

# What is Reading?

Reading begins in infancy as a child listens and begins to interpret the spoken word. Early exposure to conversation and stories are a child's first steps towards literacy. Children who are early readers often have had many opportunities to explore books and stories and to experiment with and play with reading.

A child's knowledge of letters and sounds and how these correlate to words are important, recent research has proven that skilled readers look at almost every letter in each word as they decode what they read, but it is also important to remember that reading is a language skill more than a visual one. In order to make meaning from what they read, children must be able to process what they read in their heads.

Here at Roosevelt, we understand that reading is a continuum, it involves skills that build on and interrelate with one another. To help children along their reading way, we provide lessons and activities to instruct beginning readers in areas proven to be essential to the reading process. The most important of these are:



- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary and Comprehension.

**Phonemic Awareness** is the ability to focus on the sounds in spoken language and how these sounds can be combined, broken down and manipulated. **Phonics** is the knowledge of the connections between letters and sounds. **Fluency** is the ability to connect the words we read in a smooth and flowing way. **Vocabulary** is the knowledge of spoken and written words and **Comprehension** is the understanding or the meaning making of text.

In my experience, children who have had many opportunities to play with literacy even before their first day of school seem to naturally move through these five key reading skills. If a child has had very little prior exposure to literacy, it is never too late!

What can you do? Give your child lots of exposure to books and any form of written text. Have conversations with your child and tell him stories. Play language games, sing songs and tell him nursery rhymes. Reading for the young children should be interactive and fun, so enjoy watching your child as he/she blooms into a skilled reader!