

# Foundations for Literacy

A Curriculum  
for Young Children  
who are Deaf and  
Hard-of-Hearing



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**Foundations for Literacy: A Curriculum for Young Children Who Are Deaf and Hard-of-hearing (Foundations)** is a collection of early literacy lessons designed for deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) children aged three to six years.

The curriculum builds a firm foundation in alphabetic knowledge and phonological awareness while providing a variety of opportunities for language growth. Children are taught letter-sound correspondences using sound stories and language-rich, hands-on activities.

Phonological awareness instruction focuses on syllable segmentation, initial sound identification, and rhyme recognition.

Additional activities use letter-sound correspondences to provide practice in blending taught sounds into words. These decodable words are combined with high-frequency words to provide children with opportunities to begin reading phrases and simple sentences.

**Foundations** is specifically designed to teach DHH children the basic skills found necessary for reading proficiency in hearing children. It incorporates a variety of modifications, including Visual Phonics, fingerspelling, pre-teaching and scaffolding techniques. Leveled activities, stories, and vocabulary are also used to address the diverse language abilities of DHH children.

Children who do not have functional hearing and are acquiring sign language as their primary language are called "eyes-only" children in Foundations for Literacy. One modification for these children is to replace sound-based instruction with fingerspelling instruction. For example, teaching letter-handshape correspondences instead of letter-sound correspondences and teaching a fingerspelling word decoding strategy instead of sound-based blending. These modifications are explained on the instructional activity pages and detailed in the lesson plans where they are highlighted in purple text.

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## Program Strands

*Foundations* provides lessons and materials that teach the following strands:

- Alphabetic and Phonological Awareness
- Vocabulary and Language Learning
- Emergent Literacy Skills

Goals and objectives of the program are directly associated with these strands.

## Units

*Foundations* consists of a sequence of units. Each unit includes four one-hour lessons.

There are three types of units:

- 1) introductory skills,
- 2) letter-sound, and
- 3) key-word.

Units 1-4 are introductory units that teach children the language of instruction and orient them to the sequence of daily activities. Key Word units follow letter-sound and focus on producing decodable words using taught sounds.

Units	
Introductory Units	1-4
Letter-Sound	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24
Key-Word	21
Supplemental	25-29

## Lessons and Skills Instruction Progression

Introductory units (1-4) teach instructional language, introduce syllable segmentation and high-frequency words, and familiarize students with the weekly routine.

Letter-Sound units (5-24) introduce a variety of skills, including:

- Letter-sound correspondences
- Initial sound identification
- Rhyme recognition
- Blending
- Decoding
- Vocabulary
- Narrative

Key Word unit (21)

- Building decodable words & creating new words through substitution (Elision)

Supplemental units (25 - 29)

- Introduce more letter-sound correspondences over the course of four weeks instruction.

⌘ Eyes-only children are taught letter-handshape correspondences, fingerspelling phonological awareness, and to use fingerspelling to read printed words.

Unit	Sound	Spellings	Primary Key Words	High Frequency Words	Reading Booklets	Phonological Awareness
1 - 4	Foundational Language			Unit 1 - a Unit 3 - and	Unit 1 - <i>A School</i> Unit 2 - <i>A Wheel</i> Unit 3 - <i>A Farm</i> Unit 4 - <i>A Loud Farm</i>	syllable segmentation
5	m, long e	m e, ee, ea	me	look	<i>A Park</i>	blending/decoding
6	b	b	bee	in	<i>A Boy and a Bee</i>	
7	long o	o, ow, oa, oe	bow, mow		<i>In a Park</i>	initial sound
8	t	t	boat		<i>A Bee</i>	
9	ū	ū	eat, tea, toe, tub	the	<i>A Boy and A Girl</i>	
Progress Monitoring/Practice Game Week						
10	n	n	bone, no		<i>The Girl and a Bee</i>	
11	p	p	Pete, note, Pup	has	<i>A Bee in a Boat</i>	
12	long i	i, ie, igh, y	pie, I, tie		<i>Pete and Pup</i>	
13	ā	ā	pat, bite	on	<i>Pie on Tie</i>	
14	s	s	see, bus, my		<i>My Pie</i>	rhyming
15	d	d	mud, soap		<i>I Eat</i>	
16	long a, f	a, ai, ay, f	say, name, beat		<i>Pup</i>	
Progress Monitoring/Practice Game Week						
17	r	r	run, feet		<i>The Bus in the Mud</i>	
18	g	g	goat, go, game	is	<i>Pete's Feet</i>	
19	ō	ō	top, tops	are	<i>Pete's Pie</i>	
20	k	k, c, ck	cut, sock, socks, kite		<i>Pete's Top</i>	
21			make, cake, bake, sad, mad	you	<i>Socks</i>	word play
22	w	w	wait, wipe	have	<i>I Make a Cake</i>	
Progress Monitoring/Practice Game Week						
23	h	h	hat, hats, he, Coco	do	<i>Pete's Kite</i>	
24	ī	ī	sit, hit, big		<i>Kate's Hats</i>	
25	v, j	v, j	van, jump, jeep, jog		<i>Say My Name</i>	
26	l, x	l, x	doll, lick, box, fox		<i>Pup and the Bone</i>	
27	ē, q	ē q, qu	egg, pet, queen			
28	y, z	y, z	yes, zip			
29	long u	u, ue	cute, Sue			
Progress Monitoring/Practice Game Week						

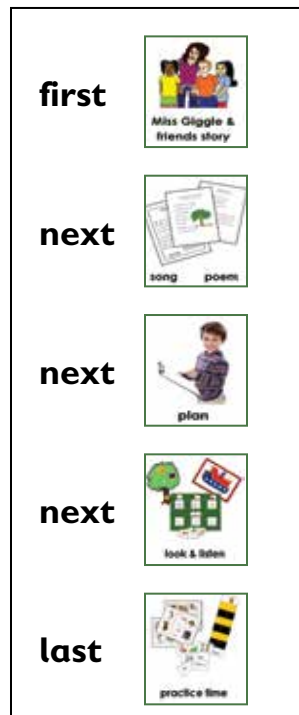
For teachers who like to coordinate **themes** in preschool instruction, the guide below shows recommendations for incorporating ideas presented in the *Foundations* units with typical preschool units.

Unit	<i>Foundations</i> Unit Ideas & Concepts	Corresponding Preschool Themes	Unit	<i>Foundations</i> Unit Ideas & Concepts	Corresponding Preschool Themes
1	Meeting Friends Starting School	School Days	13	Going to an Apple Orchard Having a Picnic	Apples and Pumpkins
2	Playing Games/ABCs Same & Different	Friends All About Me	14	Pete's Snake Taking a Trip	Pets Transportation
3	The Farm	The Farm & Farm Animals	15	Washing Clothes Emotions	My Home My Feelings
4	Sound Animals Sounds Around Me		16	Games & ABC's Bicycles & Balls	Sports Let's Play
5	Making Sundaes Going to the Park	My Home	17	Cars Racing	Sports/Let's Play Transportation
6	Boats and Water Bees	Transportation Water Play Bugs	18	Ghosts & Goats Feelings	My Feelings/Emotions
7	Bees and Bows Colors	Things that Grow Bugs Colors	19	Going to the Doctor	Community Helpers When I Grow Up
8	Clocks and Gifts Boats and Bows	Friendship Transportation	20	Coco Gets Groomed Socks	Community Helpers Pets Clothing - My Home
9	Tea Party Toes	All About Me Parties	21	Baking a Cake	Food Nutrition/Cooking When I Grow Up/Chef
10	Airplanes	Transportation	22	Beach & Swimming Coco Wants to Swim Cleaning Up	Ocean/Beach Pets
11	Making Popcorn Pete Can and I Can	Fun with Food My Five Senses I'm Special	23	Playing with Coco All Kind of Hats	Pets Spring/Summer Fun When I Grow Up
12	Making Pie	Fun with Food Baking/Cooking	24	Experiencing Our Senses Playing with Balls	My Five Senses Spring/Summer Fun



## Foundations for Literacy.

Teachers use a variety of essential practices that help them deliver instruction consistently and systematically. These practices also allow teachers to scaffold to individualize learning. Some of these practices are specific to program components, some are utilized across the program, and some are used at the teacher's discretion for individualization. These essential practices are explained in detail in the pages of this guide. Familiarity with these practices enables teachers to engage children in learning the essentials skills leading to reading.



Activity Sequencing provides structure to the day's lesson for both the teacher and children, and allows children to experience sequential language necessary to understand and retell the sequence of events in a story.

## Introduction to the Language of Instruction.

In order for a DHH child to understand the task you are presenting, the language of instruction must be understood. For example, a child who is asked to say the beginning sound in a word must understand the meaning of 'beginning', 'sound', and 'word.' During the initial four units of the program, language critical to instruction in alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness is introduced through stories and engaging activities. While it may appear that these lessons have little to do with learning to read, the language you are using throughout the activities is providing students the tools they will need when letter-sound instruction begins in Unit 5.

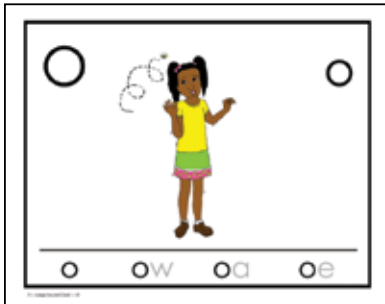


## Language and Vocabulary Instruction.

Language and vocabulary development is always at the center of teaching DHH children. Therefore, *Foundations* teaches children the meanings of the words and language they will use during the Language Activity, Key Word Activity, and Storybook Reading prior to working on the associated skills so that they have the prior knowledge to engage in a particular task. Targeted vocabulary during the Language and Key Word Activities are visually supported with vocabulary picture cards. Four levels of vocabulary: **core**, **target**, **challenge** and **extension** words are provided to meet the various language levels typical in a class of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. The interactive strategies used during Storybook Reading engage children in answering questions that lead to language expansion and vocabulary development.

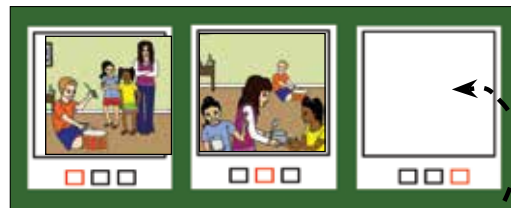
## Letter-Sound Instruction.

Letter-sound correspondence instruction is the core of the program. Sounds are introduced in stories that provide a semantic association between a sound and a meaningful idea. Children engage in a language-rich activity that provides repeated opportunities to produce sound in isolation and to strengthen the semantic connection. The letter-sound correspondences are ordered to address the needs of young deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Children learn long vowels first because long vowels are easier to hear than short vowels. Long vowels also are easier to say. Because they are easy to sustain, or drag out, they also are helpful in beginning blending. Multiple spellings of the long vowels are included in instruction to show children that we can represent sounds in many ways. Multiple spellings are color-coded. The letter of the spoken sound is represented in black and the silent sound in gray as in **boat**.



Letter Sound Cards provide a visual reference for the semantic association of a sound and the letters that correspond with it.

New letter sounds and their semantic associations are introduced in Miss Gigggle stories that the teacher tells using sequence picture cards.











Next, the class makes a **Plan** to engage in the language activity in the Miss Gigggle story.

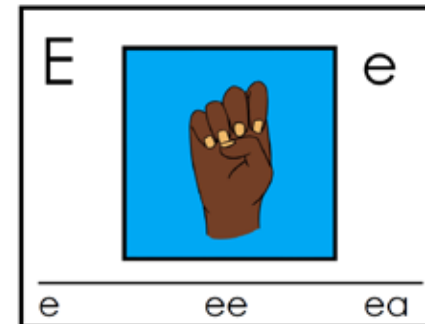
Next, they **Do** the activity and practice the sound in isolation while learning and using the targeted vocabulary.

Finally, children **Recall** the activity and use the targeted vocabulary expressively within their developing narrative skills.

### Plan

1. Get a  of  .
2. Go to the kitchen.
3. Put the  in the  .
4.  to it  .
5. Pour it in the  .
6. Eat the  .

⌘ For eyes-only children, alternative instructional materials and procedures are provided using fingerspelling strategies.



# Overview

## Phonological Awareness Instruction

Phonological awareness is an important skill underlying good reading. Phonological awareness means manipulating or “playing” with sounds in words. Syllable segmentation means breaking a word into its parts or syllables. For example, the word ‘hamburger’ has three word parts or syllables, ‘ham–bur–ger’. In *Foundations*, phonological awareness skills are taught explicitly or directly. Syllable segmentation, beginning sound isolation, and rhyme recognition are taught during phonological awareness activities. Blending and decoding are taught during Key Word Blending.

## Differentiation and Modifications

Differentiation techniques guide teachers in making adaptations to meet their students’ listening and language needs. Scaffolding techniques as used in the curriculum are specifically tailored to support deaf and hard-of-hearing children’s learning.

You’ll find modification suggestions in each lesson plan for easy use by teachers.

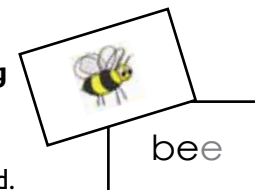


# Instructional Components



The **Key Word Activity** helps children understand the Key Word.

**Key Word Blending** teaches children that sounds blended together make a word.



Small **Sound Cards** are used in Key Word Blending to provide a bridge to reading with letters.



Small **Handshape Cards** are used in Key Word Blending to provide visual support for fingerspelling.



## Reading Activities: Words in Isolation.

As children acquire letter-sound correspondences, the process of combining sounds allows children to begin to make words. For example, during the first week of letter-sound instruction, children learn the sounds *m* and *e*. By combining or blending these sounds *mmeee* - *me*, they learn that putting sounds together makes a word.

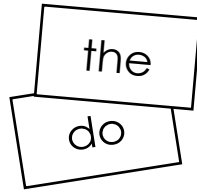
Before the blending activity, children engage in a Key Word Activity, which establishes or strengthens the mental lexicon of the Key Word. (A mental lexicon is the set of words a child has stored in his memory.) Strengthening a word in the mental lexicon makes that word more readily available for recall. The number of Key Words or decodable words increases as the units progress.

⌘ When children learn the handshapes that correspond to the letters, they immediately learn to fingerspell Key Words. Teachers support children's ability to chain the fingerspelled word to the corresponding sign and printed word.

# Overview

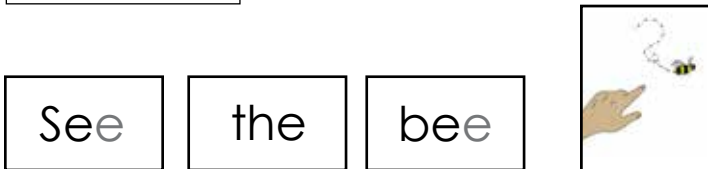
## Reading Activities: Connected Text

Children learn 12 high-frequency words: a, and, look, in, the, has, on, is, are, you, have, and do. They also learn the color words so that they can read decodable words in the context of phrases and sentences. These high-frequency words are introduced during activities to emphasize the concept associated with the word. While not every child will read connected text by the end of the program, opportunities to do so are provided often for those children who are ready to put into practice the skills they have learned. Reading practice activities occur throughout the program.



Both Sentences of The Week and Reading Booklets provide a way to practice decodable and high-frequency words in context.

⌘ Connected Text materials for eyes-only children do not contain sound-based scaffolds such as grey letters or vowel sound indicators.



Reading activities provide practice reading and constructing phrases/sentences using both decodable and high-frequency words.

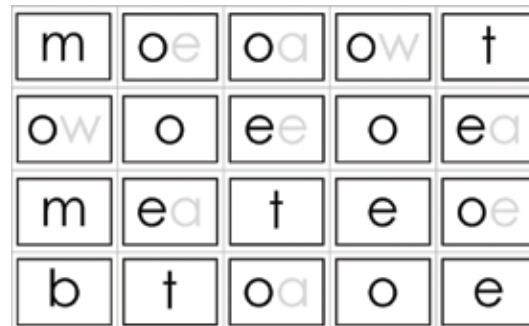
# Instructional Components

## Practice Time

Reinforcement of developing skills is an important feature of *Foundations* and occurs in many ways. Practice books, and sound reading charts reinforce letter-sound correspondences. Practice Activities provide practice in blending and decoding of Key Words, initial sound isolation, letter names, vocabulary, and reading connected text. Poems and songs provide engaging reinforcement of vocabulary and phonological skills. Narrative Practice provides children practice in telling a story with character names, a setting, and a sequence of events. Parent Pages provide parents with the opportunity to reinforce skills at home.



Practice activities provide the time necessary for students to achieve mastery of new skills.



Sound Reading Charts provide children practice in reading and producing of sounds sequentially as they track from left aiding in the development of sound fluency.

**Goals and Objectives** specified in the curriculum all focus on helping young children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing master skills in these three strands.

- I. Alphabetic and Phonological Awareness
- II. Vocabulary and Language Learning
- III. Emergent Literacy Skills

As such, *Foundations* is not a comprehensive preschool program but should be used for an hour daily alongside a strong cognitive, language, and early learning curriculum.

<b>I Alphabetic and Phonological Awareness</b>	
<b>Goal 1.1</b>	<b>To master letter-sound correspondence</b>
Objective 1.1.1	Children will say names of letters when given printed letter
Objective 1.1.2	Children will produce sounds to printed letters, including digraphs
Objective 1.1.3	Children will differentiate between letter names and letter sounds
Objective 1.1.4	Children will increase the rate/automaticity with which they produce sounds with letter prompts
<b>Goal 1.2</b>	<b>To manipulate sounds in words through rhyming, segmentation, blending, and onset-rime</b>
Objective 1.2.1	Children will differentiate gross sounds that are the same and different
Objective 1.2.2	Children will segment words into syllables
Objective 1.2.3	Children will identify beginning sounds in words
Objective 1.2.4	Children will recognize the same beginning sound in different words (alliteration)
Objective 1.2.5	Children will recognize rhyming words
Objective 1.2.6	Children will create and invent words by substituting one sound for another
Objective 1.2.7	Children will blend sounds to form a word
<b>Goal 1.3</b>	<b>To develop orthographic knowledge</b>
Objective 1.3.1	Children will sequence the letters in their names
Objective 1.3.2	Children will recognize upper case and lower case letters and their corresponding sounds
<b>Goal 1.4</b>	<b>To introduce the decoding process</b>
Objective 1.4.1	Children will demonstrate an understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between print and spoken sounds
Objective 1.4.2	Children will use beginning strategies to decode familiar words (e.g., blending phonemes and onset-rimes)
Objective 1.4.3	Children will engage in automatic and fluent recognition of familiar words

⌘ For eyes-only children replace objectives that focus on sound-based skills with those that focus on parallel visual/kinesthetic skills based on sign language, that is, letter-name knowledge and fingerspelling phonological awareness.

<b>II Vocabulary and Language Learning</b>	
<b>Goal 2.1</b>	<b>To expand DHH children's background knowledge in support of literacy objectives of the curriculum</b>
Objective 2.1.1	Children will expand their knowledge of everyday concepts that are frequently experienced at home, school, and in the community
<b>Goal 2.2</b>	<b>To expand DHH children's vocabulary base in support of literacy objectives of the curriculum</b>
Objective 2.2.1	Children will acquire a variety of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions
Objective 2.2.2	Children will understand and use instructional vocabulary
Objective 2.2.3	Children will comprehend new vocabulary (spoken or signed) in the context of meaningful activities
Objective 2.2.4	Children will produce new vocabulary in the context of meaningful activities
Objective 2.2.5	Children will use key, enrichment, and high-frequency vocabulary to engage in planning activities associated with the curriculum
Objective 2.2.6	Children will discuss vocabulary and multiple meanings
<b>Goal 2.3</b>	<b>To expand DHH children's language base in support of literacy objectives of the curriculum</b>
Objective 2.3.1	Children will understand expanded language in the context of meaningful activities
Objective 2.3.2	Children will produce (say or sign) expanded language in the context of meaningful activities
Objective 2.3.3	Children will ask and answer increasingly complex questions
Objective 2.3.4	Children will retell stories in their own words
Objective 2.3.5	Children will use and follow directions
<b>Goal 2.4</b>	<b>To increase DHH children's higher level thinking skills</b>
Objective 2.4.1	Children will expand their ability to plan activities
Objective 2.4.2	Children will understand temporal and sequential relations
Objective 2.4.3	Children will recall events and actions

<b>III Emergent Literacy Skills</b>	
<b>Goal 3.1</b>	<b>To demonstrate and expand awareness of stories</b>
Objective 3.1.1	Children will demonstrate an interest in books and stories
Objective 3.1.2	Recall and describe three events from a story
Objective 3.1.3	Children will tell stories with a with a sequence of events using pictures
Objective 3.1.4	Children will become familiar with characters, events, and setting in stories
Objective 3.1.5	Children will dramatize and retell stories
Objective 3.1.6	Children will communicate effectively when relating experiences and retelling stories heard
Objective 3.1.7	Children will discuss books and stories read/signed aloud
Objective 3.1.8	Children will connect information and events in books to real life experiences
Objective 3.1.9	Children will participate in storybook reading activities
<b>Goal 3.2</b>	<b>To connect stories to written language elements</b>
Objective 3.2.1	Children will associate symbols with objects, concepts and functions
Objective 3.2.2	Children will recognize that print represents spoken/signed words and phrases
Objective 3.2.4	Children will recognize that written sentences are composed of separate words
Objective 3.2.5	Children will use pictures or symbols to identify concepts
Objective 3.2.6	Children will match print to meaningful concepts
<b>Goal 3.3</b>	<b>To relate written forms to meaning</b>
Objective 3.3.1	Children will understand that print is used to communicate ideas and information
Objective 3.3.2	Children will use left-to-right patterns
Objective 3.3.3	Children will demonstrate that print has meaning and represents spoken language in written form
Objective 3.3.4	Children will match taught consonant and vowel sounds to appropriate letters and letter combinations
Objective 3.3.5	Children will blend individual sounds to read one-syllable decodable words
Objective 3.3.6	Children will apply learned phonics skills when reading words and sentences in stories

⌘ Use alternative objectives for eyes-only learners.