



**PROGRESS
REPORT
GUIDEBOOK**

Table of Contents

Letter to Parents	2
Readiness Stage	4
Preconventional Stage	6
Early Emergent	8
Emergent	10
Beginning	12
Early Developing	14
Developing	16
Bridging	18
Expanding	20
Fluent	22
Continual Growth	24

Dear Parents,

For the last few years committees of teachers, parents and administrators have been engaged in researching the ways into how a progress report can communicate the key skills and concepts students are expected to learn and develop. It should also reflect the key aspects of the research based programs such as those we have more recently developed in our schools. With that considered we have developed detailed math indicators and continuums in reading and writing which indicate appropriate progress of skills and concepts that all of our children are exposed to each day. This then lead us to a revised progress report that has been designed as a tool to communicate your child's progress along a continuum of growth in reading and writing as well as detailing the specific skills and knowledge expected in key subject areas.

A continuum is simply a list of descriptors which unfolds students' academic behaviors that increase in difficulty through a set of development levels. As the student masters the majority of skills on a given list he/she progresses naturally through levels that are contained within this guide. Therefore a continuum is like a map showing where the child has gone and where he/she will be going. The learning continuum or map has ten different levels of proficiency ranging from Readiness (chooses books to look at, pretends to read, listens to stories) to the Fluent level which includes skills that in some cases high school age students have yet to master.

Most students fall mainly into one level or the other on the continuum for a subject, although there may be some skills at a higher level which they are able to do or some at a lower level which they are still working on. A continuum allows parents, children and teachers to celebrate the progress made with specific skills and provides important opportunities to talk clearly about which skills will require more attention. When the skills listed are accomplished, independently, on a consistent basis we will be aware that the student is making progress. However, there may be some instances when a child remains at a given level for more than a year which is acceptable given that each child progresses at a different rate from their friend or sibling. The educational focus is on comparing the child to the learning goals and not to other children. Given that, the guide does indicate a traditional instructional level that accompanies the continuum but as stated that does not automatically apply to every student as each is unique and progresses at their pace.

This guide offers a support to parents that highlights some of the skills students should acquire as they reach their potential and also presented is an accompanying list of suggestions for families to refer to, so that they can support the important steps our children take during their learning.

Sincerely,
The Teachers and Administrators
of the Morris School District

Readiness:

Characteristics of Readiness Readers:

- Chooses books to look at and has favorites
- Listens to stories
- Understand simple stories
- Retells simple stories
- Pretends to read
- Enjoys shared reading (predictable Big Books)
- Knows names of most letters
- Matches rhyming pictures

Family Support For The Readiness Reader:

- Read books with appealing pictures that match your child's age and interests. Children at this age like books with rhythm, rhyme, and repetition.
- Read aloud daily, even if it's only for 10 minutes. Snuggle up on the couch or hold your child in your lap.
- Reading at bedtime is a wonderful way to end the day.
- Talk about the story and pictures in the books you read together. This time together should be natural and fun.
- Visit bookstores and libraries with your child.
- Encourage children to notice words in their world, such as signs, logos, and labels.
- Listen to familiar simple songs and rhymes.
- Sing together to develop an ear for the sounds of language and rhyme.
- Play letter matching games

Characteristics of Readiness Writers:

- Uses paints, clay or other materials to form letters
- Draws 4 basic shapes (circle, square, rectangle, triangle)
- Uses illustrations to write
- Begins to copy words from the environment
- Demonstrates some letter/sound connections
- Pretends to read “own spelling”
- Pretends to read various books, newspapers, etc.
- Begins to demonstrate print awareness (top-bottom, left-right)
- Prints first name
- Sing familiar songs & rhymes to promote oral language

Family Support For The Readiness Writer:

- Read aloud to your child on a regular basis. By listening to books, young children begin to understand that print carries meaning.
- Provide writing materials (such as paper, pens, chalkboard, markers) and a corner or area for writing. You might want to have a writing box with paper, markers, and crayons in one convenient place.
- Provide magnetic letters on the refrigerator and plastic letters in the bathtub so your child can play with letters and words.
- Respond to your child’s awareness of the writing around them (“Wow, how did you know that said K-Mart? That’s great reading!”).
- Respond enthusiastically to early attempts at writing.
- When your child draws, scribbles, or writes random letters label the writing or drawing and have the child read back the few words you write.

Preconventional Stage:

Characteristics of Preconventional Readers:

- Begins to choose reading materials (e.g., books, magazines, and charts) and has favorites.
- Shows interest in reading signs, labels, and logos.
- Recognizes own name in print.
- Holds book and turns pages correctly.
- Shows beginning/end of book or story.
- Knows all letter names.
- Listens and responds to literature.
- Comments on illustrations in books.
- Participates in reading (books, rhymes, poems, and songs).
- Begins to rhyme words.

Family Support For The Preconventional Reader:

- Read books with appealing pictures that match your child's age and interests. Children at this age like books with rhythm, rhyme, and repetition.
- Have a cozy reading corner that invites reading.
- Read aloud daily, even if it's only for 10 minutes. Snuggle up on the couch or hold your child in your lap.
- Reading at bedtime is a wonderful way to end the day.
- Talk about the story and pictures in the books you read together. This time together should be natural and fun.
- Encourage risk-taking as children learn to read and memorize their first books. Have your child chime in on repeated lines or a chorus.
- Respond enthusiastically to early attempts at reading. Never say, "She's not reading. She has just memorized the book." Memorizing is one of the first steps in learning to read.
- Play with magnetic letters on the refrigerator or plastic letters in the tub.
- Encourage children to notice words in their world, such as signs, logos, and labels.
- Help your child learn to recognize his or her name in print.
- Share your love of books and reading.
- Sing together to develop an ear for the sounds of language and rhyme.
- Tell stories together.
- Visit bookstores and libraries with your child.
- Take your child to hear authors or storytellers at bookstores or the library.
- Make singing and talking together part of your daily routine.
- Watch TV shows together, such as Sesame Street, that incorporate reading and books.
- Buy or make tapes of favorite songs and books to listen to at home or in the car.

Characteristics of Preconventional Writers:

- Relies primarily on pictures to convey meaning.
- Begins to label and add “words” to pictures.
- Writes name correctly.
- Demonstrates awareness that print conveys meaning.
- Makes marks other than drawing on paper (scribbles).
- Writes random recognizable letters to represent words.
- Pretends to read own writing.
- Tells about own pictures and writing.
- Holds pencils, crayons, markers correctly.

Family Support For The Preconventional Writer:

- Model everyday writing (such as lists, letters, notes). Ask your child to add a word or picture.
- Keep a grocery list on the refrigerator. Have your child add to the list.
- Share letters and birthday and holiday cards.
- Take pictures and make a book about your child as he or she grows up.
- Invite your child to write along with you when you’re writing lists or letters.
- Have your child dictate a story to you and make it into a simple book.
- Play with language by singing, pointing out signs, rhyming words, and talking about words and letters.
- When your child draws, scribbles, or writes random letters, ask him or her to tell you about the writing or drawing.
- Encourage risk-taking as your child learns to write and experiments with letters and words.
- Encourage your child to label drawings with a word or letter and sign his/her name.
- Respond enthusiastically to early attempts at writing.

Early Emergent:

Characteristics of Early Emergent Readers:

- Memorizes pattern books, poems, and familiar books.
- Begins to read signs, labels, and logos.
- Demonstrates eagerness to read independently.
- Uses illustrations to tell stories.
- Reads top to bottom, left to right, and front to back with consistency.
- Knows all letter names and some initial consonant letter sounds.
- Recognizes some names and words in context.
- Begins to make meaningful predictions.
- Rhymes and plays with words.
- Participates in reading of familiar books and poems.
- Connects books read aloud to own experiences with guidance.

Family Support For The Emerging Reader:

- Read aloud daily to your child.
- Make a cozy place to read at home.
- Talk about the books and materials you read with your child. Model reading.
- Go to the library regularly and visit bookstores. The people who work there can often help you find just the right books for your child.
- Check out books on tape from the library. Listen to them at bedtime or in the car.
- Take books everywhere you go. Keep books in the car and in every room.
- Write notes to your child (in his or her lunchbox, on the bed, on the mirror, or under the pillow) using simple words.
- Read picture books with predictable patterns and rhymes and familiar stories.
- Re-read favorite stories and poems.
- Encourage your child to chime in as you read stories, sing songs, or recite poems.
- Celebrate early memorizing as reading.
- Point out words around you (such as signs, logos, commercials, and billboards).
- Tell stories and ask family members and friends to tell stories.
- Encourage your child to tell stories from pictures in magazines and newspapers.
- Tape record your child telling stories. Send the tape to relatives or friends.

Characteristics of Early Emerging Writers:

- Uses pictures and print to convey meaning.
- Writes words to describe or support pictures.
- Copies signs, labels, names, and words.
- Demonstrates understanding of letter/ sound relationship.
- Experiments with capital letters when writing
- Matches letters to sounds
- Uses beginning consonants to make words.
- Uses beginning and ending consonants to make words.
- Reads own writing.
- Sees self as writer.
- Takes risks with writing.

Family Support For The Early Emergent Writer:

- Read aloud to your child on a regular basis. Reading provides the foundation for writing and builds vocabulary.
- Provide writing materials where your child can get them easily.
- Invite your child to write alongside you as you use daily writing.
- Keep a family calendar where you and your child can write down upcoming events and things to remember.
- Encourage invented spelling rather than spelling the words for your child, so he or she can become an independent writer (Ask, "What sounds do you hear?").
- Encourage your child to label things in his/her room or around the house.
- Encourage your child to write the names of family and friends.
- Encourage your child to add pictures and a few words to thank you notes or cards.
- Play letter/ word recognition games while driving ("Let's look for things that start with 'p' or look for license plates from different states.")
- Cut up words and letters from magazines and glue them together to make words and sentences.

Emergent:

Characteristics of Emerging Readers:

- Chooses to read independently.
- Reads books with simple patterns.
- Reads silently without interruption for at least 10 minutes.
- Is eager to read books out loud to others.
- Knows all letter sounds.
- Blends letters together in an attempt to read words of varying difficulty.
- Can make meaningful predictions.
- Rhymes and plays with words.
- Participates in reading of familiar books and poems.
- Connects books read aloud to own experiences and asks related questions.
- Has favorite books based on theme or characters.

Family Support For The Emergent Reader:

- Ask your child to guess what will happen next as you read aloud.
- Reinforce early reading attempts without correcting mistakes.
- Ask questions about what you read to help your child connect books with their life and experiences.
- Read different things aloud in addition to stories (such as recipes, letters, and directions).
- Provide time each night for your child to read on his or her own (10-15 minutes).
- Find books with patterns, rhythm, and rhyme that help children as they first begin to read on their own.
- Talk about authors, illustrators, or interesting words.
- Take books everywhere you go. Keep books in the car and in every room.
- Write notes to your child (in his or her lunchbox, on the bed, on the mirror, or under the pillow) using simple words.
- Be supportive as your child reads his or her first I Can Read chapter books.
- Read picture books with predictable patterns and rhymes and familiar stories.
- Ask friends and relatives to give books as gifts.
- Watch educational TV shows together.
- Re-read favorite stories and poems.

Characteristics of Emerging Writers:

- Uses capital letters appropriately when writing.
- Other people can read their simple stories.
- Writes sentences.
- Writes top to bottom, left to right and front to back.
- Uses spaces between words.
- Spells words on the basis of sounds and patterns with some success.
- Make “word cards” of the words your child can read.

Family Support For The Emergent Writer:

- Read aloud to your child on a regular basis. Reading provides the foundation for writing and builds vocabulary.
- Provide writing materials where your child can get them easily.
- Provide Post-it notes for lists and notes.
- Invite your child to write alongside you as you use daily writing. (“Could you write that for me on the grocery list?” “Why don’t you put a sign on the door?” “Stick a Post-it note on the refrigerator so we don’t forget.”)
- Demonstrate the many ways you use writing as you make lists, address envelopes, pay bills, and write notes and letters.
- Keep a family calendar where you and your child can write down upcoming events and things to remember.
- Encourage invented spelling rather than spelling the words for your child, so he or she can become an independent writer (Ask, “What sounds do you hear?”).
- Encourage your child to label things in his/her room or around the house.
- Encourage your child to write the names of family and friends.
- Encourage your child to add pictures and a few words to thank you notes or cards.
- Create a message center with a bulletin board or slots for mail. Encourage your child to write notes to members of the family.
- Play letter/word recognition games while driving. (“Let’s look for things that start with ‘p’ or look for license plates from different states.”)
- Cut up words and letters from magazines and glue them together to make words and sentences.

Beginning:

Characteristics of Beginning Readers

- Retells stories with beginning, middle and end.
- Begins to read independently for short periods (10-15 minutes).
- Discusses favorite reading material with others.
- Uses finger-print-voice matching.
- Knows letter sounds and letter clusters.
- Uses growing awareness of sound segments (e.g., phonemes, syllables, rhymes) to read words.
- Makes meaningful predictions.
- Identifies titles and authors in literature.
- Retells story events with detail.
- Sees self as reader.
- Explains why certain literature is liked / disliked.

Family Support For The Beginning Reader:

- Subscribe to a magazine (such as Sesame Street, Ranger Rick) and read it together.
- Visit bookstores and libraries regularly.
- Make “word cards” of the words your child can read. Make sentences with the words. The focus is on “playing with the words” rather than drilling!
- Encourage your child to read to a friend, children in your family, or other relatives.
- As you read together, ask your child to predict what might happen next or talk about how the book relates to your child’s life.
- Once in awhile, make a mistake while you’re reading and problem-solve with your child about how to figure out what would make more sense.
- Talk about the characters in the books you read. Ask questions, such as, “Does that character remind you of anyone you know or a character in another book?”
- After reading a story aloud, retell it in your own words with your child’s help.
- Keep a list of “Favorite Books We’ve Read” or a wish list of “Books to Buy.”
- Ask friends and relatives to give books as gifts.
- Read the Sunday comics with your child.
- Watch educational TV shows together.
- Expose your child to computer games related to reading (such as Reader Rabbit and Magic Schoolbus).

Characteristics of Beginning Writers:

- Writes a story with beginning, middle and end.
- Writes names and familiar words.
- Generates own ideas for writing.
- Intermixes and experiments with punctuation.
- Uses appropriate spacing between words.
- Uses growing awareness of sound segments (e.g., phonemes, syllables, rhymes) to write words.
- Uses beginning, middle and ending sounds to make words.
- Begins to read own writing and revises with guidance.
- Spells priority words correctly.

Family Support For The Beginning Writer:

- Read aloud to your child on a regular basis. Reading helps children develop an ear for language and a love of reading.
- Make a writing center with Post-it notes, paper, stickers, staplers, pencils, and pencil sharpener. Try to include inviting paper and bright pens or colorful markers.
- Make or buy an alphabet strip with upper and lower case letters to put in a writing area or on a desk.
- Display your child's artwork and writing.
- Leave simple notes in your child's lunchbox, under the pillow, on the mirror, or on the refrigerator.
- Encourage the use of your child's own spelling (invented spelling) so he or she can become an independent writer. When asked, "How do you spell that?", encourage your child to write the sound he or she hears.
- Involve your child in writing party invitations, name tags, thank you notes, valentines, holiday cards, etc. Be sure to plan ahead enough so your child will have lots of time.
- Make simple books together after a trip, about your family, or about a subject your child finds interesting.
- Ask your child to tell you about the work that comes home from school. Have your child read to you what he or she has written. Focus on content.

Early Developing:

Characteristics of Early Developing Readers

- Selects just right books independently.
- Relies on print more than illustration.
- Reads and follows simple directions with guidance.
- Uses basic punctuation when reading orally.
- Reads independently for 15-20 minutes.
- Uses meaning cues (context).
- Uses letter sounds and patterns (phonics).
- Retells beginning, middle, and end from memory.
- Reads with increasing fluency often chunking phrases together.

Family Support For The Early Developing Reader:

- Read aloud daily. Your child might be ready for you to read a chapter book aloud, a chapter or two each night. Children also enjoy picture books, nonfiction, and joke books.
- Begin to read series books. If you read a few, children will often read the rest of the series on their own.
- Read poems, magazines, cartoons, recipes, maps, and nonfiction, as well as fiction.
- Provide time each night for your child to read on his or her own (15-20 minutes).
- Help your child find books at the right reading level, since at this stage children need lots of practice to become fluent readers. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions.
- Visit bookstores and libraries regularly.
- Be supportive as your child reads his or her chapter books. Help with difficult words so your child can keep the flow of the story.
- Encourage your child to re-read a sentence when it doesn't make sense.
- Ask your child to retell a story you have read together.
- Point out ways to figure out words in addition to "sounding it out" (such as looking at the picture, breaking the word into smaller words, reading on, or thinking what would make sense).

Characteristics of Early Developing Writers

- Writes several detailed sentences in stories.
- Writes in varying genres, e.g., poetry, personal narrative, letters.
- Begins to take risks in writing, e.g., adding speech.
- Incorporates suggestions from other people into writing.
- Moves towards using conventional spelling.
- Writes legibly.
- Uses appropriate spaces between words consistently.
- Set simple writing goals with guidance.
- Moving towards the use of patterns and word meaning to assist with spelling.

Family Support For The Early Developing Writer:

- Read aloud to your child on a regular basis. Reading helps children develop an ear for language and a love of reading.
- Make a writing center with Post-it notes, paper, stickers, staplers, pencils, and pencil sharpener. Try to include inviting paper and bright pens or colorful markers.
- Display your child's artwork and writing.
- Make lists of jobs, friends, birthdays, favorite restaurants, good jokes, etc.
- Encourage your child to write notes and reminders ("Why don't you add that to the message board, refrigerator, or calendar?").
- Involve your child in writing party invitations, name tags, thank you notes, valentines, holiday cards, etc. Be sure to plan ahead enough so your child will have lots of time.
- Have your children send friends postcards when you're on a trip. Be sure to take stamps and their addresses with you.
- Tell "add-on" stories as you hike or on a car trip.
- Make simple books together after a trip, about your family, or about a subject your child finds interesting.
- Show your child how you use writing in your job and in daily life.
- Ask your child to tell you about the work that comes home from school. Have your child read to you what he or she has written. Focus on content.
- Encourage risk-taking and the use of invented spelling as your child first writes. This helps your child express ideas and feelings independently without becoming discouraged by the mechanics of writing.
- Save your child's work and compare with earlier writing to point out and celebrate growth.

Developing:

Characteristics of Developing Readers:

- Reads simple chapter books.
- Reads and follows written directions independently.
- Begins to read aloud with fluency.
- Identifies basic genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, and poetry).
- Uses punctuation when reading orally.
- Reads independently for 15-25 minutes.
- Chooses reading materials independently.
- Learns and shares information from reading.
- Uses sentence cues when reading.
- Recognizes word endings, common contractions, and many high frequency words.
- Begins to self-correct.
- Retells beginning, middle, and end with details, from memory.
- Discusses characters and story events with guidance.
- Identifies own reading behaviors.

Family Support For The Developing Reader:

- Read aloud daily. Your child might be ready for you to read a chapter book aloud, a chapter or two each night. Children also enjoy picture books, nonfiction, and joke books.
- Begin to read series books. If you read a few, children will often read the rest of the series on their own.
- Read poems, magazines, cartoons, recipes, maps, and nonfiction, as well as fiction.
- Provide time each night for your child to read on his or her own (15-20 minutes).
- Help your child find books at the right reading level, since at this stage children need lots of practice to become fluent readers. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions.
- Visit bookstores and libraries regularly.
- Talk about books you enjoyed when you were little.
- Give books as gifts.
- Be supportive as your child reads. Help with difficult words and their meaning.
- Ask your child to make predictions as you read a story. ("What do you think this story will be about?" "What do you think will happen next?")
- Encourage your child to re-read a sentence when it doesn't make sense.
- Ask your child to retell a story you have read together.
- Point out ways to figure out words in addition to "sounding it out" (such as looking at the picture, breaking the word into smaller words, reading on, or thinking what would make sense).
- Point out punctuation as you read aloud. ("Oops, an exclamation mark! I'd better read that a little louder.")
- Talk about the strategies you use as a reader when you're looking for a book, when you come across a word you don't know, or want to learn more about something.

Characteristics of Developing Writers:

- Writes about observations, feelings, opinions and experiences.
- Writes short nonfiction pieces (simple facts about a topic).
- Chooses own writing topics.
- Reads own writing and notices mistakes with guidance.
- Writes legibly.
- Writes pieces that are published for others to read.
- Uses phonetic spelling to write independently.
- Spells priority words correctly.
- Edits for correct use of punctuation and grammar.

Family Support For The Developing Writer:

- Read chapter books aloud to your child. Anticipating the next installment each night is motivating!
- Keep materials for writing available (old checks, music paper, telephone message pads, paper, chalk and chalkboard, markers, pens, and pencils).
- Encourage letter writing (pick a friend or relative who will answer!).
- If you have a computer, encourage your child to email friends and relatives.
- Keep a family journal of trips, favorite restaurants, funny stories, visitors, movies, etc. Ask your child to add comments and reactions.
- Make a family joke book. Check out joke books from the library and add your favorites.
- Have your child read you what he/she has written. Respond first to the content and ideas. At this stage, a child's confidence and attitude about writing are very important.
- Share your thinking as you write.
- Correct your child's spelling or punctuation only if asked. Focus on only one skill so your child doesn't become overwhelmed.
- Save your child's quality school work and art and keep it in a book or folder. Be sure to date the work and call attention to changes and growth.

Bridging:

Characteristics of Bridging Readers

- Reads a wide variety of chapter books.
- Chooses, reads, and finishes a variety of materials at appropriate level with guidance.
- Reads silently for increasingly longer periods (20-30 minutes).
- Uses reading strategies appropriately, depending on the text and purpose.
- Uses word structure cues (e.g. prefixes, word chunks) when encountering unknown words.
- Increases vocabulary by using mean cues (context).
- Self-corrects for meaning.
- Follows multi step written directions.
- Identifies chapter titles and table of contents (text organizers).
- Summarizes and retells story events in sequential order.
- Responds to and makes personal connections with facts, characters, and situations.
- Compares and contrasts characters and story events.
- “Reads between the lines” making inferences.
- Identifies own reading strategies and sets goals with guidance.

Family Support For The Bridging Reader:

- Keep reading to your child, even when he or she can read independently.
- Provide time for your child to read at night (15-30 minutes).
- Encourage your child to practice reading aloud to siblings, relatives, or senior citizens.
- Use the public library for storyteller sessions, books on tape, book lists, and recommendations.
- Children at this age often delve into series books, such as Goosebumps, Nancy Drew, The Baby-Sitter’s Club or Animorphs. This comfort zone helps build fluency. Go to the library so your child can get the next book in the series!
- Look for books that match your child’s interests. (Bookstore staff, librarians, and your child’s teacher can help you.)
- Talk about how you select books and the types of things you like to read.
- Have your child keep a list of books he or she finishes or would like as gifts.
- Help your child learn how to find information in books.
- Model how you look up words you don’t know in a dictionary.
- Subscribe to children’s magazines, such as Kid City, Ranger Rick, or Contact Kids.
- Talk about the characters from books, movies, and television programs.
- Read and compare several versions of a story (such as a fairy tale or folktale).
- When your child reads aloud and makes a mistake, don’t correct your child right away. Provide enough time for your child to self-correct.
- Talk with your child about his/her reading strategies. Give positive encouragement.
- Play word games, such as Boggle, Hangman, or Junior Scrabble.
- Cook together. Ask your child to read and explain the directions.
- Ask relatives to send your child postcards when they go on trips.

Characteristics of Bridging Writers

- Writes a variety of fiction and non-fiction pieces genres (e.g., facts about a topic, letters, lists).
- Writes with a central idea and voice.
- Organizes ideas in a logical sequence in fiction and non-fiction genres.
- Begins to recognize and use interesting detailed, figurative language.
- Uses several pre-writing strategies (e.g., web, brainstorm).
- Listens to others' writing and offers feedback.
- Takes risks when writing to engage the reader.
- Publishes own writing.
- Writes legibly.
- Spells high frequency words correctly and moves toward the use of base words, meanings and derivatives to support spelling of unfamiliar words.
- Identifies own writing strategies and sets goals with guidance.

Family Support For The Bridging Writer:

- Read chapter books aloud to your child. Reading provides a model of story structure.
- Talk about lovely language, descriptions, and details in the books you read together.
- Point out the beginning, middle, and end of stories. Discuss the exciting parts or parts that made you want to read more.
- Provide empty notebooks or blank books to use as journals or diaries.
- Keep Post-it notes in the car and around the house for notes and messages.
- If you have a computer, provide writing programs (such as Creative Writer, Writer Rabbit).
- Give your child a dictionary or use the many online examples.
- Discuss the types of writing you do at home and at work (such as checks, lists, and memos).
- Suggest writing topics (things you've done as a family, family stories, trips).
- Make books together about trips, events, holidays, and your family.
- Encourage your child to make books about their interests (such as electronic games, soccer, horses).
- Encourage your child to write to friends and relatives who will answer promptly.
- Respond to the ideas and content first when your child shares his or her writing.
- Point out patterns in English as your child tries to spell challenging words.
- When asked, help your child by focusing on one skill at a time.
- Be encouraging as your child tackles longer writing pieces and begins to revise and edit.
- Be a supportive audience for your child's writing.

Expanding:

Characteristics of Expanding Readers

- Reads some of the more complex chapter books.
- Chooses reading materials at appropriate reading level.
- Expands knowledge of different genres (e.g., realistic fiction, historical fiction, and fantasy).
- Reads aloud with expression.
- Uses resources (e.g., Internet, encyclopedias, CD-ROMS, and nonfiction texts) to locate and sort information with guidance.
- Gathers information by using the table of contents, captions, glossary, and index (text organizers) with guidance.
- Gathers information from graphs, charts, tables and maps with guidance.
- Increases vocabulary by using context cues, other reading strategies, and resources (e.g., dictionary and thesaurus) with guidance.
- Demonstrates understanding of the difference between fact and opinion.
- Discusses setting, plot, characters, and point of view (literary elements) with guidance.
- Responds to issues and ideas in literature as well as facts or story events.
- Makes connections to other authors, books, and perspectives.
- Uses reasons and examples to support ideas and opinions.

Family Support For The Expanding Reader:

- Continue reading aloud to your child. You can model fluent reading.
- Provide a reading routine when everyone in the family reads (30-40 minutes).
- Invite your child to read more challenging books, as well as books at his/her level.
- Encourage your child to try new genres or reading (poetry, fantasy, and non-fiction).
- Have your child keep a list of "Books I've Read" or "Favorite Books."
- Talk together about why you like or dislike certain books or authors.
- Talk about interesting words and language.
- Look up new words together in a dictionary.
- Talk about the characters, theme, and exciting or favorite parts in movies or books.
- Go to a local children's theatre. If the play is based on a book, read it together before you go, then compare the book and the play.
- Encourage your child to read aloud a favorite book, poem, or story to friends, relatives, or to younger children.
- Subscribe to children's magazines that match your child's interests, such as Sports Illustrated for Kids, American Girl, or Zillions: Consumer Reports for Kids.
- Discuss facts and opinions about community events or world news.
- When your child asks questions, seek answers together in books, encyclopedias, the newspaper, or on the Internet.

Characteristics of Expanding Writers

- Writes persuasively about feelings and opinions.
- Writes fiction with creative plot, problem and solution.
- Writes poetry using carefully chosen language.
- Writes organized nonfiction pieces (e.g., reports, letters, and lists).
- Uses strong verbs, interesting language and dialogue.
- Seeks feedback on writing.
- Revises for clarity with guidance.
- Uses resources (e.g., thesaurus and word lists) to make writing more effective.
- Edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar.
- Publishes writing in polished format with guidance.
- Increases use of visual strategies, spelling patterns, and knowledge of word meaning to spell correctly.
- Uses criteria for effective writing to set own writing goals.

Family Support For The Expanding Writer:

- Read chapter books aloud to your child. Don't stop reading aloud when your child can read independently! Introduce your child to new authors and genres.
- As you read aloud, talk about the author's style and what makes powerful writing.
- Provide blank books for a personal journal (the ones with a key are particularly appealing at this age) as well as stamps, stationery, and writing materials.
- Purchase a dictionary and thesaurus and show your child how to use them.
- Point out words that are related (such as "sign" and "signal").
- Talk about root words, prefixes, and suffixes that help children see the patterns of English spelling.
- If you have a computer, show your child how to use email, the spell checker, and the Internet.
- Read a poem once a week at dinner. Let family members take turns picking poems.
- Encourage your child to write and/or perform plays at home.
- Help your child learn how to research a topic using the computer, nonfiction books, and magazine articles, as well as the encyclopedia. Encourage your child to take notes in his or her own words.
- Play word games, such as Jr. Scrabble, Yahtzee, or informal word games with similes and alliteration.
- On final drafts, help your child revise for meaning first. Revision involves communicating and presenting the ideas logically. Editing for spelling and punctuation come after revision. Leave the pencil in your child's hands!
- Help with a few skills at a time so revision doesn't become overwhelming. Revising and editing are challenging for young writers.

Fluent:

Characteristics of Fluent Readers:

- Reads challenging young adolescent books.
- Selects, reads, and finishes a wide variety of genres.
- Begins to develop strategies and criteria for selecting reading materials.
- Reads aloud with fluency, expression, and confidence.
- Reads silently for extended periods (30-40 minutes).
- Uses resources (e.g., encyclopedias, articles, Internet, and nonfiction texts) to locate information.
- Gathers information using the table of contents, captions, glossary, and index (text organizers) independently.
- Uses resources (e.g., dictionary and thesaurus) to increase vocabulary in different subject areas.
- Begins to discuss literature with reference to theme.
- Generates thoughtful oral and written responses in small group literature discussions.
- Uses new vocabulary in different subjects and in oral and written response to literature.
- Begins to gain deeper meaning by “reading between the lines.”
- Begins to set goals and identifies strategies to improve reading.

Family Support For The Fluent Reader:

- Continue reading aloud to your child. Reading together opens the door for conversation about reading and life.
- Provide time for your child to read (30-40 minutes per day) on a regular basis. Research shows a direct correlation between how much a student reads during the day and reading achievement and success in school.
- Provide a quiet place for homework, writing and reading.
- Listen to books on tape in the car, especially on long trips.
- Visit the public library regularly to check out books and tapes and to find information.
- Help your child find books. Keep up with new children’s books by talking to teachers, friends, librarians, and bookstore staff. Encourage your child to try new genres and types of books.
- Read book reviews in newspapers and magazines, then look for those books in the library.
- Talk about the books and materials you read and how you find new books.
- Help your child find information in books, in articles, and on Internet.
- Look up the meaning of an interesting word together. Talk about the interesting words you find as you read.
- Ask your child to read aloud a favorite book, poem or story into a tape recorder and send the tape to a younger child far away as a gift.
- Encourage your child to participate in community programs that include reading and writing, such as writing contests, summer reading programs, or reading to younger children at the library.
- Point out what your child does well as a reader and celebrate successes.

Characteristics of Fluent Writers

- Continues to write organized fiction and nonfiction (e.g., reports, letters, biographies, and autobiographies).
- Develops stories with interesting characters, descriptive settings and plots that include problems and solutions.
- Writes poetry using carefully chosen language.
- Experiment with complex sentence structure.
- Varies leads and endings.
- Takes risks in writing e.g., uses metaphors, similes, dialogue with guidance.
- Uses a range of strategies for planning writing.
- Adapts writing for purpose and audience with guidance.
- Revises for specific writing traits (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions) with guidance.
- Incorporates suggestions from others about own writing with guidance.
- Edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar with greater precision.
- Uses tools (e.g., dictionaries, word lists, and spell checkers) to edit with guidance.
- Develops criteria for effective writing in different genres with guidance.

Family Support For The Fluent Writer:

- Read chapter books aloud to your child. Read young adult novels that spark great discussions. Talk about point of view and the author's style.
- Help your child learn to locate information in encyclopedias, on the Internet, and in nonfiction materials.
- Do crossword puzzles together.
- Encourage your child to send editorials or letters to the editor with opinions, reactions, or concerns. Receiving a response can be very motivating.
- Have your child collect family stories and make them into a book as a gift.
- Encourage your child to write to favorite authors. (You can write to authors in care of the publisher. The publisher's address is near the copyright date at the front of the book.) Be sure to include a return envelope and postage.
- Discuss movies and TV shows together. Talk about the writer's or director's decisions and choices. Compare the book and the movie versions if available.

Continued Reading Growth:

- Reads complex children’s literature.
- Reads and understands informational texts (e.g., maps, want ads, brochures, schedules, catalogs, and manuals, etc.) with guidance.
- Develops strategies and criteria for selecting reading materials independently.
- Uses resources (e.g., encyclopedias, articles, Internet, and nonfiction texts) to locate information independently.
- Gathers and analyzes information from graphs, charts, tables, and maps with guidance.
- Integrates information from multiple nonfiction sources to deepen understanding of a topic with guidance.
- Uses resources (e.g., similes, metaphors, personification, and foreshadowing).
- Discusses literature with reference to theme, author’s purpose, and style (literary elements), and author’s craft.
- Begins to generate in-depth responses in small group literature discussions
- Begins to generate in-depth written responses to literature.
- Uses increasingly complex vocabulary in different subjects and in oral and written response to literature.
- Uses reasons and examples to support ideas and conclusions.
- Probes for deeper meaning by “reading between the lines” in response to literature.

Continual Family Support

- Continue reading aloud to your child. Read young adult novels together. It’s an important way to stay connected as your child grows into adolescence.
- Read the newspaper and magazines and discuss articles together.
- Provide a quiet place for homework, writing, and reading.
- Help your child make time for reading and set goals as a reader.
- Visit the public library regularly to check out books and do research.
- Help your child find books. Keep up with new young adult and children’s books by talking to teachers, friends, librarians, and bookstore staff. Read some of the books yourself so you can talk about them with your child.
- Join a parent/child book club.
- Collect books by a favorite author. Have your child write to the author. Send the letter to the publisher listed near the copyright information in the front of the book.
- Encourage wide reading of different genres and types of texts.
- Provide support as your child begins to read informational texts in different subject areas.
- Do crossword puzzles together.
- Discuss the concepts, symbols, well-written passages, and the author’s craft as you read. Reading a book together also provides an opportunity to talk about issues.
- Talk about deeper levels of meaning in song lyrics.
- Talk about multiple perspectives and the complexity of issues in the news.

Continued Writing Growth:

- Begins to develop the main characters and describe detailed settings.
- Begins to write organized and fluent nonfiction, including simple bibliographies.
- Writes cohesive paragraphs including reasons and examples with guidance.
- Uses transitional sentences to connect paragraphs.
- Varies sentence structure, leads, and endings.
- Uses descriptive language, details, and similes.
- Uses voice to evoke emotional response from readers.
- Begins to integrate information on a topic from a variety of sources.
- Begins to revise for specific writing traits (e.g., ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions).
- Uses tools (e.g., dictionaries, word lists, spell checkers) to edit independently.
- Selects and publishes writing in polished format independently.
- Uses complex punctuation (e.g., commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks) appropriately.
- Sets goals and identifies strategies to improve writing in different genres.

Continual Family Support:

- Read chapter books aloud to your child. Read young adult novels that spark great discussions. Talk about point of view and the author's style.
- Help your child learn to locate information in encyclopedias, on the Internet, and in nonfiction materials.
- Do crossword puzzles together.
- Encourage your child to send editorials or letters to the editor with opinions, reactions, or concerns. Receiving a response can be very motivating.
- Have your child collect family stories and make them into a book as a gift.
- Encourage your child to write to favorite authors. (You can write to authors in care of the publisher. The publisher's address is near the copyright date at the front of the book.) Be sure to include a return envelope and postage.
- Discuss movies and TV shows together. Talk about the writer's or director's decisions and choices. Compare the book and the movie versions if available.

Notes:

