



Literacy Framework | Family Resource

Oral Language

A key outcome in the [CBE Education Plan](#) is “Students achieve excellence in literacy.” While literacy is more than learning to read, learning to read is an essential piece to meeting this outcome. The age-old proverb reminds us it takes a village to raise our children, and this document is one way to build a stronger sense of connection between home and school in helping all children become literate, engaged members of our community.

The [CBE Literacy Framework](#) is a key document that supports and guides teaching and learning of literacy within CBE. This Framework creates many connections between school and home that can both include and inform families in purposeful and important ways. This four-page resource is the first in a series of resources that will make these connections more transparent.

Oral Language

Oral language is a key part of the Framework as it is foundational to all literacy practices. It differs from written language but is an important part of the progression in learning to read and write. Oral language connects sounds, such as letter sounds and spoken words, to meanings and is a foundational piece that helps to increase the likelihood of becoming a successful reader. In order to make sense of the printed words on the page or the screen, readers start by organizing three pieces of information: the **MEANING** of the word, all the **SOUNDS** that make up the word, and the **LETTERS** that represent the sounds in the word. This resource focuses on how oral language development supports children in increasing the number of words they know the **MEANINGS** of, and how to play with the **SOUNDS** in words to improve word knowledge.



Visual from: Strom, C. (2022; *Cortex in the Classroom: Advancing Science of Reading in the Early Years*. [Webinar].

Examples of Oral Language Development at School

<p style="text-align: center;">Singing Songs</p> <p>Singing songs together helps to develop a sense of rhythm and sounds in spoken language, which can build oral fluency. Many songs also use rhyme and alliteration, which can help children hear the smaller chunks of sounds in words. Songs may also provide opportunities to learn new vocabulary in a joyful way.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Listening</p> <p>Listening actively creates opportunities for learning and building knowledge and connections. Students engage in listening to oral stories from Elders, podcasts, videos, peers and other people and sources. It provides the chance to hear multiple perspectives and new ideas, as well as building connections to background knowledge.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Story Telling</p> <p>Children make connections to others and their world through storytelling. They have opportunities to use a variety of materials to build and share stories. In doing so, they develop a sense of sequencing; understanding that stories have a beginning, middle and ending. Children also discover the power of word choice by sharing stories.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Conversations</p> <p>Conversation, sometimes called “Serve and Return,” uses questions (serve) and responses (return) to develop a learner’s ability to think about and respond to others’ thoughts and ideas. Teachers often aim for 4-6 questions and responses for the topic of conversation when talking with a child to deepen one’s knowledge, and curiosity of topics and expand vocabulary.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Read Aloud</p> <p>Teachers read books out loud to students every day. These reading experiences include opportunities for teachers to model the process of what readers are thinking while they read, as well as include time for interaction through strategies like asking questions, making predictions or inferences and summarizing what has been read. Diverse and inclusive books are selected to help students connect reading to self, others and the world around them.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Games</p> <p>Oral language can be developed within schools through conversations that are structured around the objectives and the rules of games. Many of these games allow for turn-taking, question asking and problem solving with peers. Games can also be set up in a way that encourages students to use new vocabulary and concepts in authentic ways that deepen knowledge and understanding through conversations</p>



Families, you are your child’s first teacher. Well-developed oral language skills enable your child to make sense of and communicate with the world around them. Expanding vocabulary through shared reading and conversations and developing a joyful awareness of the sounds in words and sentences are just a few ways that you can support oral language development at home.

Examples of Supporting Oral Language Development at Home

<p>Share books together as often as possible - every day if you can. These books can be in English, French or any other language your child speaks at home or may be learning at school. The Calgary Public Library has many books in many languages for families to access. When reading stories together, take time to talk about the beginning, the middle and the end of the story. Also, find one or two good words in the book and talk about what makes these words interesting to you and your child.</p>	<p>Watch educational videos and short child-friendly documentaries with your child. Ask questions and build knowledge together. Focus on learning one or two new words when you watch and learn together. Talk about what the difference is between asking a question and stating a fact or an opinion after watching a video. Practice creating all three types of statements: questions, opinions and facts.</p>
<p>Provide opportunities for free play both inside and outdoors. Family members can engage in play with your child or your child can play independently. Create opportunities for your child to play with formal toys and informal objects. Ask questions about what your child is imagining and creating. Ask for clarification as a listener to support your child in adding detail to their thoughts.</p>	<p>Sing songs and share rhymes with your child. This can be done along with digital support, such as a recording or a video, and can be in your family’s home language or in the language your child speaks at school. While it is fine to have the support of a recorded version, please do take the time to say the words in the song or rhyme, as it is a much more powerful learning tool when the words are said out loud.</p>
<p>Play games that support literacy skill development. This could include board games, such as those available at the Calgary Public Library, card games, or Word Games.</p>	<p>Take time to draw and colour or play Lego or build puzzles together. Use this time to promote talking and listening- serve & return structure, at home. Question to Consider (Advertisements are not endorsed)</p>



Links to Support Oral Language Development:

Please ensure a responsible adult is with your child when accessing digital content.

<p>Kid Time Story Time</p> 	<p>Podcasts for Children</p> 
<p>Reading Buddies</p> 	<p>24 Fun Word Games to Play in the Car with Kids</p>  <p>(from: Empowered Parents-Advertisements are not endorsed)</p>
<p>Play Roly</p> 	<p>Scarborough's Reading Rope</p> 
<p>Talking is Teaching</p> 	<p>National Geographic Kids YouTube Channel</p> 