



ABCs to Fluency

A Step-by-Step Guide to Teaching Your Child to Read

Parent Workshop Outline

Potter and Clay Educational Institute

Our Mission

Potter & Clay Educational Institute exists to provide high-quality educational programs that nurture academic growth, character development, and lifelong learning, while supporting children, families, and communities through education, faith-based instruction, and outreach initiatives.

Today you will learn practical, hands-on strategies to help your child become a confident reader using simple, inexpensive materials that can be used at home.

Workshop Objectives

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

- Understand the first steps in learning to read.
- Teach phonemic awareness through games and conversation.
- Teach letter sounds using multisensory activities.
- Blend sounds into words.
- Build vocabulary from everyday books.
- Practice fluency using simple reading activities.
- Strengthen comprehension through discussion and storytelling.

Reading Begins with a Book

Example Book:

Llama Llama Red Pajama

One quality picture book can be used to teach:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Blending
- Vocabulary
- Fluency
- Comprehension



Section 1: Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words.

Remember:

Children hear sounds before they read letters.

Skills We Practiced

☐ Rhyming Words

Examples:

☐ Syllables

Clap the parts of each word.

Examples:

☐ Beginning Sounds

Examples:

PRE-K WORD CHART				
Say/Write It	Clap It	First Sound	Last Sound	Draw It

☐ Oral Blending

Hear the sounds first.

Then blend them together.

Example:

/m/ + /a/ = ma

/m/ + /a/ + /t/ = mat

(I Do • We Do • You Do)

Hands-On Activity



Draw three sound boxes.

Push one chip for each sound you hear.

Example:

map

□ □ □

What other words can you practice?

Say it! Tap it! Map it! Zap it!

Say it! Tap it! Map it! Blend it! Zap it! Write it!

● ● ● 2 3 4

□ □ □ □

Sound Boxes

□ □ □

			
			
			

Key Takeaway

Children must be able to hear sounds before they can connect those sounds to letters.



Section 2: Phonics

Phonics is the connection between spoken sounds (phonemes) and the letters that represent those sounds.

Remember:

Children hear sounds first. Then they learn to connect those sounds to letters.

Teach the Sound Before the Letter Name

When introducing a new letter, teach its sound first.

Example:

m → /m/

rather than

"This is the letter M."

Focus on helping children recognize and produce the sound the letter makes.

Letter Flash Cards

Use flash cards to introduce one or two new letters at a time.

Ideas:

- Traditional alphabet flash cards
- Picture or animal-themed alphabet cards for younger learners

Review previously learned letters daily before introducing new ones.





Multi-Sensory Letter Practice

Children learn best when they can see, hear, say, and move.

Practice each letter by:

- ☐ Air writing
- ☐ Tracing with a finger
- ☐ Whiteboards
- ☐ Salt or sand trays (salt in zip lock bag, add a few drops of food coloring, place on napkin to dry)
- ☐ Playdough (use playdough to trace letters or create letters)

As children trace or build each letter, have them repeat the letter's sound aloud.

Example:

Trace the letter **m** while saying:

"/m/, /m/, /m/"

Hands-On Activity

Practice tracing one or two letters using:

- ☐ Playdough
- ☐ Salt tray
- ☐ Whiteboard

Repeat the sound each time the letter is traced.





Build Simple Letter Combinations

Once children know a few letter sounds, begin combining them.

Example:

m + a = ma

Then add another letter:

m + a + t = mat

Use:

- Magnetic letters
- Pool noodle letters
- Letter cards
- Blocks

Allow children to slide the letters together as they blend the sounds.

Parent Reminder

Keep lessons short and fun.

Five to ten minutes of consistent daily practice is often more effective than one long lesson each week.

(Insert screenshots of flash cards, sensory writing examples, and your letter blending activity.)



Section 3: Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the foundation for reading comprehension. Children cannot understand what they read if they do not understand the words.

Build Vocabulary from the Story

Choose **2–3 meaningful words** from the book you are reading.

For each word:

- ☐ Print or draw a picture of the word.
- ☐ Write the word on an index card.
- ☐ Glue or tape the picture to the card.

Discuss:

- What does the word mean?
- Can you use it in a sentence?
- Can you find the word again in the story?

Review vocabulary cards throughout the week to strengthen understanding and memory.

Example

Word: _____

Meaning: _____

Sentence: _____





Section 4: Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read accurately, smoothly, and with expression.

For beginning readers, fluency begins by hearing and repeating language.

Sentence Strip Activity

1. Choose a short sentence from the story.
2. Write the sentence on a sentence strip or index card.
3. Draw a dot under each word.
4. Have your child point to each word as they repeat the sentence.

Example:

● Llama ● llama ● red ● pajama.

Practice reading the sentence:

- ☐ Happy voice
- ☐ Sad voice
- ☐ Robot voice
- ☐ Whisper voice
- ☐ Excited voice

After reading, have your child draw a picture that matches the sentence.

I see a llama.	
I see pajamas	
I see momma.	

Make It Reusable

Place sentence strips in a plastic sleeve or laminate them for repeated practice.

Children build confidence by reading familiar sentences multiple times.

Remember: Fluency grows through repeated reading—not rushing.



Section 5: Comprehension

Comprehension is understanding what we read. Good readers think about the story before, during, and after reading.

Before Reading

Help your child prepare for the story.

Ask questions such as:

- What do you think this story will be about?
- What do you notice on the cover?
- Have you ever experienced something like this?

During Reading

Pause throughout the story to encourage thinking.

Ask questions like:

- What is happening?
- Why do you think that happened?
- How is the character feeling?
- What do you think will happen next?
- Can you find one of our vocabulary words?

Discuss new vocabulary as it appears in the story.

After Reading

Help your child retell the story in their own words.

Ask:

- What happened at the beginning?
- What happened in the middle?
- How did the story end?
- What was your favorite part?
- What lesson did the character learn?

Beginning, Middle, and End Activity



Draw three boxes on a sheet of paper.

Label each box:

- ☐ Beginning
- ☐ Middle
- ☐ End

Have your child draw a picture in each box and use the pictures to retell the story.

This activity helps children organize events and strengthen story recall.

Build a Reading Notebook

Keep your child's work together in a notebook or binder.

Include:

- ☐ Vocabulary pages
- ☐ Sentence strips
- ☐ Beginning, middle, and end drawings
- ☐ Word cards
- ☐ Favorite books
- ☐ Reading responses

As children revisit previous work, they strengthen vocabulary, improve fluency, and build confidence as readers.

Remember

The Potter and Clay Educational Institute



Reading is more than saying the words on the page.

Reading is understanding, discussing, and enjoying the story together.

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