



School Readiness



WHAT WE WILL COVER

Pre-Literacy
Concepts

Blanks
Levels of
Q's

Names,
Letters &
Numbers

Play Skills
& Table
Skills

Supporting
Your Child's
Transition To
School



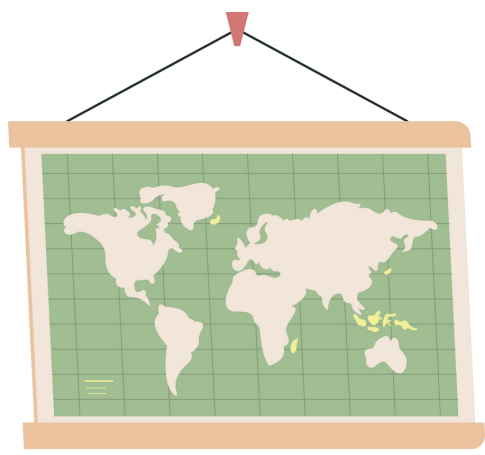
INTRODUCTION



- Margaret Burgess, Speech Therapist based in Bondi Beach- 17 years clinical experience.
- Speech Therapists work on speech, language and communication development.
- Age appropriate speech and language abilities are the building blocks for a successful transition to school.
- But what are 'speech' and 'language' skills



Language V Speech.



This is Language:

Receptive Language

- Understanding words, directions, basic concepts etc.
- Understanding the various parts of a story as well as 'wh' questions.
- Making inferences, understanding idioms etc.

Expressive Language

- Using vocalisations, gestures and words to communicate with others.
- Joining words together to make phrases and sentences.
- Using common and uncommon words to label people, places animals, things etc.
- Using words to form persuasive texts, stories and imaginative texts.

This is Speech:

Articulation

- Producing sounds in words clearly.
- Forming words, phrases and sentences clearly and in a way that is intelligible to others.

Voice

- Using a voice that is not raspy, too loud, too whispered or nasaly.

Fluency

- Often referred to as stuttering.
- Speaking smoothly. No stopping.
- Not repeating sounds or words in words or phrases.

What My School Age Child Can Understand

- Understands time related words (before, after, now, later)
- Understand a range of WH questions (discussed in next slides)
- Understands and can answer q's on simple stories.
- Understand and can follow complex and unfamiliar 3-part instructions (get your bag, put your book in it and put it by the door)
- Recognises some letters and their sounds (discussed in later slides).



What My School Age Child Can Say

Speak in Full Sentences

Use 4–6+ word sentences like:

“I went to the park on the weekend” or “Can I play with you?”

Tell Simple Stories

Tells simple stories with a beginning, middle, end, timeline and characters.

Ask and Answer Questions

Ask questions to find out more: *“Why is it raining?”*

Answer who, what, where, and when questions clearly

Use Descriptive Words

Describe things using words for colour, size, quantity, shape, etc.

“I have a big red ball” or “That one is faster”

Use a Growing Vocabulary

Talk about school topics (like days of the week, shapes, numbers)

Use words to talk about feelings, people, places, and actions

Use Grammar Correctly (Most of the Time)

Use regular past tense (“walked”), plurals (“dogs”), and pronouns (“he,” “they”)

Sentences might not be perfect yet, but they should be mostly clear

Join in Conversations

Take turns talking

Stay on topic

Use greetings like “hi,” “bye,” and polite words like “please” and “thank you”



What Sounds My School Age Child Can Say

2-3

p,b,m,d,n,h,t,d,k,g,w,ng, f,w

4

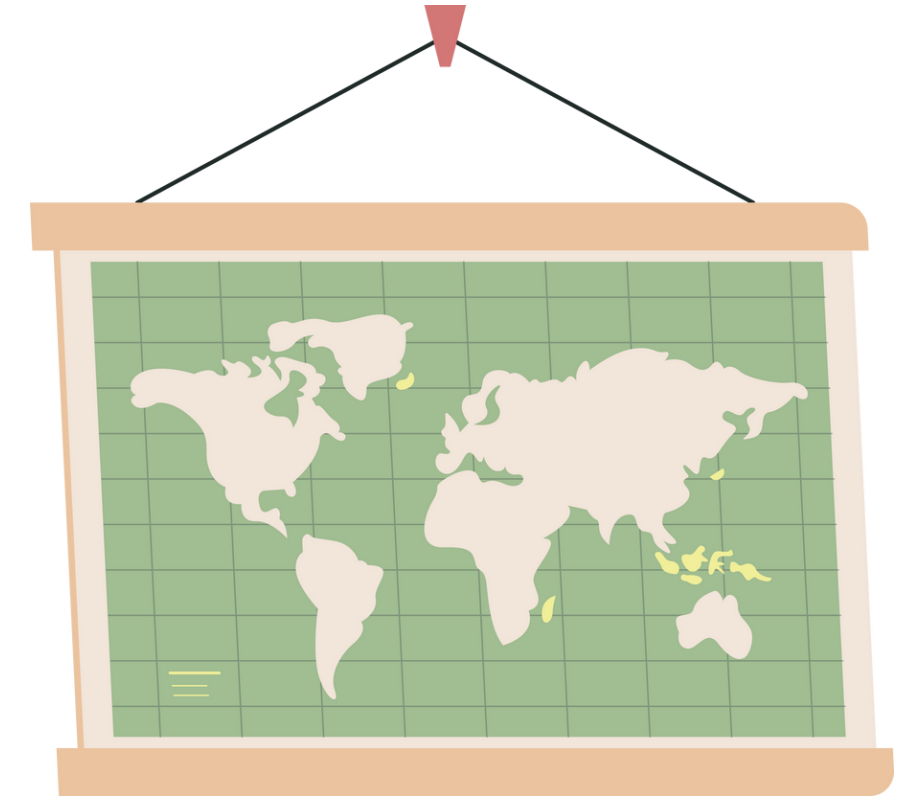
l,j,ch,s,v,sh,z

5

r, zh (treasure), th voiced (feather)

6

r, zh (treasure), th voiced (feather)



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The single biggest predictor of high academic achievement is reading to children.

Not extra tuition, fancy toys, expensive schools or technology.

It is simply somebody taking some time to read to their child every day or night.

HOW TO TEACH PRE-LITERACY CONCEPTS

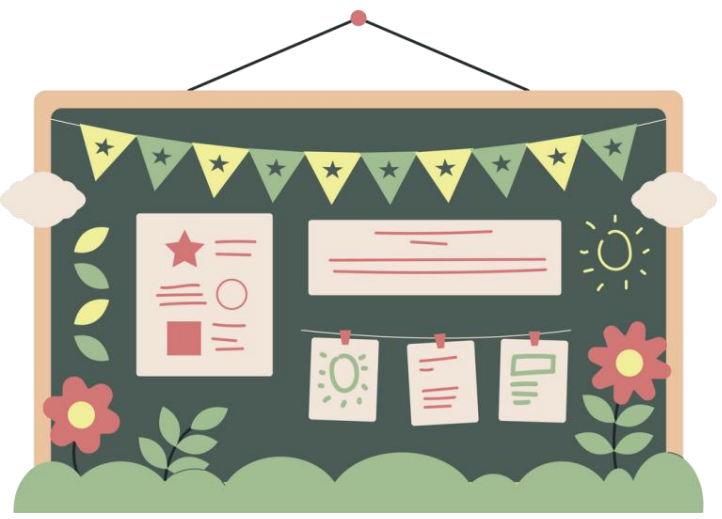
Pre-literacy concepts (or concepts that are fundamental to literacy success).

Model these when reading with your child:

- Where is the front of the book?
- How do we hold it?
- How to turn the page carefully.
- What page we read first- (left to right)
- What line we read first (top to bottom)
- Can they find big letters and what are big letters called ? (capitals)
- Can they find small letters ?



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Blanks Q's = WH Q's

Level 1

2-3 years

- Questions relate to the immediate environment and require concrete thinking.
- "What is that?"
- "What can you see?"
- "What is _ doing?"
- "Is it a _?" (yes/no response)

Level 2

3-4 years

- Involve analysis e.g. classifying/ grouping objects, describing and understanding object functions.
- "what is the different in this picture ?"
- "What is happening in this picture?"
- "Where is the...?"
- "Find something that you eat"
- "Which one is an animal?"



Level 3

4-5 years

- Child needs to use their own knowledge to make basic predictions, assume the role of another, or make generalizations.
- “How would you feel if ...?”
- “What will happen next?”
- “How do you think they feel?”
- “What is a ...?”
- “What would you do if ...?”

@totalcommunicati

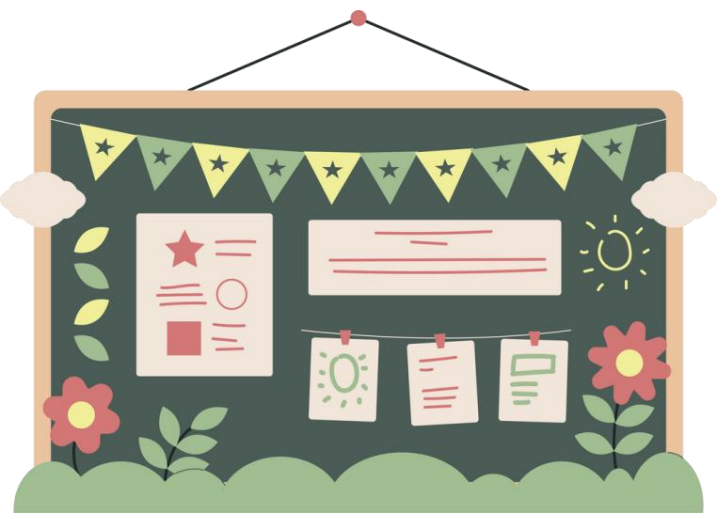
Level 4

5+ years

- Problem solving, predictions, solutions and explanations. Apply own knowledge when thinking about the future and past.
- “What will happen if...?”
- “What should we do now?”
- “How did that happen?”
- “Why can't we ...?”
- “How do you know that ...?”

@totalcommunicationsp

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PRACTICE RECOGNISING NAMES & LETTERS



- It's important that your child can recognise their name in school as name labels are everywhere

their clothes, bag cubbies, seat allocations, and whiteboards!

- For safety reasons it's also important that you child can recognise your name and your address and can answer these when asked.

PRACTICE THESE SKILLS BY:

- Writing their name down and talking about the letters (i.e.. 'This is an 'M'! Your name starts with 'M' – hear it? Mmmax!')
- Talk about other sounds in words like the last sound and the middle sound- not just the first sound.
- Clap out syllables in words
- Have them practice tracing their name after you've written it in big letters
- Use fridge magnets or felt letters to practice picking the letters out and putting them in order.





PRACTICE THESE SKILLS BY:

Start with Sounds, Not Names

Focus on the **sound** each letter makes first (e.g. “*a*” as in *apple*, not “*ay*”).
Say the sound clearly and naturally—short and simple.

Use Songs and Rhymes

Sing the alphabet song—but also silly rhymes and songs that focus on **rhyming** and **beginning sounds**.
Rhyming builds sound awareness, which is key for reading.

Get Hands-On

Draw letters in sand, playdough, shaving cream, or with chalk.
Talk about what the letter looks like and what sound it makes.

One at a Time—No Rush

Focus on **one letter and sound at a time**—repeat it in different ways until it sticks.
Start with common letters like **s, a, t, p, i, n**—these can make simple words quickly (e.g., sat, pin).



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PLAY & TABLE SKILLS



Before starting school, it's helpful for children to practice these important group skills:

- **Sharing**
- **Taking turns** (knowing when it's your go and waiting when it's not)
- **Asking others to play**
- **Sitting at a table and waiting patiently**

These skills help children succeed in both play and learning at school.

PRACTICE THESE SKILLS BY

Organising playdates and practicing sharing / asking people to play

Playing card or board games at home like Go Fish, Memory, Snap, Snakes and Ladders etc, to practice taking turns, sharing, and importantly, winning and losing gracefully!

Play 'Waiting Games':

Use a timer or countdown for turn-taking (e.g. "Your turn in 2 minutes!"). Try during activities like swinging, tablet time, or choosing a TV show.

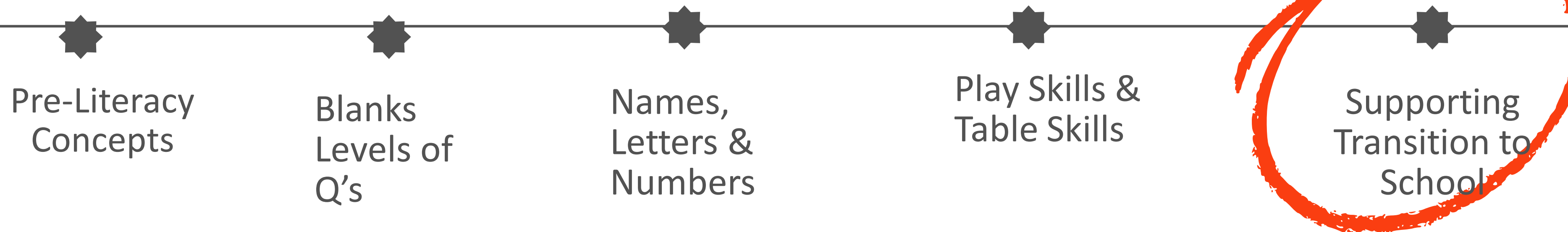
Role Play Together:

Pretend to be teachers, shopkeepers, or doctors—this encourages asking for things, waiting, and using polite language like "please" and "thank you."

Create a Mini Routine:

Set up a short "school-style" routine—like pack-up time, sitting for snack, or quiet reading time—to build independence and listening skills.

SCHOOL READINESS



Supporting Your Child's Transition To School



Every child is different—and you know your child best

You understand what helps them feel safe, connected, and ready to learn.

If you're concerned about how your child will manage the transition—whether it's with understanding, communication, attention, regulation, or sitting still—reach out to the school *before* they start.

Here are some helpful steps you can take:

- 📌 Ask for a seat near the teacher or in a low-distraction area
- 🧘 Request sensory breaks or access to sensory tools if helpful
- 🚶 Check if movement or brain breaks are built into the day
- 🚶 Let staff know if your child learns better when they can stand or move
- 🤝 If relevant, connect your child's Speech Pathologist or OT with the school to support a smooth transition.

