

Fourth Grade Literacy Skills/Parents

This guide is intended to help you, the parent, understand what your child will be learning and gives suggestions on how to support this learning at home. The first column lists general standards in the Utah State Core Curriculum for Language. The second column, *"Your Child is Learning..."*, lists specific literacy skills in that standard. The third column, *"You Can Help at Home ..."*, has activities you might do as an important part of their literacy achievement.

	Your Child is Learning How to...	You Can Help at Home...
Language Skills	Know why we need to listen with understanding and follow multiple-step directions	Teach your child to listen by <i>being</i> a good listener yourself. Give two and three step directions like "Clear off the table, put the garbage out, then..." Praise him/her when they do what you asked.
	Speak in complete sentences with expression and have good conversations at home.	Model this in talking with your child, and ask questions that cannot be answered "yes" or "no", like: "What have you learned about Utah?" or "Tell me about that computer game you want", and be sure to listen to what he/she says.
	View a variety of media, know the difference between information /entertainment, and identify purpose for watching.	Point out the difference between news, opinions, and accuracy of reports. Talk about current events, sports, characters in popular programs, and enjoy humor in cartoons.
	Participate in class discussions, give reports in class on what he/she learned in science, social studies, or health, and take part in programs presented at school.	Encourage your child to share some interesting collection or report a special event at school. Help him/her speak clearly by rehearsing at home. Retelling a story or giving main ideas about a science project are good activities. Using notes helps. Often adding pictures makes it more interesting.
	Your Child is Learning How to...	You Can Help at Home ...
Spelling	Maintain phonic and spelling skills, including word families, learned in previous grades.	Spell grade- level words that require phonics and/or combining word parts, and common letter combinations to spell new words.
	Use root words with prefixes or suffixes to read and spell longer words. Also learn to read and spell plural words, compound words, common contractions.	Show how <i>beauty</i> changes meaning when spelled <i>beautiful</i> ; <i>believe</i> drops <i>e</i> in <i>believable</i> , and <i>they are</i> may be spelled <i>they're</i> . Have your child make a list of contractions met in reading stories and practice spelling them.
	Know that some words cannot be sounded out and have to be learned by memorizing how to pronounce and spell them. This requires visual memory skills.	Remind your child that most words can be sounded out <i>but</i> we have to just remember how to pronounce and spell many common words such as <i>busy</i> or <i>sure</i> . Writing the words will help them remember how to pronounce and spell them.

	Your Child is Learning How to...	You Can Help at Home...
Vocabulary	Use new vocabulary words learned by listening, talking, and reading advertisements, notices, internet text, newspapers and stories.	Read aloud news events and parts of good stories so your child hears big words like <i>environment</i> or <i>frequently</i> , and learn what they mean. Then he/she will already know the meaning of many words when reading later.
	Read and know the meaning of most grade-level words met in stories and information books. Relate new words and concepts to what he/she already knows to increase vocabulary.	Ask for a list of words that make up half of the words <i>any</i> reader will see in print. Then add grade level vocabulary like <i>resources</i> or <i>several</i> . Many signs use important words to talk about like <i>Automatic Door</i> or <i>Emergency Vehicle Only</i> . Ask for a short list of words that may be taught in social studies, science, and other subjects so you can help your child say them and remember what the word means.
	Add to understanding of words by using the base or root word and adding plurals, prefixes, suffixes, and other word parts.	Begin by adding <i>un, es, er</i> to form words like <i>fewer, watches, and unbelievable</i> ; change <i>lead</i> to <i>leadership</i> . Discuss how this changes the meaning of words. Find other words in his/her assigned reading that require this skill.
	Use context to determine the meaning of new words in print.	Use what you already know when words have several meanings or may be a noun or verb—such as <i>ground, light, or store</i> . Reading the sentence helps him/her know which meaning. This is learned with a lot of easy reading and talking about how our language works. (List of multiple-meaning words is available.)
	Use other resources to learn word meanings such as easy dictionaries or glossaries.	Show him/her how to use the dictionary by looking up words together and letting them see what can be learned from these sources.
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Comprehension	Understand the purpose of reading different print and what the author wants you to learn.	Share the reading you do at work, to learn the news, weather reports, fill out a form, see what is on TV, or even follow a recipe Talk about the reasons we read information, directions, stories.
	Use what he/she already knows to make connections to new information and understand better.	Help your child to see that he/she knows a lot about many things. Begin by saying, “What do you already know about...?” He/she knows more than you might think. This helps him/her put new information with what they know and often makes him/her interested in learning more.
	Ask questions about what he/she is reading or is being read to him/her.	This is an important listening skill and thinking task as it helps your child remember ideas and gain more information to understand better. Get them interested by asking simple questions as your child reads to you: “ <i>What are some of our natural resources?</i> ”, or “ <i>Why is voting important?</i> ”

		Show him/her how to use the beginning <i>question</i> words like <i>how, what, when, who</i> and <i>why</i> .
	Make predictions using picture clues, title, beginning information, and/or prior knowledge. Then see how right you were.	This helps your child use what he/she knows to think about what might happen next. When he/she reads, stop and talk about what has happened in the story so far and predict the next event. This skill means he/she has been listening and learning, and also helps them use what they know or imagine might happen next. It is not as important to be correct, as thinking about what <i>might</i> happen. This is a higher-level thinking skill!
	Make inferences and draw conclusions about what they read.	This happens when your child can tell in their own words what the story or information was about. Begin with a short story and talk about what you learned, liked, or wondered about. Forming mental pictures in your head may help.
	Identify topic, main ideas, and details and summarize what he /she has read.	This skill is really important at every grade level so it needs to be practiced often. Begin by having your child read an easy book about weather, families, friends, or sports. Get him/her to tell you the main idea, and talk about some of the details that help explain it. If he/she has trouble doing this, remind them to go back and read it again, think of what they know, and look for clues that help him/her retell the most important ideas.
	Recognize different structures in text such as problem/solution, compare/contrast, sequence of events, and words that signal this.	Point out that most paragraphs in information text are written in one of these forms. Identifying this is important to comprehend, summarize, and to remember the important facts. Words like <i>because, however, also, finally</i> aid understanding.
	Recognize characters, setting, series of events, and other information when reading fairy tales, information books, and realistic or historical fiction	Family reading a variety of good books—your library has a list—will help comprehension and shared enjoyment more than any activity. As you read, make predictions, talk about good/bad characters, whether the story was real or make-believe, what facts were learned, and how you liked it. Show your child how to do this when reading alone—to stop and think about different ideas that help us learn more from printed text.
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Writing	Think of ideas for writing and who will be the audience.	Write notes to your child about things that need to be done, share letters from friends, show what writing you do at work, and talk about who will be reading what we write. Of course, have him/her develop a list of good email partners from friends, grandparents, and other trusted people.
	Select the right words and compose a <i>draft</i> copy.	Help your child write a letter or a report in complete sentences, with correct punctuation. Work together to make it read better, talk about how to improve it, and then make a few changes.

	Write for different purposes such as stories, letters, and reports.	Point out the difference in these types of writing and tell your child that what he/she can say, they can write. This is important for them to know. Get him/her to tell you a story or what they know about a subject studied in school. Then together write what he/she says so they understand the idea of speech to print.
	Share writing with others, using illustrations if needed, and publish.	This is learned first by sharing with other family and friends. Praise them for this work! If they are going to share it at school, practice at home first so they feel comfortable doing this.
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Fluency	Read grade-level text at a rate of 120-150 words per minute, with 95-100% accuracy.	Fluency is important because if we read too slowly, we don't understand very well. Ask the teacher to give you a list of words that often appear in all kinds of print so you can practice reading these words with your child first, then let him/her practice them alone, with help if needed. This is an ongoing activity for the year. Teachers also have lists of easy phrases on this grade level that will help your child with fluency as reading word-by-word makes comprehension difficult. Each column contains about 75 words so two columns might be read in one minute. (These phrases are on the USOE Core website.)
	Read grade-level text fluently and with expression.	Reading in phrases helps your child to do this. Model this when you read to them, and then have easy, interesting books for more practice