Rhyming, especially with your child's name, is a fun way to keep her interested in language. Connecting print and letters with rhyming helps her become a successful reader and speller.
21	Listen for Details. Tell your child a story about when you were her age. Ask her to listen for things you describe that are different from today—not having a cell phone, playing music on a record player. This gives her a focus for listening.	Comprehension	Listening skills are important to your child's school success. Encourage your child to listen carefully by asking questions about what you talk about throughout the day. <i>We said we needed milk from the store. What else did we say we wanted to get?</i>

22	Take Steps. Read a recipe with your child and talk about the order of the steps. Use words like <i>first, next, then, after</i> and <i>finally</i> . Ask him to help you prepare the dish using the recipe to guide each step.	Vocabulary, Comprehension	Following instructions is a great way to help your child learn new words and understand a sequence of events. Using sequence words can also help your child summarize a story, which helps comprehension. <i>After the three bears came home, what happened next?</i>
23	Read with Your Ears. Have your child read along with an audio book. Younger children will enjoy reading aloud while older children can read silently as they listen to the audiotape. Many libraries have these available to check out.	Fluency	Listening to a book on audiotape or CD provides a model of fluent reading. It will help your child with phrasing, expression and word recognition. Encourage your child to read aloud to you or to a younger sibling.
24	Fun With Words. Have fun with words and see if your child can say this tongue twister without getting her tongue twisted: <i>Tommy Turtle took two tasty tomatoes today</i> . Take turns and see who can say it the fastest.	Phonics	Create your own tongue twister or silly sentence. Start with a simple sentence, perhaps using your child's name: <i>Brandon brought bread</i> . Take turns adding a word that begins with the same sound: (1) <i>Brilliant Brandon brought bread</i> . (2) <i>Brilliant Brandon brought brown bread</i> . (3) <i>Brilliant Brandon brought brown bread for breakfast</i> .
25	What's Another Word? Read a story together. Pick some words and talk about other words that mean the same thing or something similar. These are called synonyms. <i>It was a dark and stormy night</i> could become <i>It was a shadowy and rainy evening</i> .	Vocabulary	Knowing more than one way to say or describe something will help your child express herself and understand more. Having a big vocabulary is important as your child reads more challenging books. Try using a dictionary or thesaurus to find new words that have similar meanings.
26	Look for Sounds. Ask your child to find something in your home that begins with a particular sound—such as the first sound of	Phonemic Awareness, Phonics	Being able to distinguish letter sounds is important for your child's future success in reading. "Look" for sounds throughout your

	her name. Darla starts with a /d/ sound, just like <i>door</i> . Help her write a list of all the things she finds, or cut out pictures from a magazine that show objects that start with the same sound.		daily routine as you go for a walk together, ride the bus, or go shopping. For example, how many vegetables can you find that start with the /p/ sound? Peppers, peas, parsnips, etc.
27	Find the Prefix. A prefix is a letter or combination of letters that can be added to the beginning of a word to change the meaning of the word. Point out prefixes to your child as you read and talk together. For example, <i>reattach</i> means <i>to attach again</i> and <i>detach</i> means <i>to separate</i> , both building off the word <i>attach</i> .	Vocabulary	Knowing some common prefixes can help your child figure out the meanings of words. Common prefixes like <i>un-</i> , <i>in-</i> , and <i>re-</i> are used often, so recognizing them is a good way to increase word knowledge. Try adding prefixes to your child's spelling words from school and talk about how they change the meaning of the words.
28	Read with Speed. Ask your child to read a short passage aloud. Help him with any words he doesn't know how to pronounce or that are unfamiliar. Then ask him to read the same passage aloud two more times. As reading becomes easier and smoother, it will likely take him less time to read.	Fluency	As your child's oral reading becomes smoother (more fluent), his ability to sound out words and understand what he is reading increases. This often makes reading more enjoyable! One of the best ways to learn to read fluently is to practice reading aloud and to repeat reading.
29	Make a Plan. What would you like to do today? This simple question can help your child practice a variety of skills, such as writing and spelling, vocabulary, and sequencing. Ask your child to help you make a schedule for your day together.	Phonics, Vocabulary	As your child spells words, she is breaking them down into parts and connecting letters to sounds. She may try this on her own or ask you for help. As she reads and writes more, her spelling skills and vocabulary will grow. This will help her be able to express her thoughts when she writes.
30	Give It Structure. Read a story with your child and talk about the important elements—who, what, where, when, and why. Ask him	Comprehension	Understanding story structure—the main characters, the setting, and the events that make up the story—helps your child remember

	to name the characters, describe where and when the story takes place, and what happens.		the story. Ask him what he thinks about the story. Does he like the main character? Would he do something different if he were in the story? You can also talk about the structure of a TV show or movie you watch together.
31	Read as a Pair. Ask your child to choose a favorite book. Tap your fingers on the book or table to signal “start reading,” and begin reading aloud together. When your child feels confident enough to read alone, she taps her fingers and you stop reading. If she taps again or makes a mistake, read with her again until she is ready to take over. When you finish, talk about what you read or summarize the story.	Fluency, Comprehension	Paired reading is a good way to build your child’s confidence. It gives her a chance to read aloud with your support. The more practice your child has in reading aloud, the more smoothly—or fluently—she will read. This is an important step in becoming a strong reader. Fluent reading also leads to better comprehension.