

Concepts About Print Assessment

Purpose: Based on their home and early school experiences with print—bed time stories and read-alouds, big book shared reading, shared writing and their very independent adventures with pretend reading and writing—young children come to kindergarten and even first grade with different understandings about the arbitrary conventions that we use to communicate meaning in print.

An assessment of each child's level of understanding, and sometimes misunderstandings of these conventions helps teachers know what their students are attending to in print and what still needs to be learned. This knowledge enables teachers to design and focus teaching points in literacy mini-lessons and other classroom literacy experiences that move children forward in their understanding of how print works. Where is the front of the book? Where does the story start? Where do I start reading and where do I go after that? What is a letter? What is a word? These are important literacy understandings that can develop through guided hands-on experience with reading and writing in the literacy workshop.

An assessment of emergent literacy print concepts should include:

- Book orientation knowledge
- Understanding of principles involving the directional arrangement of print on the page
- The knowledge that print, not picture, contains the story
- Understanding of important reading terminology such as *word*, *letter*, *beginning of sentence*, and *top of page*
- Understanding of simple punctuation marks

(Gillett and Temple, 1994, *Understanding Reading Problems: Assessment and instruction*. Harper Collins: NY. p. 70)

Directions: In assessing concepts of print, the teacher sits with the child, one-on one, and reads an engaging early level text, asking the child to help with the reading. The book used should have distinct layout of print and illustrations, good spacing between words, multiple lines of text on each page, some basic sight words (I, me, and, is, was, etc.) and basic elements of punctuation (periods, quotation marks, question marks, exclamation points). Because the teacher reads the book to the child with the child looking on and responding to prompts, the text we are using is *Honey for Baby Bear* at a level F. This text has varied and sophisticated text layout and punctuation. (Other sample texts, levels C-F might include: *Where is Hannah?* *Ben's Teddy Bear*, *A Friend for Little White Rabbit*, *Nick's Glasses*, *Dan, the Flying Man*, *Going to Lucy's House*).

The teacher should be very familiar with the text (story, layout and features, punctuation, etc.) before reading with the child. Have ready two brightly colored index cards, a pencil and the record sheet. This assessment incorporates prompts that help the teacher observe a student's behaviors in response to the prompts and note these on the record sheet. (While working with the child, you will want to make small tick marks to note correct responses and keep moving, but later note the child's specific behaviors and responses.)

Based upon the research of Clay, M. M. (2000). *Concepts About Print: What have children learned about printed language?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Student's Name: _____

Date: _____

Teacher/Recorder: _____

Grade/Class: _____

Concepts of Print

Choose a Level C-F book for the administration of this assessment. It should have distinct layout of print and illustrations, good spacing of words and multiple lines of text. Begin by telling the child, "I'm going to read you this story and I want you to help me. It is called _____."

<p>1. <u>Orientation or layout of text/ Front of book</u>: Hand the child the book, holding it vertically so that the spine faces the child. Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Where is the front of the book?" • "Where is the back of the book?" • "Open the book to where the story begins." Child can open the book to title page or first page of story. <p style="text-align: right;">Score one point for each</p>	
<p>2. <u>Print, not pictures, carries the message</u>: With the book open to page 1, ask the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Show me the picture." Describe and discuss details of the picture. • "Show me the words." <p style="text-align: right;">Only score one point if both are correct</p>	
<p>3. <u>Direction of print</u>: On the same page ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Show me where to start reading." If child's response is vague, prompt, Where exactly?" Show me with your finger." • Point to the first word, read it and ask: "Where do I read after this?" <p style="text-align: right;">Only score one point if both are correct</p>	
<p>4. <u>Page sequencing</u>: Point to the last word on the left page and ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Where do I read after this?" <p style="text-align: right;">Score one point</p>	
<p>5. <u>Difference between letter and word</u>: Give the child the two strips of paper. Demonstrate how they slide together and apart on a page in the book. On the same page ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Show me one letter." • "Show me one word." • "Show me the first letter in a word." • "Show me the last letter in a word." <p style="text-align: right;">Score one point for each</p>	
<p>6. <u>Return Sweep</u>: Turn to a page with at least 2 lines of text. Read the top line and keeping your finger on the last word ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Where do I read after this?" <p style="text-align: right;">Score one point</p>	
<p>7. <u>One-to-One Correspondence</u>: Point to the first word on a new page and before reading, ask the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Point to each word as I read this line." Does the child follow and match text as you read? <p style="text-align: right;">Score one point</p>	
<p>8. <u>Punctuation</u>: Point to the period, tracing it with your pencil and ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Do you know what this is?" If so, ask: "What is this for?" <p style="text-align: right;">Score one point</p>	
<p>TOTAL</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">___/13</p>

For benchmark scoring rubrics please see the Benchmarks for Primary Assessments document.

Based on Clay, M.M. (2000). Concepts About Print: What have children learned about printed language? Heinemann: N.Z. ECLAS-II. Literacy Development Checklist. (2003). CTB/McGraw-Hill.