

Alabama Literacy Act

What does it mean for your child?



Current reality

In 2019, the Alabama legislature passed the Alabama Literacy Act, and it became effective September 1, 2019.

The first group of students that falls under this act are second graders during the 2020 - 2021 school year.

What the law says . . .

“Commencing with the 2021-2022 school year, third grade students shall demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion to fourth grade.”

There are “good cause” exemptions, but our goal is for all of our students to be able to read well.

Why was the act established?

“..to implement steps to improve the reading proficiency of public school kindergarten to third grade students and ensure that those students are able to read at or above grade level by the end of the third grade...”

Why is the deadline third grade?

“Ninety percent of children with reading difficulties will achieve grade level in reading if they receive help in the 1st grade. Seventy percent of children whose help is delayed to age 9 or later continue to struggle throughout their school career.”

(Vellutino, Scanton, Sipay, Small, Pratt, Chen & Denckla, 1996)

Parental Notification

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, a parent or legal guardian of any K-3 student who exhibits a consistent deficiency in reading or characteristics of dyslexia at any time during the school year shall be notified in writing.

Good Cause Exemptions

- Students with disabilities whose participation in statewide testing isn't appropriate.
- English language learners who've had less than two years of instruction in English as a second language.
- Students with disabilities (IEP or 504 plan) who have received intensive reading intervention for more than two years and were previously retained in kindergarten, first, second or third grade.

Good Cause Exemptions

- Students who have received intensive reading intervention for two or more years and were previously retained in kindergarten, first, second, or third grade for a total of two years.
- No student shall be retained more than twice in kindergarten through third grade.

How are we supporting our students?

District-wide implementation of a multisensory phonics program that increases students' ability to decode words.

District-wide implementation of a research-based reading curriculum for building comprehension and vocabulary.

School-based interventions through the Response to Instruction model.

Classroom teachers provide tiered instruction based on an individual student's needs.

Attendance Matters

Make sure that your child is present and on time for school.

Graphic from www.gradelevelreading.net

Who Is Affected

Kindergarten and 1st grade classes often have absenteeism rates as high as those in high school. Many of these absences are excused, but they still add up to lost time in the classroom.

1 in 10 kids

in kindergarten and 1st grade are chronically absent. In some schools, it's as high as 1 in 4.¹



Who Can Read on Grade Level After 3rd Grade?



of kids with good attendance in K and 1st
(missed 9 or fewer days both years)



of kids with at-risk attendance
(missed more than 9 days both years)



of kids chronically absent in K or 1st
(missed 18 or more days one year)



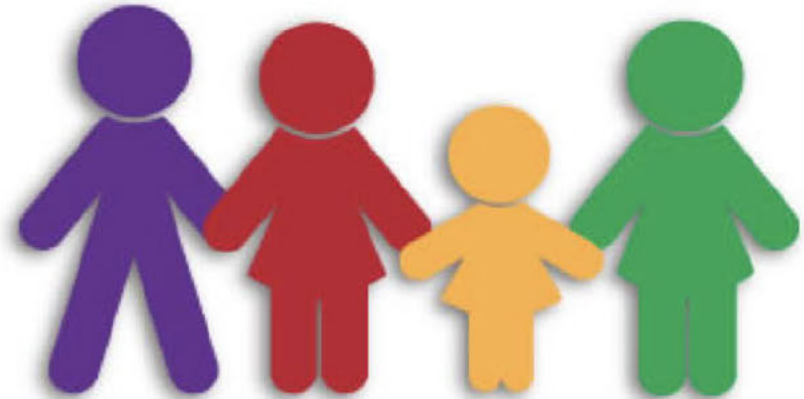
of kids chronically absent in K and 1st
(missed 18 or more days both years)

Attendance Matters

Family Involvement

Parents as Partners

- How do you partner with your child's teacher?
- What help or resources do you need to strengthen the relationship?
- What help or resources do you need to support your child in reading at home?



Communicate with Your Child

One of the best ways to support your child is through two-way **communication**.

- It **develops positive speaking and listening skills**.
- It **informs you of what your child is learning in school**.
- It **gives insight on how your child thinks and feels about school**.



Show That Reading is Valued

- You may **read to your child**, your **child may read to you**, and/or you may **read together**.
- It is recommended that children **read at home** for a minimum of 20 minutes daily.
- Visit **libraries**, **book trade stores**, and **yard sales** to help create your **home library**.
- Expose your children to different types of **reading material**.



Phonemic Awareness – *the ability to hear and distinguish sound*

- Play a game in which you say a word and your child has to **break apart all the sounds**. Ask your child to stretch out a word like dog, and he/she can pretend to stretch a word with a rubber band. Your child should say /d/ /ŏ/ /g/.



- Orally provide pairs of **words that rhyme** and pairs that do not rhyme (Ex: pan/man; pat/boy). Ask, “Do ‘pan’ and ‘man’ rhyme? Why? Do ‘pat’ and ‘boy’ rhyme? Why not?”

Phonics

– *the ability to understand the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent*

- Point out **words that begin with the same letter** as your child's names (for example, *John* and *jump*). Talk about how the beginning sounds of the words are alike.
- **Make letter-sounds** and ask your child to draw matching letters in cornmeal or sand.
- **Building words** - Using magnetic letters, make a three letter word on the refrigerator (cat). Have your child read the word and use it in a sentence. Every day, change one letter to make a new word. Start by changing only the beginning letter (cat, bat, hat, sat, mat, rat, pat). Then change only the ending letter (pat, pal, pad, pan). Finally, change only the middle letter (pan, pen, pin, pun).



Fluency – *the ability to read with sufficient speed to support understanding*

- **Repeated reading** - Choose a passage that will not be very difficult for your child. Read the passage aloud to your child, and then read it together, helping your child figure out any tricky words. Next, have your child read the passage to you with a focus on accuracy. Finally, have your child read the passage to you again, paying attention to fluency and expression. The goal is to sound smooth and natural.
- **Use different voices** - When reading a familiar story or passage, try having your child use different voices. Read the story in a mouse voice, cowboy voice, or a princess voice. This is another way to do repeated reading, and it adds some fun to reading practice.

Vocabulary — *the student's knowledge of and memory for word meanings*

- **Play “categories”** with your child. Name a topic such as “farms” and ask your child to think of all the words he/she can related to that topic. This is a great way to build word knowledge!
- Trips to everyday places build vocabulary. **Discuss what you are doing and seeing** as you are going through the store, for example. “I’m here in the bakery. I can find donuts, cookies, and bread.” Ask your child, “What else do you think I could find here?”

Comprehension — *the ability to understand and draw meaning from text*

- **Before reading** - Point out the title and author. Look at the picture on the cover and ask, "What do you think you'll learn about in this book? Why?" This helps your child consider what he already knows about the topic.
- **During reading** - Don't forget the captions, headings, sidebars, or any other information on the page. Young readers tend to overlook these, so it's a good idea to show that the author includes lots of information in these "extras".
- **After reading** - Ask your child, "What was it mostly about? What do you still want to know? Where could you find out?"

