

Dear Family:

A new school year has launched! This year, I will be using a program called ***Fundations® Level 3***. All levels of Fundations provide a systematic and explicit approach to reading and spelling with phonics. In Level 3, emphasis is placed on advanced word structure, spelling, vocabulary, and cursive handwriting. We will combine instruction in these areas with the reading of a wide variety of literature including poetry, narrative, and expository text.

When a child has a **“coach”** in addition to a classroom teacher, the child makes significant academic progress. Let's be a **“team”** – I will be the teacher, and you the coach. I will be sending you the necessary tools to take on your coaching role. I will keep you informed of what is happening in the classroom and I will also provide you with suggestions and a guide as to what you can be doing at home.

Please read the Fundations letters I send home. Your child will be asked to identify language concepts in words through a process called marking, and these letters will show you how to mark up words. They will also contain updates, program information, and activity ideas. Set aside time to do these activities with your child. Monitor your child's progress and share any accomplishments and concerns with me.

I look forward to a very successful year as we work together with your child!

Sincerely,





You are likely wondering, “What is Foundations®?”

Research indicates that **systematic** and **explicit phonics instruction** is effective for all children. Foundations provides a systematic and explicit approach to reading and spelling with phonics. We will combine this instruction with the **reading of good literature**, which is just as important for your child’s development.

Foundations is systematic

because it follows a very definite sequence for teaching and it follows a very definite procedure to teach those concepts.

Foundations is explicit

because this program does not leave room for guessing. It teaches all concepts directly. The children will review letters and how to form these letters. They will learn sounds using keywords to help them remember. They will soon move on to blend the sounds into words.

As the year progresses, Foundations introduces many aspects of word structure and sentence structure. I shall be sending home guides and activities for all of this.

You are also probably wondering, “How can I become a successful “Coach” in this reading program?”

As a “Coach” you can:

- 1.** Read the Foundations letters that I send home. These letters will contain updates, program information, and activity suggestions.
- 2.** Set aside time to do the “home activities” with your child.
- 3.** Monitor your child’s progress and share successes as well as concerns with me.

I feel certain that you will find working with your child in Foundations very rewarding. Your child will treasure your involvement!



Help Develop Oral Expression And Vocabulary

You can help your child develop **oral language** (the spoken word) with the following ideas. Do these anytime you are with your child:

1. Encourage your child to answer “wonder” statements.

Say such things as “I wonder why a dog barks.” Or say, “I wonder if Grandpa likes spinach.”

2. Help your child expand his/her vocabulary by rephrasing.

When your child says something such as, “He’s scared,” you could say, “Yes, the dog barks because he is frightened, you are correct!”

3. Ask open-ended questions.

Do not ask, “Are you raking leaves?” (The child would simply answer, “yes.”) Instead, ask, “What are you doing with your rake?” The child will answer you and then you can rephrase the answer to further develop vocabulary (see # 2).

4. Limit the amount of TV

However, if your child watches a children’s program, talk about it (see #'s 1, 2, 3).

5. Provide household props that encourage pretend play.

Use spoons/pans in the bathtub; cups/teapots/dolls; small rakes/shovels. While playing, be sure to talk through your actions (see #'s 1, 2, 3).

Verbally interacting with your child simply means taking every opportunity to talk with your child. With our busy lives, interactions between adults and children are often directive (“do this,” “do that,”) or negative (“stop hitting,” “don’t run.”) Try to break this pattern whenever possible. Both you and the child will have pleasant experiences and you will be helping to develop oral expression and vocabulary.