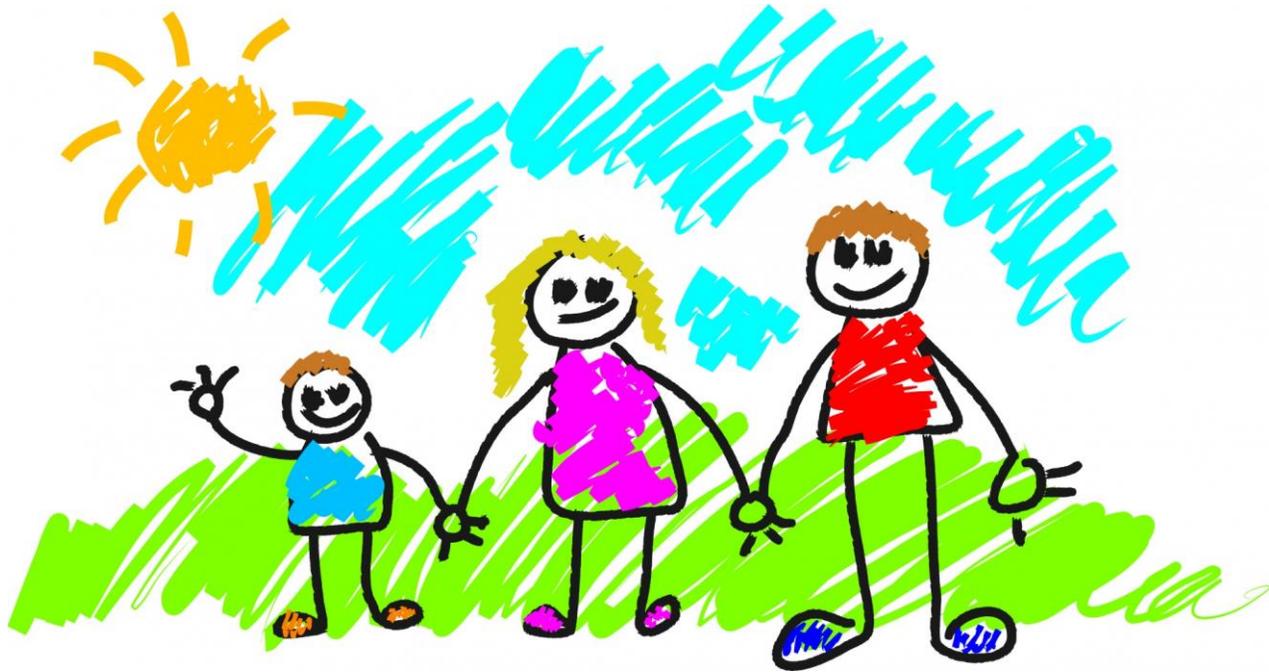


# Parent Toolkit



Language and Literacy Strategies  
First and Second Grades

The development of literacy is much more than simply learning to read. It also includes listening and understanding, speaking and communication, connecting sounds to language, using writing and storytelling, and representing ideas through art and pretend play, singing and rhyming. There is so much you as a parent can do, without it involving too much time.

The goal of this toolkit is to provide you with simple activity ideas, book lists, poems, warning signs of potential red flags, and provide suggestions to help you meet the educational needs of your child.

<b>Listening and understanding</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Literacy and Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>
Talk to your child.	Pretend play.	Read books with your child.	Provide paper, pencils, crayons daily.
Sing songs together.	No baby talk	Rhyming, rhyming, rhyming!	Utilize magnetic letters.
Say/repeat rhymes.	Play rhyming games.	Make up stories together.	Write and mail letters and cards.
Play "I Spy" while driving.	Talk about beginning, middle end of stories.	Go to public library with your child.	Sidewalk chalk for outdoor writing.
Play board games.	Create stories.	Play letter/word bingo.	Play school.
Work puzzles together.	Sentence completion games.	Discuss books with your child.	Have child write the letters he/she hears in words.
Word games: make new words by substituting the first letter of each word.	Sound out small, simple words together.	When reading with child, move your finger along the words.	Provide activities to strengthen muscles in child's fingers.
Word sorting: ask child to sort word cards by beginning or ending letter.	Ask child lots of questions, especially open-ended.	Read fiction and non-fiction with your child.	Have child illustrate stories.

## Book Suggestions

The public library has a wonderful selection of books for young children! Allowing your child to have his/her own library card is a wonderful way to encourage interest in books and develop strong reading skills. Here is a brief list of **just a few** quality books for first and second grade children:

Frog and Toad Are Friends by Arnold Lobel  
Gus and Grandpa Ride the Train by Claudia Mills  
Mr. Putter and Tabby Toot the Horn by Cynthia Rylant  
Henry and Mudge (series)  
Dr. Seuss books  
Nate the Great (series) by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat  
Soap Soup and Other Verses by Karla Kuskin  
Pete the Cat by Eric Litwin  
The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein  
Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak  
Miss Nelson is Missing by Harry Allard  
Click, Clack, Moo by Doreen Cronin  
Cam Jansen by David Alder  
Junie B. Jones (series)  
Magic Treehouse (series) by Mary Pope Osborne  
Elephant and Piggie by Mo Willems  
Dory Fantasmagory: Head in the Clouds by Abby Hanlon  
Magic School Bus (series)  
*Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White  
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst  
Ivy and Bean by Annie Barrows

## Potential Signs and Characteristics of a Problem: First Grade

- Difficulty remembering the names of letters and recalling them quickly
- Difficulty learning how sounds and letters connect
- Difficulty with blending or breaking words
- Difficulty learning to recognize common words automatically
- Reading errors show no connection to the sounds of the letters
- An inability to read common one-syllable words or to sound out even the simplest words
- Poor spelling
- Poor handwriting
- Complains about how hard reading is
- Difficulty remembering sequences, such as first, second, third

## **Second and Third Grade Indicators**

- Mispronunciation of long, unfamiliar, or complicated words
- Frequently misreads common words even after practice
- Speech that is not fluent
- No strategies for word attack, makes wild guesses at words
- Use of imprecise language
- Loses place and skips over words while reading
- Poor spelling
- Inability to read small function words
- Fear of reading out loud
- Oral reading that lacks expression
- Does not enjoy reading
- Lowered self-esteem

# Advocating for Your Child

You are your child's first and most important teacher! No one knows your child better than you do. Being an advocate means giving a voice to your child's needs and empowering him/her to accomplish goals. It means helping your child to obtain the resources to meet those needs. Dyslexia in no way limits what your child can accomplish or what he or she may become as an adult. They can become doctors, lawyers, scientists, artists, entertainers, athletes and anything else they may dream.

If your child's teacher mentions noticing a potential red flag, listen to her. This is not a reflection of your child's intelligence or worth. But, the earlier the concerns are addressed, the less likely it is that your child could fall behind and become frustrated with school. Ask what you can do at home to support your child's learning.

If you suspect that your child may have reading difficulties, speak up! Be specific about weaknesses you notice at home and keep track. Do not wait for annual parent-teacher conferences to say something. Reach out and express what your concerns are and ask your child's teacher to begin noticing. Your elementary principal is another great resource for help and support. Recognize

your role as the most important member of your child's educational team. Stand up. Be heard. Be an advocate. Never give up on your child!

### Helpful Websites

[www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org)

[www.readingrockets.org](http://www.readingrockets.org)

[www.bookshare.org](http://www.bookshare.org)

[www.getreadytoread.org](http://www.getreadytoread.org)

[www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com)

[www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)

[www.inspiration.com](http://www.inspiration.com)

[www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org)

[www.getreadytoread.org](http://www.getreadytoread.org)