



KINDERGARTEN LITERACY

Growing Readers, Writers & Communicators

Understanding What Literacy Looks Like In
Kindergarten & How to Support It!

CHALLENGE

Crack the Code!

Crack the code... Can you read the message below (Line 1) in the language called Wingding?

There are some clues to help you on the second line (Line 2). The dashes _ represent a letter that is missing. Some of the English letters are provided on the second line to help you crack the code on the first line.

Line 1:

● ™ ☹ □ ■ ✕ ■ ♪ ♦ □ □ ™ ☹ ✕ ♦ ☹ ☹ □ ☹ ♦ □ □ & ✍

Line 2:

_ _ a n i _ _ _ o r _ _ _ _ s _ ar _ w _ _ _ !

Try the unfamiliar message on the screen. What strategies do you reach for—and how does it feel when the code is not yet automatic?

Children need explicit teaching, guided practice and encouragement. *Learning to read is hard work.*



Literacy in Kindergarten Is Bigger Than Reading!

-  **Text Forms & Structures:** Understanding how stories and other messages are organized
-  **Oral Language:** Listening, speaking, sharing, discussing and storytelling
-  **Vocabulary:** Learning, using and playing with new words
-  **Phonological Awareness:** Hearing and manipulating the sounds in spoken language
-  **Phonics:** Connecting letters with the sounds they represent
-  **Fluency:** Recognizing familiar letters and words with increasing speed and accuracy
-  **Comprehension:** Understanding, discussing and thinking about texts
-  **Writing:** Expressing ideas and information through pictures, symbols, letters and words
-  **Conventions:** Beginning to understand spelling, grammar and punctuation

These areas work together!

A B C



We teach literacy through BOTH:

Explicit Instruction

"Let me show you!"



Meaningful Experiences

"Now let's use it!"

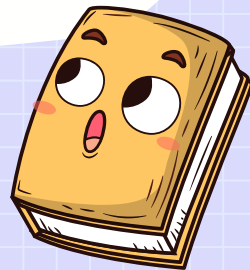
Children need opportunities to:

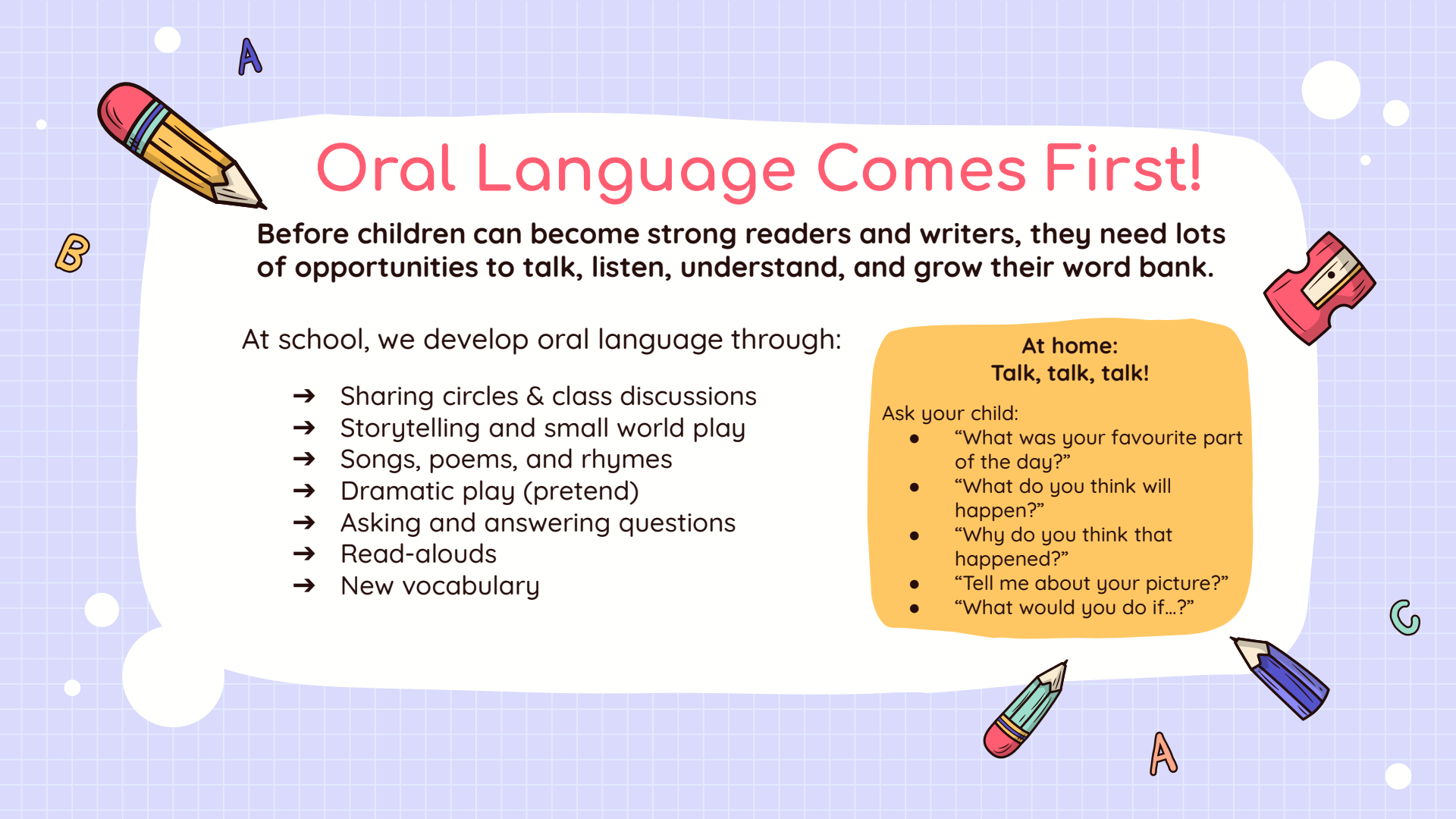
- Learn specific literacy skills
- Practise those skills with support
- Hear rich and interesting language
- Experience high-quality literature
- Talk and listen with others
- Apply what they are learning in meaningful contexts
- Play and pretend
- Tell and retell stories
- Experiment with writing
- Explore words
- Make connections



THE BIG PICTURE!

It's not either/or! Kindergarten needs both!





Oral Language Comes First!

Before children can become strong readers and writers, they need lots of opportunities to talk, listen, understand, and grow their word bank.

At school, we develop oral language through:

- Sharing circles & class discussions
- Storytelling and small world play
- Songs, poems, and rhymes
- Dramatic play (pretend)
- Asking and answering questions
- Read-alouds
- New vocabulary

**At home:
Talk, talk, talk!**

Ask your child:

- “What was your favourite part of the day?”
- “What do you think will happen?”
- “Why do you think that happened?”
- “Tell me about your picture?”
- “What would you do if...?”



Phonological Awareness

"Can you hear the sounds?"

A



B

Phonological awareness is about **sounds we hear and say** – not letters on a page!

We play with language by:

- Counting words in a sentence
- Clapping syllables
- Noticing rhymes
- Identifying beginning, middle and ending sounds
- Blending sounds together
- Breaking words apart
- Playing with onset and rime
- Manipulating sounds

Heggerty (an instructional resource) helps us intentionally develop phonological awareness through short, oral practice.

For example:

Teacher: "What word do we get when we put /m/ /ap/ together? Children: "Map!"

B

At home:

Make it playful!

- "What sound does sun start with?"
- "Can you clap the parts in butterfly?"
- "Say sunshine without sun."
- "What rhymes with dog?"
- "Can you stretch out the sounds in map?"

C





Heggerty

Phonological Awareness

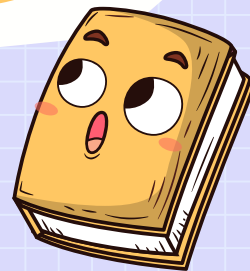
- What sounds do I hear?
- Oral and auditory practice
- Rhymes, syllables, and phonemes

UFLI

Phonics

- What letters represent those sounds?
- Explicit sound-symbol instruction
- Letter formation/Printing
- Using sounds and letters to read and write

***Heggerty and UFLI complement one another,
they do different jobs!***





Phonics

“What do those sounds look like?”

Phonics connects **sounds to letters** (or “graphemes”)! A 

Children learn that **letters represent sounds** and that this knowledge can help us read and write. B

We will work on:

- Recognizing letters
- Connecting letters and sounds
- Hearing sounds in words
- Identifying beginning, middle, and ending sounds (and the letters that represent them)!
- Blending sounds to read words (/c//a//t/ → cat)
- Using sound knowledge when attempting to write (“kid spelling”)

At home:

- Notice letters and sounds in everyday life
- Point out letters in your child’s name
- Play simple “what sound does ___ start with?”
- Look for familiar letters on signs, labels, and books
- Encourage your child to use the sounds they know when attempting to write

Our kindergarten goal: Children increasingly use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read and write unfamiliar words.

C



B

Learning Letters Is Multisensory

Children learn best when they connect several senses at once.

Children who say each sound while printing build stronger sound–symbol connections.



SAY

the sound



WRITE

the letter



SEE

the print



HEAR

the sound

Printing is not quiet time!

[Single Grapheme Songs Must Download To Play](#)

[Graphemes 1 - 26](#)

[Graphemes 27 - 54](#)



Writing Is Making Meaning

A



B

Draw - Represent - Write - Tell

What writing can look like in Kindergarten:



Letter formation: developing pencil grasp, control and accurate formation



Drawing & representing: using pictures, symbols and marks to communicate ideas



Storytelling: creating and retelling stories through pictures, writing, oral language and play



Small-world play: building characters, settings and storylines, then representing those ideas



Purposeful Writing: labels, signs, lists, messages, cards, captions and other authentic purposes



Sound-based spelling/ "kid spelling": Using known letters and sounds to represent words (what can I hear? → How can I represent it)

Building the Foundations

We support writing and fine motor development through **multi-sensory** and **fine-motor** experiences.

**Playdough • Sand Trays •
Drawing**

**Cutting • Building • Manipulating
Small Materials • Tracing &
Forming
Letters • Sensory Play**

C



B

Writing isn't limited to the letters a child can print!

Spelling Helps Us See Children's Thinking

When children try to spell, they are showing us what they understand about:

sounds → letters → words

Kid spelling might look like:

sun → sn

The spelling isn't conventionally correct yet—but the child is showing that they can hear and represent important sounds.

We continue to teach conventional spelling patterns while giving children space to communicate their ideas.

♥ Heart Words/ High Frequency
or Sight Words

Building Automatic Word Recognition

the
■ ♥

said
■ ♥ ■



How Do We Know What Children Know?

We listen, watch & check in as children:

- Identify and name letters
- Connect letters and sounds
- Hear, blend, and segment sounds
- Read familiar letters, words & print
- Attempt to spell and write
- Apply skills during reading, writing, & play

What we notice guides what we teach next!



Where Are We Going In Kindergarten?

A



B

By the end of the year, children are growing in their ability to:

- Know and use all 26 letters and connect letters with their sounds
- Hear, blend, and segment sounds in spoken words
- Use letter-sound knowledge to begin reading simple words (eg. CVC - "cat") and familiar print
- Recognize familiar and high frequency/ heart words

From learning about sounds and letters → to using that knowledge independently.

C



B

Learning to Read Is About More Than Decoding!

We want children to understand what they read and hear.

Children can become very good at sounding out words while still needing support to understand what those words and stories mean.

That's why we intentionally develop:



Decoding

“What does it say?”

Comprehension

“What does it mean?”

Language

“Can I talk about it?”

Thinking

“What do I think about it?”



Comprehension Starts with Listening!

A



B

Some of the richest literacy learning happens when children are listening to a story.

During read-alouds we:

-  listen to stories
-  discuss ideas
-  make predictions
-  ask and answer questions
-  make connections
-  interpret illustrations
-  sequence events
-  retell and dramatize stories
-  talk about characters' feelings and experiences

At home:

After reading, try:

- “What was your favourite part?”
- “I wonder why the character did that...”
- “What do you think will happen next?”
- “Does this remind you of anything?”

Rich literature gives children language, knowledge, imagination, and ideas!

C



B

LITERACY

Lives In Play!

Play is not separate from literacy - it is a place for application in a meaningful way for children.

Play gives children a reason to USE language.

During play, children might:

-  negotiate roles
-  learn new vocabulary
-  tell stories
-  act out characters
-  sequence events
-  make signs and menus
-  create lists
-  write messages
-  listen to one another
-  solve problems together



Children use literacy because the communication has a purpose!

A TLC Approach

The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model helps us move children toward independence.

From “I Do” → “We Do” → “You Do” → “Use It!”

I Do

We Do

You Do

Apply

The teacher models.

“I am going to show you how I stretch out the sounds in this word.”

We practise together.

“Let’s stretch this word out together.”

The child tries with increasing independence.

“Now you try.”

The child uses the skill in a meaningful context.

The child uses sound knowledge while writing a card during play.

The goal is increasing independent!
Our goal is not identical performance at the same moment.

Supporting Our English Language Learners!

Language development is literacy development!

Our classrooms include children who are learning English alongside one or more other languages!

We support language development through:

- Repetition
- Visuals
- Gestures and movement
- Modelling
- Songs and rhymes
- Predictable routines
- Meaningful conversations
- Dramatic play
- Partner talk
- Rich read-alouds
- Explicit vocabulary teaching
- Opportunities to practise language in authentic situations

And importantly:

A child's home language is an asset!

Families can continue to:

- ★ Tell stories
- ★ Read books
- ★ Sing songs
- ★ Have conversations
- ★ Share family experiences
- ★ Introduce new vocabulary

in whichever language or languages are most comfortable at home!

Strong language experiences in any language help children build knowledge, communication and confidence!

How can you help at home?

You don't need to recreate school at home!



READ

Read together every day when possible.



TALK & BE CURIOUS

Have real conversations, not just questions with one-word answers.



SING

Songs and rhymes are wonderful for language and sound awareness.



PLAY

Pretend play builds vocabulary, storytelling, and communication.



NOTICE SOUNDS

Play simple sound and rhyme games.



WRITE

Let your child see that writing has real purposes.

At school, we will:

- **Teach** skills explicitly
- **Model**
- **Read** rich literature
- **Practise** together
- **Support** individual needs
- **Celebrate** growth
- **Challenge** appropriately

At home, you can:

- **Read**
- **Talk**
- **Play**
- **Sing**
- **Tell stories**
- **Notice sounds**
- **Write for real purposes**

Our Literacy Partnership

School + Home = A Powerful Team!



What We Hope Your Child Develops This Year

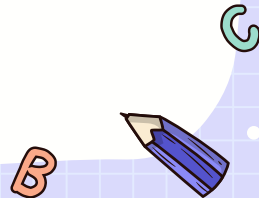


By the end of Kindergarten, children are growing as:

-  Readers
-  Communicators
-  Language Learners
-  Thinkers
-  Writers
-  Book Lovers

Our goal is to give children:

The skills to read,
The language to understand,
The confidence to
communicate,
The imagination to create,
And the love of stories that
makes them want to keep
reading!





Literacy Resources



Kindergarten Google Classroom

Learning materials - You must sign in as your child to Google Chrome and use their credentials on the label inside their homework folder to access these resources. Check your child's gmail for the invitation to join the classroom.



Epic Reading - During School Hours Is Free

Digital books and reading practice - Each teacher has a class code. See Peek At The Week



Calgary Public Library

Books, eResources and family programs - <https://www.calgarylibrary.ca/>





Sight Words & Home Reading

Heart Words

the
I*
and*
a
is*
as*
said
to
do
of
see*
he*
be*
me*
from
look*
book*
are
was
you*
what
have*



Sight words

Build automatic recognition

ELAL Skills & Procedures	Kindergarten
Reading	Recognize some letters of the alphabet with speed and accuracy. Recognize 5–10 high-frequency words.
	Recognize own name. Recognize some environmental print automatically.
Writing	Spell 5–10 high-frequency words.



Fluency

Read smoothly and with expression

[Video: What Is Fluency?](#)



Comprehension

Talk about meaning and connections

[Video: Reading Comprehension Strategies](#)

A few minutes of shared reading each day makes a difference.

[Video: Home Reading Suggestions](#)



Family Resources

- **Our literacy program is based on the Science of Reading:** Video: What Is The Science of Reading?
 - Phonemic Awareness (Heggerty) https://ecommerce.heggerty.org/watch-dlv/?uid=226176&pid=904885&k=week_1_day_1_content
 - Graphemes and Markings (Literacy M.A.P.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9R1K1joMTWs>
 - Reading and Spelling (UFLI) UFLI - Part of a Structured Literacy Program
- **Online resources:** Google Classroom, Epic Reading and Calgary Public Library
- Single Graphemes 1-26 Slide Show
- Double Graphemes 27 - 54 - Teaching Helps

Questions!?