

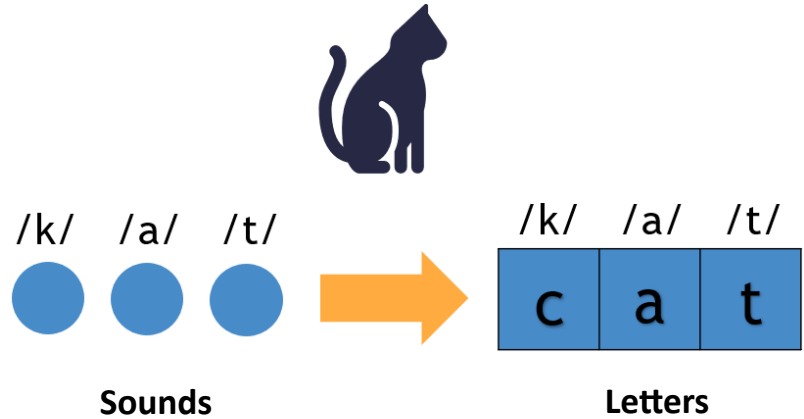
Phonics

Information For Parents

What is Phonics?

Phonics is the study of the relationships between the letters and the sounds they represent.

Phonics instruction is a method of teaching people to read by explicitly teaching sound-symbol correspondences.

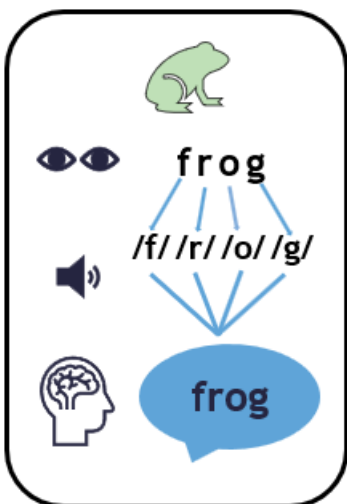


Phonics instruction begins with basic letter-sound correspondences and progresses to advanced spelling patterns throughout the elementary grades.

	K	1	2	3	4+
Phonics	Early				Advanced

(Birsh & Carreker, 2018)

Why is Phonics Important?



Phonics instruction teaches the predictable relationships between sounds and letters which allows readers to apply these concepts and read both familiar and unfamiliar words.

Phonics is important for supporting orthographic mapping. **Orthographic mapping** is the term Dr. Linnea Ehri popularized to label the process that happens in the brain that allows readers to turn an unfamiliar word in print into an automatically recognized word, without having to sound it out each time.

ALL students benefit from phonics instruction—it leads to better fluency, comprehension, spelling, and writing.

Orthographic Mapping

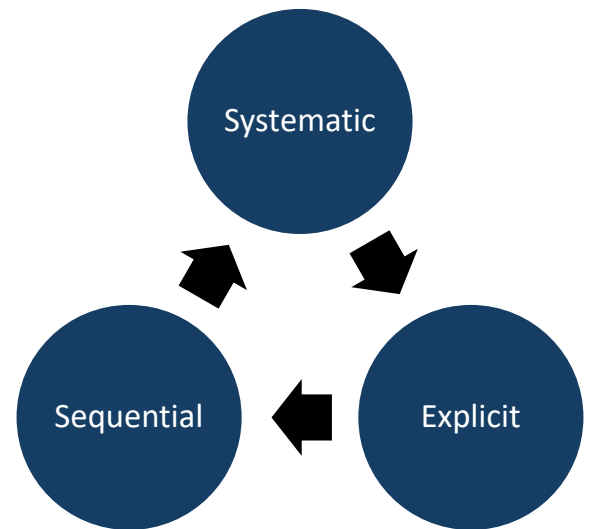
(Ehri et al., 2001; NRP, 2000)

What Does Phonics Look Like at School?

Systematic: Lessons are taught in a structured, predictable format, with many opportunities for feedback and cumulative practice.

Explicit: Important concepts and skills are taught very clearly and directly by the teacher. Children are not expected to infer these concepts and skills just from exposure alone.

Sequential: Lessons are taught in a logical order, from simple to more complex. Skills build on each other over time.



Phonics instruction involves both **decoding** (reading the words) and **encoding** (spelling the words).



Decoding (Reading the Words)



Encoding (Spelling the Words)

(Birsh & Carreker, 2018; IDA, 2020)

How Can You Support Phonics at Home?

When **reading with your child at home**, ask your child to:

1. **Look at the letters.**
2. **Sound it out.**
3. Once a word has been decoded (read), then ask...
Does that make sense?



(Moats & Tolman, 2009)

Additional Resources

Please visit the [Colorado Department of Education \(CDE\) Parent Resource website](#) for more information about the Colorado READ Act, READ Plans, and the Science of Reading.



[CDE Parent Resources Website](#)

References

- Birsh, J. R. & Carreker, S. (2018). *Multisensory teaching of basic language skills* (4th ed.). Baltimore, MD: Brookes.
- Ehri, L. C., Nunes, S. R., Stahl, S. A., & Willows, D. M. (2001). Systematic phonics instruction helps children learn to read: Evidence from the National Reading Panel's meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 71(3), 393–447.
- International Dyslexia Association. (2020). *Structured literacy: Effective instruction for students with dyslexia and related reading difficulties*. <https://dyslexiaida.org/effective-reading-instruction/>
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- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). U.S. Government Printing Office.