Phases and Models of Reading and Spelling Development

1: Emergent stage

Children in before kindergarten and in kindergarten (katchi class) are considered to be at the Emergent stage. They are aware of the print in their environment but see it more as a picture than individual letters. They are beginning to be aware that there is a relationship between sounds and letters—most of this focus is on consonants—there is little vowel understanding at this stage. In terms of writing, they may make letter-like forms but usually don’t have firm sound-letter correspondences. Important for teachers to read aloud and engage in shared readings with students to connect print to the world and ideas.

Phonological awareness activities (no print needed) are important at this stage.

2: Beginning Stage of Reading and Writing

In kindergarten and 1st grade children are at the Beginning Stage of Reading and Writing. They move from “pretending to read” to actually being able to read as they match sounds to letters. At this Beginning Stage, it is common for students to vocalize the letter sounds as they read aloud, to fingerprint while reading aloud, and to read slowly in a word-by-word manner.

Students have a working knowledge of the alphabetic system but may lack a full understanding of all vowel patterns.

Side by Side

The corresponding stage of spelling development is the letter-name alphabetic stage. At this stage of spelling tend to use beginning and ending sounds and spelling. For example, the sentence, I work hard may be written as: I wrk hrd. However, more complete spellings are seen as students progress into 1st grade.

The use of predictable texts is important at this stage, since it will help support readers trying to understand and make sense of print. Children in this phase benefit enormously when a proficient reader reads books aloud to them.

3: Transitional Stage of Reading and Writing—2nd Grade

The transitional stage usually begins around second grade as children begin to decode commonly recurring letter patterns as units (e.g.,attle, cattle, rattle). Children at this stage are said to be at the consolidated-alphabetic stage as their focus shifts to spelling patterns.

In spelling development, within-word pattern spelling, children are able to consolidate single-letter sounds into patterns or chunks, and words with regular spelling patterns are internalized (e.g., pattern; sofa) Children are able to read with more fluency and expression, and they can correctly spell most words with single syllables and short vowel sounds (such as switch). Reading instruction useful at this stage includes Read-aloud, Shared reading, and Guided reading.

4: Intermediate Stage of Reading and Writing—end of 2nd Grade into 3rd Grade.
In the intermediate stage students move into an awareness of syllables and affixes (i.e., prefixes, suffixes, and other types of inflectional endings such as for plurals, 's for possession). These children can read faster silently than they can orally, and they can spell most single-syllable words correctly.

Students spell multi-syllable words, but may still “make errors at syllable juncture and in unaccented syllables” (e.g. market as markit). This stage can occur around the end of second grade or the beginning of third grade.

5: Advanced Stage of Reading and Writing—late 2nd Grade- 3rd Grade.

Readers and writers at the advanced stage, or automatic stage, of word reading have “highly developed automaticity and speed in identifying unfamiliar as well as familiar words.” A characteristic of proficient readers is that they read accurately and recognize words automatically. The corresponding stage of spelling development is known as the stage of derivational relations, because children understand that they can derive related words from a basic root word by adding prefixes and suffixes. Emphasis on comprehension and vocabulary development is critical.

100 Days of Reading” video