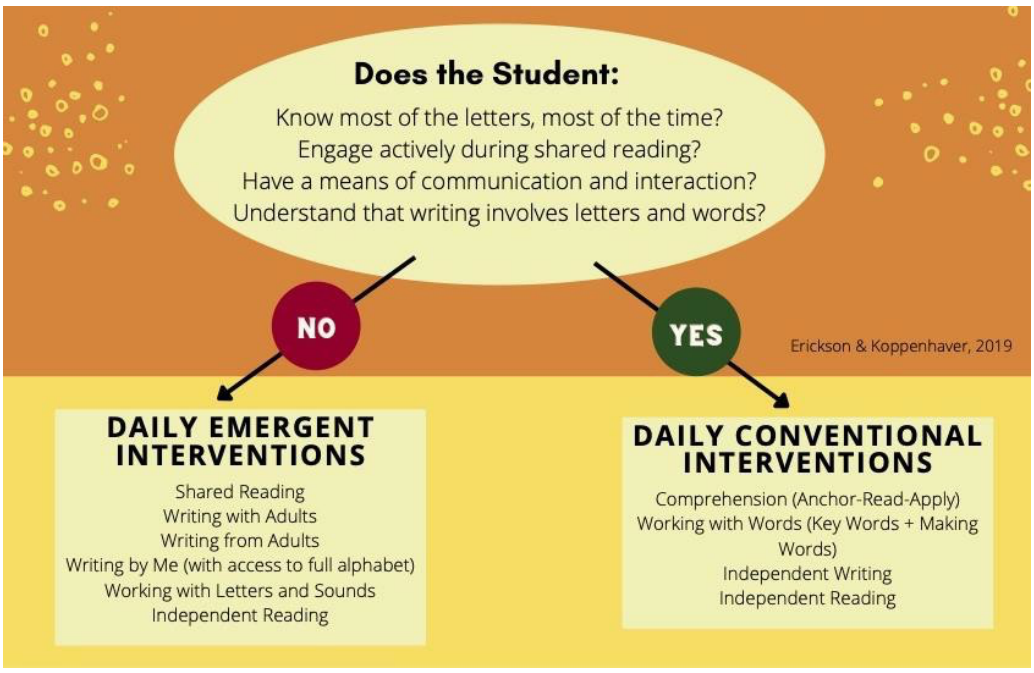
Emergent Literacy

Our most diverse students need access to a comprehensive literacy approach. There are no prerequisite skills the student must have to start learning to read and write. The goal is meaningful interaction with text and with literate adults & peers.

How do you know if your student is an Emergent reader?



Want to learn about how to teach emergent literacy learners? Watch Inclusion Outreach's instructional webinars

- A Transdisciplinary Approach to Literacy for Complex Learners (1hr)
- Developing a Comprehensive Literacy Approach with Complex Learners
  - Part 1: Shared and Self-Selected Reading (1hr)
  - Part 2: Writing and Alphabet Knowledge (1hr)

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A Summary of the 6 Emergent Literacy Interventions

There are six emergent literacy interventions which students need daily access to. Don't be afraid to jump in and get started! It is better to do them all imperfectly than some perfectly.

The six daily emergent literacy interventions. Image credit: Jane Farrall Consulting

Shared Reading

The focus of shared reading is the experience and interaction of looking at a book together. Share the "A.I.R." by using an **a**ttention grabber, **i**nviting participation, and waiting for a **r**esponse from the student. Adults should use open-ended questions or comments to invite, NOT test, student engagement.

Resources:

Share the A.I.R. - intro

Share the A.I.R. – more details

Writing with Adults

Writing with adults, also known as shared writing, means collaborating with students during the writing process. For a speaking student, the student can use dictation to work on composition. For minimally speaking students, this can look like involving your student's choice within the beginning, middle, and end of a story. "Do you want your fox to go to the forest or beach?" This is where we build shared experiences of writing together, collaboratively, and students see themselves contributing to text. There is also a structured process you can follow by completing class wide predictable chart writing, which involves 5 structured steps as detailed in the resources below.

Resources:

Predictable Charting Writing: Group Writing for All

Jane Farrall: Predictable Chart Writing

Reading & Writing 4 All: Predictable Chart Writing

Writing from Adults

Writing from adults, also known as writing to students, is when we model the function and form of writing in real life. By talking out loud while writing, we show students how to think and write, and how we write for purpose such as daily schedule, lesson notes, a thank you card to a parent volunteer, signing in/out of the office, or a communication book that goes between school to home. This is also when we model back to them writing with the tool that they are using (AAC, alternative pencil/alphabet flipchart, pen and paper, or keyboard etc.).

Resources:

Comprehensive Literacy for All: Writing from Adults

Writing by Me

Writing by me, otherwise known as independent writing, is where students begin to explore selecting letters— and we, as adults, attribute meaning to those letters. This is the foundation for a student to see themselves as a writer. Students need to be given access to all 26 letters of the alphabet with no expectations of letter name or sound mastery. Every student needs an accessible writing tool that requires the least amount of energy to use.

Each student's writing tool will look different depending on their vision, motor skills and ability to point with their hand, head, foot, etc. All writing tools are equal!

Resources:

Alternative Pencils – what are they?

Alternative Pencil Templates

Alex de la Nuez: Alternative Pencils on YouTube

Do's and Don'ts of Writing

LOMAH Season 5 Podcasts:

- Dr. Gretchen Hanser OT #137: Literacy Instruction and Physical Disabilities: Choosing the Tools
- #144: Emergent Literacy Strategies with Cortical Visual Impairment
- Jane Farrall #135: Writing Strategies for Learners with Disabilities

Working with Letters and Sounds or *Alphabet Knowledge and Phonological Awareness*

Working with Letters and Sounds refers to instruction about letter formation, letter names, letter sounds, and how to recognize letters in text. While they are strong predictors of later reading success, remember, *explicit & isolated* alphabet instruction does not lead to reading on its own. Use the other 5 emergent literacy interventions too, so students have daily purposeful reading and writing experiences.

Resources:

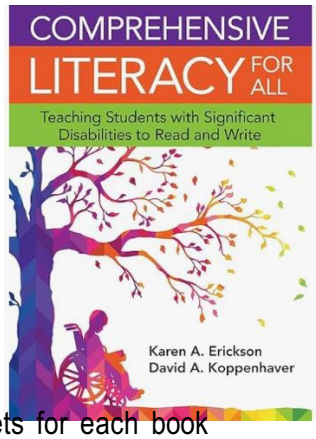
- Letter a Day/Explicit Alphabet Instructional Routine: Routine outline/script from Koppenhaver & Erickson's book Comprehensive Literacy for All (2020).
- Alphabet books and alphabet book templates. Created by Dr. Laura Clarke, has prompts for non-speaking children (but no prompts for use of alternative methods of letter formation such as alternative pencil, keyboard, etc.)
- Enhanced Alphabet Knowledge Instructional Routine: Website for Building Bridges, UNC Chappell Hill. Alphabet Books include prompts to use alternative pencils and build in targets for 3 areas of phonological awareness (*alliteration, onset-rime blending, and sound blending).*

Independent (or Self-Selected) Reading

Independent reading is universally valuable for all students. When students choose and explore a variety of books, they gain authentic opportunities to see themselves as capable, engaged readers. Daily self-selected reading gives students consistent, predictable time to explore books that interest them. During independent reading time adults can provide light, supportive involvement with the focus on helping students choose books and develop reading identities rather than correcting or directing their reading. The goal of independent reading is to nurture motivation, strengthen students' identities as readers, and increase meaningful engagement with print through authentic, student-driven reading experiences. Accessible reading texts for independent reading includes;

- Books connected to current curriculum topics
- Wordless picture books
- Predictable texts (books with repeated language patterns, repeated sentence frames, or highly consistent structures that allow students to anticipate what comes next)
- Comics
- Student and teacher authored books
- Digital books

Further Resources



Comprehensive literacy for all: Teaching students with significant disabilities to read and write by Karen Erikson and David Koppenhaver

Jane Farrall's main website and literacy website

Project Core PD Modules

David Koppenhaver's website

Comprehensive Literacy for All Book Collection including literacy planning sheets for each book

Centre for Literacy and Disability Studies

LOMAH Podcast Season 5: episodes 131 – 146, available wherever you get your podcasts