



Dear New Bedford Family,

We're excited to announce our Citywide Literacy Initiative! We've teamed up with Scholastic, the global publisher of children's books and educational resources, to provide you with the knowledge, tools, and books to support your children's literacy development. Many Community Partners in New Bedford have also joined us in our shared commitment to promoting literacy throughout our city.

We want to empower your family to engage in literacy activities at home, at school, and in the community. In this resource you will find several easy-to-use guides to support literacy from birth:

[Ages & Stages: Birth–Age 8 Literacy Milestones](#)

[Early Literacy: Reading at Home & Beyond](#)

[Family Engagement: Guidance & Community Resources](#)

Literacy is far-ranging and multifaceted. It isn't just alphabet knowledge and sounding out words—though it does include those! Literacy encompasses everything from reading and writing to listening, speaking, understanding pictures, and communicating ideas effectively. Literacy is essential to our daily lives and to understanding the world around us.

Enjoy your children's growth and celebrate their successes!

Sincerely,

Mayor Jon Mitchell

In Collaboration with



Ages & Stages

Birth–Age 8 Literacy Milestones



Read aloud to your child from birth! This chart can help guide your reading practices and literacy activities at home and in your community. Always remember to be patient and encouraging. Children who read early read for life.

Ages	Milestones	What You Can Do	What to Read
birth–1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> smiles, babbles, and coos likes pictures of baby faces responds to own name grasps and throws books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> talk, sing, read, and play point and name things play games cuddle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> board books cloth books books with baby faces nursery rhymes
1–2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> turns board book pages gives books to adults for read-alouds points and names pictures says single words and short phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> smile and answer your child let your child turn pages use books in family routines: naptime, playtime, in the car, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> board books rhyming books picture books books that name things
2–3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> turns paper pages starts to scribble names familiar objects completes familiar rhymes and sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ask questions talk about the pictures let your child choose books be willing to read the same book again and again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rhyming books search and find books picture books that tell stories
3–5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes numbers and letters recites phrases from books can retell familiar stories “reads” to stuffed animals can listen longer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relate stories to your child’s life make up stories together ask your child to tell a story find books about your child’s interests encourage writing and drawing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> alphabet books counting books fairy tales and legends picture books with longer stories
6–8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maps sounds to letters asks questions uses visual clues sounds out unfamiliar words begins to read smoothly rereads and makes predictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> play games with words show that reading is valuable to you read aloud more difficult books encourage independent reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> books about your child’s interests books at the right level a variety of text types (poems, nonfiction, stories, comics, etc.)

Sources & Resources: <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/> | <http://www.readoutandread.org/> | <https://edlkc.o.hhs.gov/hslr/hls/sr/approach/elcfl> | <http://www.gomaisa.org/sites/default/files/Pre-K%20Literacy%20Essentials%202016.pdf> | <http://www.readingrockets.org/> | <http://www.kidshhealth.org/en/parents/milestones> | <http://www.pbs.org/parents/child-development/>

Early Literacy

Reading at Home & Beyond

Text, text everywhere! From the minute you wake up, just think of how many things you read: newspapers, street signs, emails—the list goes on! There are countless opportunities for you to get your children reading at home and in your community. Be creative!

Early Literacy Skills to Develop

Foundational reading and writing skills that develop from birth to third grade are a strong indicator for successful high-level literacy skills later in life.

Concepts of print

Learn about the physical aspects of texts: that the book has a front and back, that we read from left to right in English, that letters make up words, and that both words and pictures convey meaning.

Phonological awareness

Learn new words: pay attention to their different sounds and separate them out to spell. *Sheep* has three sounds: /sh/, /ee/, and /p/. Have fun with rhymes!

Oral language

Learn to talk and communicate as well as listen and understand.

Letter-sound knowledge

Learn the alphabet: the sounds of the letters and the way they look.

Comprehension

Make sense of the world around us: what we see, read, and hear. Think about what we know, how it relates to the new information presented, and how the information is presented by the speaker or author.

Writing

Learn to scribble, draw, and write, as we venture to express meaning through writing.

Word knowledge

Learn new words! The more words we hear, the more robust our vocabulary will be.

Literacy at Home

Increase your child's literacy by having lots of print materials available at home—books, magazines, newspapers, etc. Create spaces for reading and have some materials for drawing and writing too.

Literacy in the kitchen

Read recipes, talk about school, go through the mail together, have conversations at meals.

Literacy in the living room

Play games, give performances, talk about what's on TV.

Literacy in the bedroom

Read at bedtime and encourage pretend play.

Literacy in unexpected places

Read in the bathroom and even in the laundry room!

Literacy in the Community

When you're out and about, or waiting at an appointment, look at the text around you.

- Go on an alphabet hunt! Search for alphabet letters while running errands.
- Read street and traffic signs, business signs, park signs, restaurant menus, transportation schedules, maps—anything you see!
- Make grocery lists and shop together!

Early Literacy

Reading at Home & Beyond



Reading aloud to children is an incredibly memorable and rewarding experience for everyone involved. Children often love to hear the same story over and over again. Read-alouds can take place at bedtime, outside, on the couch, in the dentist's office, almost anywhere. Literacy activities can also involve games and adventures!

Choosing Books to Read Together

Include your children in your book selection as often as possible. Guide your choices by both their interests and your own. Consider the following:

- Look for authors and illustrators who are well known and well respected for their work.
- Be wary of mass-market books of lesser quality.
- Think about your child's interests and preferences.
- Be mindful of your child's development or reading level.
- Link reading materials to your child's experiences and concerns.
- Read book reviews for more information.
- Ask friends and teachers for recommendations.
- Ask your local librarian or bookseller for advice.
- Give a book a test drive whenever possible.
- Take a book back if it's not right.

Interactive Read-Alouds

Get into it! Show your excitement for reading aloud and your child will pick up on the value you place on reading.

- Let your child pick out books.
- Stop, talk, and explain details.
- Question and comment on the text or pictures.
- Answer children's questions.
- Encourage participation including page-turning.
- Be expressive with different voices, emotions, and actions.

Literacy Activities

Literacy is more than just reading books. Talking, drawing, and singing are simple and effective activities that help build literacy!

At Home

- Read and write recipes at snack time.
- Engage in dramatic play.
- Retell movies and TV shows.
- Sing songs and make up rhymes.

In the Community

- Play I Spy.
- Take literacy walks.
- Play Twenty Questions.
- Go on book picnics.
- Read bus schedules and subway maps.
- Take a trip to the library.

In Collaboration with



Family Engagement

Guidance & Community Resources



Of course, being engaged in your children's education means going to back-to-school nights, parent conferences, and literacy events. It also means building strong relationships and communicating openly with your children's teachers and administrators. Be an advocate for your child!

Community Resources

Of the many resources in New Bedford that support you and your family, these organizations have partnered with us in our shared commitment to promoting literacy throughout our city.

New Bedford Birth to Third Partnership

Boys & Girls Club

Buttonwood Park Zoo

New Bedford Chamber of Commerce

New Bedford Community Services

Dennison Memorial Community Center

Greater New Bedford Early Literacy Consortium

New Bedford Housing Authority

Immigrants' Assistance Center

Joseph Abboud Manufacturing

New Bedford Parks, Recreation, and Beaches

New Bedford Free Public Library

New Bedford Public Schools

Schools on Wheels

Southcoast Health

Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance

(List in formation)

Proven Benefits

Children's academic success is built on the strength of their relationships with the adults in their lives: at home, at school, and in their communities.

Increased family engagement:

- Raises student grades and test scores.
- Increases graduation rates.
- Lowers chronic absenteeism.
- Supports social-emotional skill development.

Family-School Tips

Your participation in your children's education is one of the most important ingredients for their success in school. Here are some tips to help you get more involved.

- Build relationships with teachers and administrators based on mutual trust.
- Reach out to teachers with questions. They want to hear from you!
- Be informed about curriculum content.
- Work together to develop literacy at home and at school.
- Share your children's needs and progress with teachers.
- Attend school events including parent conferences, back-to-school nights, literacy events, and sports and arts events.
- Celebrate your children's growth and successes.
- Join parent and community groups, and build your network.
- Pay attention to local and state announcements for learning opportunities, giveaways, events, and other support.

In Collaboration with

