

Foundational Skills

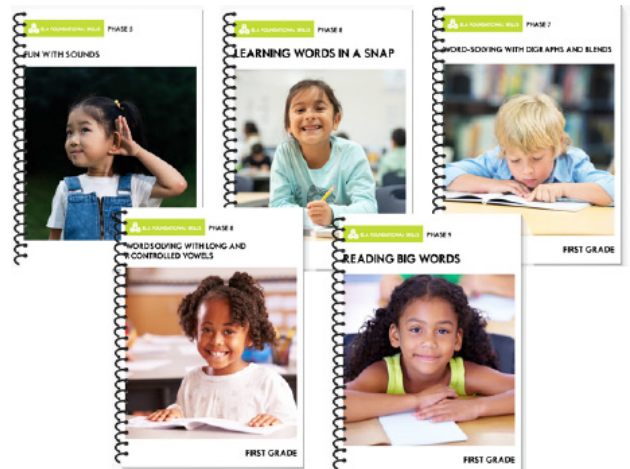
K-8

Foundational skills are self-defining: They are the knowledge and abilities that provide a strong basis for literacy learning.

Schoolwide’s Foundational Skills Program has been designed to ensure that students receive explicit and systematic instruction in the following skills: Phonological Awareness, Print Concepts, Handwriting, Phonics, Word Recognition, and Fluency.

These skills have proven to be significant predictors of young students’ later proficiency in reading and writing (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009).

The program integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing opportunities in a clear scope and sequence building from simple to complex and providing students scaffolds and supports for effectively transferring newly-learned skills to the practice of reading and writing texts.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Explicit, direct instruction that follows a clear sequence backed by science.

Researchers have concluded:

“Explicit instruction of foundational skills is critical in early elementary school. Numerous studies point to the benefits of a structured program for reading success . . . [T]his means a program that begins with phonological awareness, follows a clear sequence of phonics patterns, provides direct instruction with adequate student practice, and makes use of weekly assessment and targeted support.” (Student Achievement Partners, 2018).

Schoolwide’s Foundational Skills Program begins with the explicit teaching of phonological awareness skills using traditional nursery rhymes, songs, and other short texts selected to capture the attention and interests of young children. The direct teaching and sequencing of the phonological awareness skills, as well as the other vital foundational skills (print concepts, phonics and word recognition, and fluency) is informed by the work of such noted experts as Dolch and Fry, Dr. Janice Light and Dr. David McNaughton, and Wiley Blevins.





IN OUR PRODUCT

Schoolwide's Foundational Skills Program for Grades K-2 is organized as a series of instructional phases. The phases, and lessons contained therein, are explicitly sequenced to systematically introduce and reinforce targeted, science-based foundational skills and strategies.

Within Schoolwide's Foundational Skills instructional framework are opportunities to read to students (modeled reading), to read and write with students (shared reading and writing), to support and guide students during small-group practice, and to have students work either independently or with a partner to apply newly-learned strategies and skills.

Whole-Class Instruction: Each phase includes a variety of research-based lesson formats which have been proven to improve student learning such as:

- Shared Reading - An interactive reading experience that occurs when students join in or share the reading of a book or other text while guided and supported by a teacher.
- Shared Writing - A collaborative teaching approach in which the teacher acts as a scribe while the students contribute their ideas.
- Interactive Writing - A collaborative teaching method in which students "share the pen" with the teacher and fellow classmates.
- Mini-Lessons - Concise lessons, focused on a targeted strategy that will build students' language, reading, and/or writing competencies.

Guided Practice and Scaffolding: Following each whole-class lesson, teachers are provided with instructions and resources for effectively differentiating instruction and providing additional practice, as well as opportunities to extend, reinforce, and transfer skills to authentic reading and writing situations.

Independent Applications: Each lesson concludes with opportunities for students to apply newly-learned skills independently or with a partner.

REFERENCES AND FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH

Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

- [Effective Use of the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model](#) by Dr. Douglas Fisher
- [Gradual Release of Responsibility Instructional Framework](#) by Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher
- [The Messy Business of Gradual Release \(GRR\)](#) by Sunday Cummins and Julie Webb

Foundational Skills and the Science of Reading

- [Meeting the Challenges of Early Literacy Phonics Instruction](#)

Additional References and Foundational Research

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