LITERACY LEVELS

DEFINITION OF LITERACY LEVELS

Pre-Emergent
Emergent
Novice
Experimenting
Conventional
Definition of Literacy Levels

Pre-Emergent Literacy

Students:
- typically communicate in one to two-word verbal or picture symbol utterances to make simple requests (e.g., for assistance, objects, and activities);
- attend to completion of short activities (listen to a story, play a game, etc.);
- understand and respond appropriately to some routine questions;
- exhibit waiting and turn-taking;
- attend more to picture and the reader than to the print when stories are read aloud;
- demonstrate minimal art/writing attempts;
- identify familiar pictures and objects by name,
- identify parts of a whole (e.g., parts of a book, body parts, etc.);
- copy melodic speech patterns.

Emergent Literacy Level

Students:
- have meaningful experiences with books and writing materials, that lay a foundation for later literacy development;
- find meaning in printed materials by using associated pictures and meaningful experiences, rather than solely the printed materials themselves;
- demonstrate art and writing attempts without the intention to communicate specific messages;
- are in the process of learning that books are: (1) pleasurable, (2) involve a listener and reader, and (3) handled in particular ways;
- are in the process of learning that pictures are symbols that convey information about objects and actions;
- are in the process of learning that printed text carries a message and conveys information;
- are learning to attend to words in texts and pay attention to identifying individual letters, especially the letters in their names;
- are becoming aware of environmental print and can identify sighs and labels in and out of context;
- can use communication boards, daily schedules, adapted books, environmental labeling, and environmental print books.

Novice Literacy Level

Students:
- are aware that printed text communicates messages by linking key words or phrases;
- write with the intention to communicate meaning although they write with unconventional spelling (e.g., a string of scribbles and/or letters, invented spelling, etc.);
- learn to name and write some letters of the alphabet;
- attempt to construct text that has visual features appropriate to the purpose even though it may not contain readable words (e.g., a list looks like a list, etc.);
- read back and assign meaning to their own writing;
- read text that depends on visual clues from the immediate environment (such as a picture of ice cream on sign that says “Ice Cream”);
- respond to stories read to the whole class, rather than needing to hear them in small groups;
- listen to tapes and records and show understanding through body language;
- relate a story in sequence.
**Experimenting Literacy Level**

Students:
- are in the transitional stage of using more conventional tools and strategies than novices;
- use literary language such as “once upon a time,” “the end,” etc.;
- name and form all letters of the alphabet;
- become inventive spellers;
- read with support of familiar predictable text;
- are beginning to recognize letters and letter sounds;
- may demonstrate limited phonetic awareness as in rhyming, blending, decoding letter sounds, and segmenting letter sounds in words;
- learn that words are combination of letters;
- are beginning to experiment with spelling in an effort to break the code and discover that letters are combined to form words;
- show boundaries between words when writing;
- respond appropriately to a presentation (e.g., stand for pledge, clap appropriately, etc.);
- retell what is heard after a story is read aloud or following another kind of presentation;
- use appropriate words to express pleasure, sadness, anger, or frustration to peers and adults in ways that make their feelings apparent.

**Conventional Literacy Level**

Students:
- have an extensive sight word vocabulary;
- demonstrate attentiveness as a listener through body language or facial expressions;
- know practiced consequences and problem solving strategies;
- speak appropriately for a variety of purposes and audiences;
- read to obtain basic information (e.g., adapted telephone directory, direction words, familiar locations, etc.);
- make predictions and inferences from a short passage read aloud, with guidance;
- use inventive spelling moving towards conventional spelling by using a word wall;
- write two or more related sentences with assistance;
- write short note, greeting cards, or e-mails with assistance;
- relate personal experiences that are relevant to what is heard with assistance as needed;
- ask questions for clarification or for information when needed or when prompted;
- use descriptive language to express ideas, opinions, and feeling when conversing with others.

Students who are demonstrating skills at the emergent and novice reading levels are logographic readers. Logographic is defined as reading and writing that relies on context. There are two stages of logographic reading; often called beginning literacy and novice reading and writing. Beginners are students who have meaningful experiences with books and writing materials; however, these students do not find meaning in printed symbols themselves and do not make written marks in order to communicate specific messages. Novices are students who are aware that printed text communicates messages and write in order to communicate specific messages. Novices may learn to name and write some letters and make texts that have visual features appropriate to their purposes (e.g., a list looks like a list even though it may not contain readable words).

Students who are demonstrating skills at the experimenting and conventional reading levels are alphabetic readers. Alphabetic reading is defined as the attempt to use sound-letter correspondences in reading and writing. There are two stages of alphabetic reading; experimenters and conventional readers. Experimenters are in a transitional period. They use literary language, can name and form most letters, have an awareness of words, become inventive spellers and can read when provided familiar, predictable text. Conventional readers and writers are often recognized by society as “really” reading and writing. Conventional readers use a variety of reading strategies, know sight words, read texts written in a variety of forms, are aware of audience, monitor their performances as writers and readers, and spell conventionally.
Orthographic Literacy Level

Students:
- have highly sophisticated and complex understanding of written language;
- automatically see chunks of letters associated with spelling patterns;
- know conventional spelling of hundreds of words and spell unfamiliar words with regular spelling patterns;

Orthographic literacy skills appear toward the end of the primary grades in elementary school. Students who are demonstrating skills at the orthographic reading level are using literacy skills which are higher than those appropriate for the F.A.C.E.S. curriculum.

References:

