

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3 from the REL Southeast guide *A Kindergarten Teacher’s Guide to Supporting Family Involvement in Foundational Reading Skills*, a companion to the WWC practice guide *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*. Full reference at the bottom of this page.



*Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words*



*For students to be able to read with greater fluency and comprehension, they must first develop their understanding of morphology, the knowledge of meaningful word parts in the language. To develop this understanding, students must learn the following: letter patterns and word parts, the relation of sounds to letters, and high-frequency word recognition.*

*The companion guide on which this summary document is based assists teachers in informing and supporting families to help children develop their ability to decode, analyze, write, and recognize words.*

Supporting Family Engagement

*How to carry out the recommendation*

1. Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound-spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation.
2. Instruct students in common sound-spelling patterns.
3. Teach students to recognize common word parts.
4. Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.
5. Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.
6. Introduce non-decodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.

*Potential roadblocks*

1. Families don’t attend family literacy nights or parent–teacher conferences.
2. Families might not feel comfortable attending a school function.
3. Families lack time to engage in the activities with their children.
4. Families may not have internet access or may have a hard time accessing the internet.

Reference: Kosanovich, M., Lee, L. & Foorman, B. (2020). *A kindergarten teacher’s guide to supporting family involvement in foundational reading skills* (REL 2020-016). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=5674>

Teacher Scaffolds for steps in *How to carry out the recommendation*

1. **Teach students to blend letter sounds and sound–spelling patterns from left to right within a word to produce a recognizable pronunciation.**

Teachers can explain how families can support children in blending sounds when reading to compose the correct word. Start with a simple consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) word, like *pat*, and demonstrate how, in order to read this word, children need to blend together /p/, /ă/, and /t/ to make the whole word.

**Videos to support Step 1**

Video Title	Link
3.1 Letter Puzzles	<a href="https://youtu.be/AOzTD_z-6yM">https://youtu.be/AOzTD_z-6yM</a>

*Note: Adapted from page K|3|5 of the guide referenced on the first page of this document.*

Printable family resources to accompany Step 1 are available on pages K|3|6–K|3|20 of the guide referenced on the first page of this document.

2. **Instruct students in common sound–spelling patterns.**
3. **Teach students to recognize common word parts.**

To support children in recognizing common sound–spelling patterns and word parts, teachers can help families become more comfortable with word families. Point out the common part across words in a word family (for example, -in or -ap). Encourage parents and caregivers to have children underline the common part when they see words in the same family.

**Video to support Steps 2 and 3**

Video Title	Link
3.2 Word Family Fun	<a href="https://youtu.be/5K6WicXvYGS">https://youtu.be/5K6WicXvYGS</a>

*Note: Adapted from page K|3|22 of the guide referenced on the first page of this document.*

Printable family resources to accompany Steps 2 and 3 are available on pages K|3|23–K|3|28 of the guide referenced on the first page of this document.

4. **Have students read decodable words in isolation and in text.**

As children know letter sounds and have built their blending skills, teachers can show families how to support using these skills for unfamiliar, decodable words. For example, rather than teaching *beg* as part of a word family, model how to isolate the sounds /b/, /ĕ/, and /g/ and then blend them into the word. Encourage families to work with children to decode individual words in isolation and then read those words in sentences.

**Video to support Step 4**

Video Title	Link
3.4 Let’s Read Words and Sentences	<a href="https://youtu.be/Qs4YuoAxrsI">https://youtu.be/Qs4YuoAxrsI</a>

*Note: Adapted from page K|3|29 of the guide referenced on the first page of this document.*

Printable family resources to accompany Step 4 are available on page K|3|30 of the guide referenced on the first page of this document.

**5. Teach regular and irregular high-frequency words so that students can recognize them efficiently.**

Explain to families that words that often show up in books are called *high-frequency words* and give examples such as *for*, *am*, and *her*. Continue by explaining that these words are often not decodable by sounding them out, so children need to learn to recognize and read them automatically in order to be good readers. Share the following video and printable resources to give families ideas about how to support automatic reading of high-frequency words.

**Video to support Step 5**

Video Title	Link
3.5 Memory Using High-Frequency Words	<a href="https://youtu.be/3W0bBRRdpO4">https://youtu.be/3W0bBRRdpO4</a>

*Note: Adapted from page K|3|32 of the guide referenced on the first page of this document.*

Printable family resources to accompany Step 5 are available on pages K|3|33–K|3|55 of the guide referenced on the first page of this document.

**6. Introduce nondecodable words that are essential to the meaning of the text as whole words.**

Explain to families that children are often interested in reading texts that contain difficult words. For example, they may want to read a book about fish but may not be able to decode the word *piranha*. Families can support children by looking through books to identify challenging words, point them out, and tell the children how to pronounce the words and what they mean. Teachers should explain that families should then have the children repeat the challenging word while pointing to it.

**Video to support Step 6**

Video Title	Link
3.6 Challenging and Important Words (I Want to be a Vet)	<a href="https://youtu.be/F1h6xPV98JY">https://youtu.be/F1h6xPV98JY</a>

*Note: Adapted from page K|3|57 of the guide referenced on the first page of this document.*

Printable family resources to accompany Step 6 are available on page K|3|58 of the guide referenced on the first page of this document.

Additionally, sample text messages with tips teachers can send to support family engagement in this recommendation are available in Appendix 3 on page K|3|60.

After selecting appropriate family resources to support this recommendation, please see page K|i|7 of the guide referenced on the first page of this document for overall guidance to help maximize the effectiveness in supporting families.

## Common Challenges and Approaches to Overcome Them

Common Challenge	Approaches to Overcome Challenge
<i>Families don't attend family literacy nights or parent-teacher conferences.</i>	Work with your school to provide support (for example, refreshments, childcare) at the event. Be sure to offer a range of time options (for example, before school, during the day, in the evening) for parent-teacher conferences.
<i>Families might not feel comfortable attending a school function.</i>	Communicate in advance what to expect at the event. Be welcoming when families arrive in your classroom, and provide an orientation to the layout and function of the room. Have refreshments available. Involve community entities that might have rapport with your families.
<i>Families lack time to engage in the activities with their children.</i>	Send home all the materials needed for any suggested activity, including copies of any books. Let families know that there are many possible times for the activities, such as weekends or during meal preparation. Also let them know that it is okay if an older sibling or other relative engages in activities with the child.
<i>Families may not have internet access or may have a hard time accessing the internet.</i>	Videos can be shared at school events (for example, parent-teacher conferences or family literacy nights). Show families how to find and view the videos, if possible, on a computer, tablet, or smartphone, or even via the school or public library.

*Note: Adapted from page K/i/8 of the guide referenced on the first page of this document.*



The companion guide from which the information in this document is summarized is designed to support the use of the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guide *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade* (NCEE 2016-4008), by B. Foorman et al., 2016, U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/21>).