

## Concepts about Print

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An educator named Marie Clay first coined the phrase “concepts about print” in New Zealand. The phrase refers to the idea that beginning readers need to understand how printed language works in order to become successful readers. Current evidence indicates that successful beginning readers develop concepts about print at an early age, even before entering school.



### Concepts about print include the following skills:

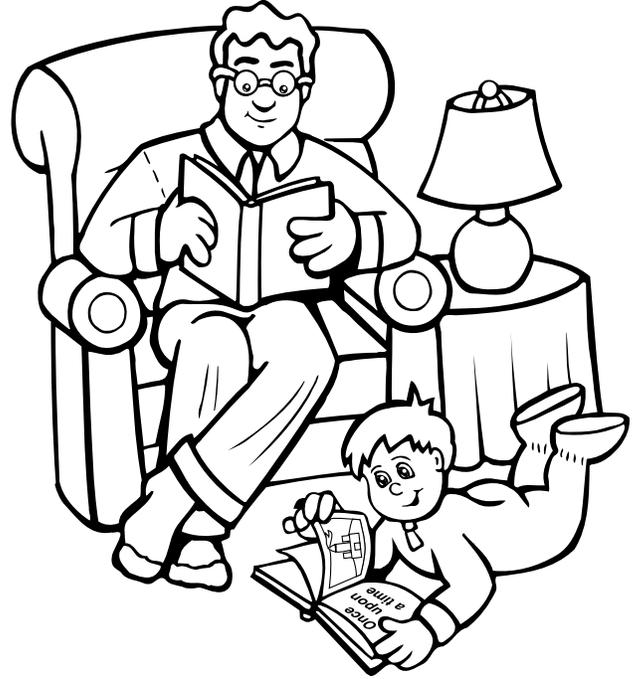
- *Print awareness* – child understands that print carries a message
- *One to one correspondence* – child recognizes a match between each word read and each word printed as text on a page
- *Directionality* – child holds a book correctly and “reads” from left to right and top to bottom (tracking print)
- *Letters, words, and sentences* – child recognizes and distinguishes between letters, words, and sentences
- *Upper- and lowercase* – child recognizes and distinguishes between upper- and lowercase letters and punctuation
- *Parts of a book* – child recognizes the author, title, and front and back of a book
- *First and last* – child has knowledge of the concept of “first” and “last”

### How can I help my child learn concepts about print?

Parents and teachers can help children learn concepts about print by exposing them to print and practicing the skills listed above. The following list supports a print-rich environment and provides opportunities for beginning readers to learn such skills.

- Help the child search the fronts of books, looking for the distinguishing features. This activity is great to do as children put books away at home or in a class or library.

- Point to words as you read. Use large text in a big book or pocket chart. Use repeated readings (readings that include a phrase or group of words repeated throughout—common in songs). Students become familiar with repeated words or phrases and can use a “pointer” or their finger to practice pointing to words as they are read aloud.
- Decorate a classroom or child’s bedroom with posters of familiar songs, poems, or rhymes. Put the posters at eye level so the child can “read around the room.”
- Use a familiar book and ask the child to locate upper- and lowercase letters. Use magnetic alphabet letters and organize them into piles of upper and lower case. Then, use the letters to create simple words, like the child’s name.
- Provide reading time at home when all family members are reading. Accept a child’s pretend reading and encourage pointing. Also, remember to read aloud to a child every day.
- Play games when you finish reading aloud. Go back and count how many letters are in a word or how many words are on a particular page.
- Use a magnifying glass for the child to be a letter or word “detective.” Tell the child you spy a three-letter word and see if the child can find it on the page.



- Children need to understand that print tells the story, not the pictures. Helping a child understand how print works will put them on the road to independent reading.

#### Resources

Assessing the student’s concepts about print. Los Angeles County Office of Education. Retrieved 12/13/2008 from <http://teams.lacoe.edu/DOCUMENTATION/classrooms/patti/k-1/teacher/assessment/print/concepts.html>

Madison metropolitan school district concepts of print (10/20/2000). Jeff Sutherland. Retrieved 12/13/2008 from <http://www.madison.k12.wi.us/tnl/langarts/concepts.htm>

Teaching reading: Other important terms. WGBH Educational Foundation (2002). Retrieved 12/13/2008 from <http://www.learner.org/channel/libraries/readingk2/front/otherterms.html>



**Helpful Products**

The list of Super Duper® products below will help your child with early reading practice. Visit [www.superduperinc.com](http://www.superduperinc.com) or call 1-800-277-8737. Click the links below to see the product and description.

*Interactive Sing-Along Big Books*  
Ask for items #TPX-18409 & #TPX-18410

[www.superduperinc.com/TUV\\_Pages/tpx18409.htm](http://www.superduperinc.com/TUV_Pages/tpx18409.htm)

*Fold and Say® Basic Concepts Mini-Books*  
Ask for item #BK-334

[www.superduperinc.com/B\\_Pages/bk334.htm](http://www.superduperinc.com/B_Pages/bk334.htm)