

Responsive Literacy in the P-3 Classroom

Supplemental Resource

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Prepared by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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P–3 Literacy Learning (Responsive Literacy in the P-3 Classroom)

Making a difference in literacy achievement requires a focus on the essential skills and high leverage practices which create the foundation for literacy learning. This document highlights the skills which are addressed through individual, small group, and whole group instruction. December, March, and June benchmarks provide clarity and direction for teachers to ensure that learners have acquired these foundational literacy skills. *Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction* are provided to help teachers determine next steps in literacy instruction.

Collaboration through the Teaching Support Team and/or Student Planning Team is required to meet the needs of all learners at their current stage of literacy development. The roles of the Teaching Support Team and the Student Planning Team are highlighted in [Nova Scotia's Inclusive Education Policy](#) (2019). [Assessing Literacy P-3](#) guides how collaborative teams consisting of school and regional staff work together on literacy learning for all. Teams include classroom teachers, administrators, resource and literacy support teachers, and mentors/coaches. Additional staff could include African Nova Scotian support workers, English Additional Language (EAL) teachers, Mi'kmaq support workers, and Student Services representatives.

A comprehensive document is currently in development with a cross-branch team of EECD staff and regional and board-based literacy leads to support a structured and detailed description of the components of reading. This document will support learners in P – 3 as they build strong and effective reading skills. Component areas within this new resource that support phonemic awareness and phonics will include definitional terms, a detailed instructional and student progress overview, as well as key messages for teachers to consider as they structure learning environments to provide equitable, culturally and linguistically responsive and inclusive instruction to all students.

Focused, personalized, and intentional whole and small group instruction are the most responsive and impactful ways to support learners' development of the essential skills noted below. Instruction should be matched to learners' strengths, interests, and challenges relative to literacy achievement. On-going assessments are essential and provide evidence of learners' responses to both instruction and intervention. When informed by ongoing assessment, responsive instruction:

- provides scaffolds to move learners towards independence in reading and writing.
- allows learners the opportunity for concentrated instruction and intervention which is responsive to their needs.
- enables learners to practice and reinforce skills in whole and small group settings and independently.
- allows for timely monitoring of learner progress

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support	Specialist Support may occur at any tier	Primary	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	
Tier One		High-quality whole and small group classroom instruction that is culturally and linguistically responsive for ALL learners				
Tier Two		Early Literacy Support (in small group settings)				
			Reading Recovery™			
Tier Three	Intensive, evidence informed, individualized interventions and supports					

Primary Skills and Benchmarks

Essential Skills	December Benchmarks	March Benchmarks*	June Benchmarks*	Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction
	<i>*March and June benchmarks build on previous benchmarks</i>			
	<i>Learners have the ability to...</i>			
Oral Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate active listening and curiosity about stories ● Ask and respond to simple questions ● Initiate conversations with classmates and teachers ● Express thoughts and feelings ● Talk about themselves and their interests ● Retell stories by including two or three ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Speak in complete sentences with 10 or more words ● Use correct word order ● Use connecting words ● Use pronouns, plurals, possessives, different verb tenses, conjunctions ● Initiate and maintain conversations with different partners in various contexts ● Retell simple narratives ● Adapt language to a range of purposes and audiences ● Tell a story that is understood by others ● Ask questions and use language for problem-solving and inquiry ● Use words to explain, explore, compare ● Listen and respond to oral stories/read alouds with curiosity, wonder and inquiry 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I arranging for opportunities for learners to expand oral language (e.g., small/whole group, play-based)? ● Am I encouraging talk through open-ended questioning, prompting for more, and providing wait time? ● Am I showing learners I am listening by providing specific feedback? ● Am I modeling the use of simple phrases? ● Do I show learners that I value and appreciate their home language and allow its use?

Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use phrases and vocabulary from books read aloud or shared reading ● Understand and use words that occur frequently in everyday conversations ● Use words to describe concepts: time markers, size, colour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize and experiment with new vocabulary ● Identify broad categories of words (e.g., food, animals, clothing) ● Use new words that are linked to a specific genre or content area ● Understand and use grade-appropriate vocabulary words by correct function and category ● Provide synonyms for some vocabulary ● Categorize words based on similar functions, attributes, or locations ● Apply an expanding repertoire of vocabulary words to reading and writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do I consistently model the use of rich and varied vocabulary? ● Do I provide play-based experiences which support learners to use new vocabulary? ● Have I intentionally used and taught vocabulary words? ● Have I explicitly taught how words can be categorized? ● Am I creating opportunities for learners to encounter a new word multiple times and in many contexts? 	
Letter Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand that name can be printed with letters ● Identify letters in own name ● Identify letters that are the same or different ● Understand that all words are made of letters ● Identify known letters in text or environment ● Identify the visual features of some letters and experiment with printing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Name many letters ● Produce letter sounds ● Link some letters to the sounds they represent ● Print some letters which correspond to sounds ● Print some letters using correct formation and orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify upper and lower-case letters by name ● Know the direct relationship between letters and sounds (consonants, vowels, letter combinations) ● Link many letters to the sounds they represent ● Print many letters using correct formation and orientation (may still see some reversals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I providing daily systematic and intentional instruction on letter names and letter sounds? ● Do I know the learners who are missing letter knowledge (which letters)? ● Am I teaching learners how to hold a pencil and form letters correctly (verbal pathways)? ● Am I providing intense individualized instruction to some learners?

Phonological/ Phonemic Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Generate rhyming words ● Identify words that rhyme and do not rhyme ● Identify syllables in words ● Blend syllables ● Add a syllable to a word ● Delete a syllable in a word ● Identify the onset in a word ● Identify the rime in a word ● Say words with the same beginning phoneme ● Count phonemes in words and represent them with markers ● Identify the phoneme at the beginning of the word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Blend onsets and rimes ● Manipulate and substitute onsets and rimes ● Change the initial phoneme to make a new word ● Identify phonemes in words (beginning, middle, end) ● Blend and segment phonemes to make words ● Blend and segment phonemes in 2- 3 letter words ● Count phonemes in words and represent them with the letters that are known ● Recognize that two spoken words can have the same beginning or ending sound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do I know the learners' strengths and areas of need in phonological awareness? ● Am I modeling the different components of phonological awareness (rhyming, blending, segmenting, manipulating)? ● Am I providing systematic, focused, daily practice for different components of phonological awareness? ● How do I integrate phonological/phonemic skills into guided reading, word work, and individualized instruction? ● Am I making intentional connections between phonological skills and reading and writing?
Phonics and Word Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Locate own name in print ● Read own name ● Identify letters in own name ● Begin to identify letter names ● Begin to identify letter sounds ● Recognize that words are made of letters and letter combinations that can be used to solve a word ● Know how to read and write a few high frequency words ● Use letter-sound knowledge to solve and confirm words when reading and writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use first and last letters and sounds to read and write words ● Connect most consonant sounds with the letters they represent ● Connect some short and long vowel sounds with the letter it represents ● Use letter patterns (e.g., blends, digraphs) seen in familiar texts ● Know and use letter-sound correspondences for consonants and vowels to decode VC, CVC words in isolation and in connected text ● Blend consonants and vowels in isolation and in connected text ● Blend more complex letter combinations and digraphs seen in familiar texts ● Print many letters using correct formation and orientation while learning letter names and letter sounds ● Read 10+ high-frequency words with and without irregular spellings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I providing consistent, focused, daily practice of letter-sound correspondence? ● Have I taught high-frequency words? ● Have I chosen shared reading texts which match my instructional focus in phonics and word work? ● Do I provide play-based opportunities for instruction and practice? ● Do I make explicit connections between phonics learning and reading and writing?

Print Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that name can be recorded in print • Understand how to open a book • Locate front/back of the book • Read from front to back of the book • Differentiate picture from printed text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book concepts- front/ back, top to bottom • Directionality • Return Sweep • One-to-one matching • Concept of a letter/word • First and last word in a sentence • Punctuation (period, question mark, exclamation mark) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I modeled how to look at print (e.g., where to start, which way to go)? • Have I explicitly taught the concepts of letters/words in reading and writing? • Am I providing multiple opportunities and contexts for learners to solidify print concepts? 	
Reading Development Reading Continuum P-3	December Benchmarks	March Benchmarks*	June Benchmarks*	Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction
<p>Read simple texts with support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read own name • Read a few high-frequency words • Understand print carries the message • Read left to write • Begin to monitor for meaning • Use language patterns to read • Locate known words • Identify some letters found in text • Talk about books • Engage in reading with growing stamina 	<p>Read familiar and new texts with growing confidence and skill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read names of some classmates and environmental print • Read own writing • Understand that text and illustrations convey meaning • Use pictures to predict text • Begin to one-to-one match • Self monitor and begin to self correct • Use letter-sound knowledge to decode words • Read high frequency words in isolation and in text • Retell what is happening 	<p>Read instructional text level C/D and higher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control directionality and one-to-one matching • Track print with eyes, using finger only at points of difficulty • Use letter-sound knowledge to self-monitor • Take apart simple and some multisyllabic words while reading • Makes multiple attempts on unknown words • Group words together so reading sounds smooth • Begin to attend to punctuation • Talk about ideas in the text and make predictions • Distinguish between fiction and non-fiction • Ask and answer questions about the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How am I moving learners out of patterned text (A & B)? • Am I modeling word-solving strategies? • Am I using information from oral reading assessments to inform instruction? • Am I providing direct instruction on? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reading strategies ○ Fluency ○ Comprehension ○ Text features • Do my read aloud texts match instructional goals? • Do I provide 20 minutes daily for independent reading to practice skills? • Am I providing small group instruction daily? • Do the texts shared reflect learners' diverse cultures and interests? • How am I motivating and engaging my learners in reading? 	

Writing P-3 Writing Exemplars	December Benchmarks	March Benchmarks*	June Benchmarks*	Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write own name ● Understand that stories can be recorded in print ● Tell a story to prepare for writing ● Draw pictures to tell a story ● Use a combination of scribbles, squiggles, and some letter forms to record a message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use environmental print in writing ● Use some letter-sound relationships ● Use invented spelling ● Represent an idea using pictures, letters, and words ● Apply directional principles when writing ● Explain or read own writing ● Print some letters using correct formation and orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Move beyond single words to simple sentences ● Print one sentence by using conventional or invented spelling ● Know many letter-sound relationships including consonants and vowels in words ● Write from left to right, with some spacing between words ● Begin to use punctuation ● Engage in different forms of writing ● Print many letters using correct formation and orientation (may still see some reversals) ● Write 10+ high frequency words with automaticity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I using learners' writing to identify an instructional focus? ● Do I use think-aloud to model strategies used in the writing process? ● Do I consistently use mentor texts to provide a model for writing? ● Am I providing daily opportunities for authentic writing? ● Am I providing planned and intentional instruction, based on curriculum outcomes and grade level targets related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Background knowledge and ideas ○ Sentence fluency ○ Vocabulary and word choice ○ Phonics and spelling strategies ○ Conventions ○ Organization ○ Reading/Writing relationship ● Do I support the use of home language in the prewriting stage?

Grade 1 Skills and Benchmarks

Essential Skills	December Benchmarks	March Benchmarks*	June Benchmarks*	Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction
<i>*March and June benchmarks build on previous benchmarks</i>				
Learners have the ability to...				
Oral Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate conversations with classmates, the teacher, and members of the school community Join in whole class, small group discussions Talk about ideas from books and link them to personal experiences, curriculum areas, and other media Retell main elements in stories Ask questions related to the topic Respond to questions with on-topic answers Explain events and actions that occurred in school Share emotions and needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak in complex sentences using various transition words to elaborate and clarify thoughts and ideas Present the same information in different ways Use a variety of pronouns correctly Initiate and maintain conversations Participate in group discussions Use language appropriately to gain information and direct others Use a range of social conventions and “I” messages to communicate feelings Follow a sequence of three or more directions Listen and respond to oral stories/read alouds with curiosity, wonder and inquiry Respond to questions with some elaboration (i.e., because) Tell a complete story Share a detailed personal experience in sequence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Am I creating opportunities for learners to talk throughout the day for various purposes with different groups? Am I creating opportunities to ensure learners encounter new words multiple times and in many contexts? Am I extending conversations through open-ended questions, prompts and wait time? Am I showing learners I am listening by providing specific feedback? Do I show learners that I value and appreciate their home language and allow its use? 	
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiment with new vocabulary Experiment with new words that are linked to a specific genre or content area Use language from read alouds Provide synonyms for some vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use new vocabulary flexibly Use specific vocabulary for time markers, size, texture, etc. Provide synonyms and/or antonyms Integrate new concept words into their talk (e.g., academic vocabulary) Recognize that words can be related (e.g., sound, spelling, category) Categorize words (e.g., attribute, function, content area) Apply an expanding repertoire of vocabulary words to reading and writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have I intentionally used and taught vocabulary words? Am I selecting read-alouds that support vocabulary development? Have I explicitly taught how words can be categorized? Am I creating opportunities for learners to encounter a new word multiple times and in many contexts? 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify broad categories of words (e.g., food, animals, clothing) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do I consistently model the use of rich and varied vocabulary?
Letter Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify letters by name or sound Understand that letters are either consonants or vowels Match upper and lower-case letters Print letters using correct formation and orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify consonants and vowels Print letters using correct formation and orientation Link letter symbol and sound (consonants, short vowels, long vowels, blends, digraphs) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Am I providing intense individualized instruction to some learners (letter-name, letter-sound, recognizing letter in text, producing letter)? Is letter knowledge rapid and reliable; if confusions linger, how am I supporting? Am I ensuring learners hold a pencil properly to print letters efficiently?
Phonological/Phonemic Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blend spoken syllables together to form 2 or 3 syllable words Change syllables in words to make new words Blend and segment phonemes to make words Blend and segment phonemes in 2- 3 letter words Count phonemes in words, and represent them with the letters that are known 	<p>With phonemes of increasing complexity that include consonants vowels, clusters, digraphs, blends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add, delete, substitute phonemes in isolation and in text Blend and segment phonemes in isolation and in text Consistently differentiate phonemes from larger units that include onset-rime, syllables, words 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do I know the learners' strengths and areas of need in phonemic awareness? Am I modeling the different components of phonological awareness (rhyming, blending, segmenting, manipulating)? How can I integrate this instruction into guided reading, word work, and play-based experiences?

Phonics and Word Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independently produce the sounds that correspond with each letter in isolation and when reading text Frequently use the correct letter-sounds in a word to read and write Begin to use known words and word parts (phonograms) to read and write new words Begin to break words apart in various ways (e.g., clap the syllables of words, separate words into onset and rime) Slowly articulate words and record the sounds they hear (first, last and some medial) Read 15+ high frequency words with and without irregular spellings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use phonograms with a short vowel sound in one syllable words (e.g., -ap, -en, -ill) Blend new letter-sounds progressing from CV, VC, CVC, CVCC words to more complex words Blend beginning, medial, final letter sounds when reading words in connected text Use short vowel sounds at the beginning and middle of words Manipulate short vowels sounds within words Blend consonant clusters at the beginning, end, and middle of a word Recognize and use digraphs (e.g., sh, ck, th) Begin to recognize and use “r” controlled vowel sounds Read 45+ high frequency words with automaticity (phonetically regular and irregular spellings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do I include explicit phonics instruction in my instructional time? Have I taught high-frequency words? Have I chosen shared reading texts which match my instructional focus in phonics? Am I modelling how to apply phonics skills when reading and writing? Do I provide play-based experiences to practice and reinforce phonics skills?
Print Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify some high frequency words and personally relevant words in continuous text Understand the function of punctuation (., ?!) Identify capital and lowercase letters in text Adhere to line, word, letter, and page order Identify and understand the purpose of title, author, and illustrator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read high-frequency words in context Identify and use punctuation in text (period, question mark, apostrophes in singular possessives and contractions) Compare the purpose of upper- and lower-case letters Understand purpose and use text features such as bold print and headings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Am I intentional in my instruction around print concepts? Am I providing multiple opportunities and contexts for learners to solidify print concepts in reading and writing? Do I intentionally teach the purpose and use of punctuation? Do I use a balance of fiction/non-fiction text to teach text features?

Reading	December Benchmarks	March Benchmarks*	June Benchmarks*	Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction
Development Reading Continuum P-3	<p>Read instructional text level E with fluency and comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Select a variety of Just Right texts based on reading needs and interests ● Engage with text for longer periods of time (stamina) ● Take apart some simple words to problem solve while reading ● Use connections between what is known to read new words ● Track print with eyes during familiar reading, using finger only at points of difficulty ● Begin to self-monitor and self-correct ● Reread to confirm or to build fluency or understanding ● Read known words quickly and automatically ● Understand the reciprocity between reading and writing “what I say I can write, what I write, I can read” ● Cross check (check one source of information -e.g., meaning- against another -e.g., visual-to confirm) ● Understand the function of dialogue ● Share ideas, make personal connections, and use background knowledge in discussions about text 	<p>Read instructional text level G with fluency and comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read familiar texts with phrasing and fluency ● Connect punctuation to expression ● Take apart simple and some multisyllabic words to solve new words ● Use context and letter-sound associations to search, predict, and confirm ● Use sound letter relationships (e.g., blends, digraphs, clusters) when reading ● Self-monitor and self-correct ● Reread to confirm, self-correct, or improve expression ● Draw from personal experience to talk about ideas in text ● Use word patterns to read new words ● Retell the message ● Answer literal questions about the text and begin to infer meaning ● Expand on known high frequency words 	<p>Read instructional text level I and higher with fluency and comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consistently notice and use punctuation ● Search for and use different kinds of information ● Problem solve unknown words in different ways (e.g., syllables, known parts) ● Make multiple attempts until a word is solved ● Create meaning using a variety of comprehension strategies (e.g., making connections, questioning, inferring) ● Answer literal and inferential questions about the text and some critical/analytical questions ● Read high frequency words with automaticity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I using information from oral reading assessments to inform instruction? ● Am I teaching comprehension strategies (e.g., questioning, inferring) to ensure that meaning is maintained? ● Am I modeling word-solving strategies? ● Do I consistently use guided reading during small group instruction to accelerate progress? ● Am I providing explicit instruction on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comprehension strategies ○ Reading strategies ○ Fluency ○ Text features ○ Genres ● Do my text choices for reading instruction match instructional goals? ● Do I provide 25 to 30 minutes daily for independent reading to practice skills? ● Do the texts shared reflect learners’ diverse cultures and interests? ● How am I motivating and engaging my learners in reading? ● Do I provide opportunities for learners to self-assess progress and develop personal reading goals?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Retell the story with some support ● Compare the traits of fiction and nonfiction texts ● Read high frequency words with automaticity 			
Writing P-3 Writing Exemplars Developmental Writing Continuum P-3	December Benchmarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand that what I say I can write and what I write I can read ● Tell a longer and more detailed story/message ● Include drawings/pictures with moderate detail depicting ideas ● Represent ideas with drawings and some words ● Write some high frequency words accurately ● Use connections between what is known to write new words ● Record some dominant sounds in words using slow articulation ● Use some spacing between words ● Control return sweep in writing ● Write more letter forms conventionally and accurately using left to right sequence 	March Benchmarks* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Orally plan and rehearse information for writing ● Write more than one sentence on a single topic, including several details ● Control directionality by writing left to right across a word and line ● Use spacing consistently between words ● Use beginning and ending sounds to write unfamiliar words ● Use some dominant vowel sounds ● Write text to support a picture ● Begin to edit and make revisions ● Use upper- and lower-case letters appropriately 	June Benchmarks* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Orally plan and rehearse information adding more detail ● Develop a topic, expanding on richer details (i.e., emotion and/or dialogue) ● Consistently use writing conventions (e.g., spacing, punctuation, and capitals) ● Organize writing in a way appropriate to the genre ● Use a variety of sentence beginnings ● Write a combination of short and long sentences ● Include several supporting details ● Elaborate on details using different types of words (e.g., colours, sense words, strong verbs) ● Include some transition words that connect one detail to the next ● Use of a variety of spelling patterns and word structures to solve (e.g., syllables, digraphs, rimes) ● Begin to use co-constructed criteria to edit written work ● Write 45+ high-frequency and personally relevant words with automaticity 	Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I using learners' writing to identify an instructional focus? ● Do I use mentor texts to provide a model for writing? ● Am I providing daily opportunities to practice skills with authentic writing? ● Am I providing planned and intentional instruction, based on curriculum outcomes and grade level targets with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Background knowledge and ideas ○ Sentence fluency ○ Vocabulary and word choice ○ Phonics and spelling strategies ○ Conventions ○ Organization ○ Reading/Writing relationship ● Do I use think-aloud to model strategies used in writing? ● How am I using a word wall to support my instructional focus? ● Do I support the use of home language in the prewriting stage? ● Do I co-construct revision and editing criteria with learners? ● Do I provide daily opportunities for learners to share writing and reflect on progress?

Grade 2 Skills and Benchmarks

Essential Skills	December Benchmarks	March Benchmarks*	June Benchmarks*	Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction
<i>*March and June benchmarks build on previous benchmarks</i>				
Learners have the ability to...				
Oral Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate and maintain conversations in various groups (one-on-one, small and large group) Take turns as a speaker and listener in conversations Ask and respond to questions to clarify information Follow multi step directions and begin giving directions Listen and respond to oral stories/ read alouds with curiosity, wonder and inquiry Express and explain opinions Tell stories and share personal experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate, maintain, and extend conversations in various groups of different sizes Use language flexibly, matching language and style to audience, situation, purpose Follow multi-step directions and give two, or more, step Tell stories and shares detailed personal experience in sequence Use different kinds of language dependent upon audience, situation and purpose Engage in conversations about own opinions and the opinions of others by asking for clarification and responding to questions Use complex sentence structures with rich vocabulary and transition words to connect phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Am I creating opportunities for learners to talk throughout the day for various purposes with different groups? Am I creating a learning community which encourages learners to talk, listen and share ideas and opinions? Am I creating opportunities to ensure learners encounter a new word multiple times and in many contexts? Am I encouraging extended conversations through open-ended questions, prompts and wait time? Am I showing learners I am listening by providing specific feedback? Do I show learners that I value and appreciate their home language and allow its use? 	
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Categorize familiar words in many ways (e.g., spelling, purpose, content area) Use vocabulary from content areas Use language from read alouds Talk about their reading using vocabulary from the text Apply new vocabulary to reading and writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate complex sentence structures and varied vocabulary Use new vocabulary flexibly Use new words that are linked to a specific genre or content area Define grade-appropriate vocabulary words by correct function and category Provide synonyms and antonyms Groups words by categories (e.g., functions, attributes, academic domain) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Am I selecting read-alouds that support vocabulary development? Do I model how to vary language depending on the audience and purpose? Am I selecting read-alouds that support teaching complex sentence structures? Am I showing learners I am listening by providing specific feedback? Am I creating opportunities to ensure learners encounter complex vocabulary? Do I show learners that I value and appreciate their home language and support its use? 	

Phonological/ Phonemic Awareness	Development in phonological awareness and phonemic awareness may progress over several years and some learners will need continued explicit instruction in this area. See Primary and Grade One benchmarks for guidance with phonological and phonemic awareness. See below for information on phonics.		
Phonics and Word Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Know letters and letter-combinations and the sounds they represent ● Use blends, digraphs, and rime units at the beginning, middle, end of words ● Know consonant letters that represent two or more different sounds (e.g., hard g, soft g) ● Use many phonograms (e.g., VC patterns, silent e, double consonant, double vowel, tch, ight, ould) ● Use morphological units to decode words (e.g., inflectional endings, suffixes, prefixes) ● Blend letter sequences to read and write complex words ● Read and write known high-frequency words with automaticity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Know letter symbols and sounds (consonants, short vowels, long vowels, blends, digraphs, diphthongs) ● Use letter-symbol relationships to read words in connected text ● Use consonant clusters that blend two or three sounds ● Use consonant letters that represent two or more different sounds ● Know that some consonant sounds can be represented by different letters or letter clusters ● Use letter combinations that represent long vowel sounds, unique vowel sounds, two different vowel sounds ● Use “r” controlled vowel sounds ● Read high frequency words with automaticity (phonetically regular and irregular spellings) ● Read and write more known high-frequency words with automaticity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Has my explicit phonics instruction shifted/expanded to show how to read more complex, and multisyllabic words? ● Am I modelling how to apply phonics skills when reading and writing? ● Do I provide play-based experiences to practice and reinforce phonics skills?
Print Concepts	Identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Features such as title, author, illustrator ● High-frequency words in context ● Capital letters in different contexts (e.g., proper names, months, days) ● A variety of punctuation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I providing multiple opportunities and contexts for learners to solidify print concepts in reading and writing? ● Do I use a balance of fiction/non-fiction text to teach text features?

Reading	December Benchmarks	March Benchmarks*	June Benchmarks*	Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction
Development Reading Continuum P-3	<p>Read instructional text level J with fluency and comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase reading stamina ● Select a variety of Just Right texts based on reading needs and interests ● Respond to texts in various ways (talking, drawing, writing, representing) ● Identify some text characteristics (i.e., genre, structure, themes) ● Self monitor when reading, integrating all sources of information ● Reread to search for and use information ● Notice word parts and make connections to known words to support decoding <p>Use a variety of comprehension strategies to create meaning inclusive of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● summarizing relevant information (fiction and nonfiction) ● making predictions ● visualizing ● making connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formulate and provide evidence from the text to support an opinion ● Compare the traits of fiction and nonfiction text ● Read known high-frequency words with automaticity 	<p>Read instructional text level K with fluency and comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read fluently, slowing down only to problem solve ● Solve new words quickly and independently using a variety of strategies ● Self correct words quickly, integrating all sources of information ● Solve some content specific and technical words ● Answer literal, inferential, and analytical/critical questions about the text ● Use a variety of comprehension strategies to create meaning inclusive of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ inferring ○ Analysing ○ Asking questions (before, during, and after reading) 	<p>Read instructional text level L and higher with fluency and comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a range of reading strategies to construct meaning and solve new words ● Use text features to construct meaning ● Engage in fluent reading that sounds like talking and supports meaning (appropriate phrasing, rate, intonation, expression, and attention to punctuation) ● Share interpretations of texts read ● Increase background knowledge from reading texts with new information and concepts ● Read a variety of genres and texts for information and interest ● Use a variety of comprehension strategies to create meaning inclusive of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ critiquing (evaluating) ○ synthesizing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I using information from oral reading assessments to inform instruction? ● Do I provide 25-30 minutes per day for independent reading to practice skills? ● Do I consistently use small group instruction to accelerate progress? ● Do I model how to problem solve new and complex words? ● Am I providing reading instruction which builds on learners’ strengths and provides an appropriate level of challenge? ● Does my instruction focus on? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comprehension strategies ○ Reading strategies ○ Fluency ○ Text features ○ Genres ● Do the texts shared reflect learners’ diverse cultures and interests? ● How am I motivating and engaging my learners in reading? ● Do I provide opportunities for learners to self-assess progress and develop personal reading goals? ● Do I have conversations with learners about books?

Writing	December Benchmarks	March Benchmarks*	June Benchmarks*	Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction
<p>P-3 Writing Exemplars</p> <p>Developmental Writing Continuum P-3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage in daily authentic writing different purposes ● Generate ideas for writing ● Begin to organize writing with a beginning, middle and experiment with endings ● Develop and use the language from different genres ● Include several supporting details to elaborate ideas ● Show evidence of using language from mentor texts that have been read aloud ● Vary word choice to emphasize an idea (e.g., enormous, huge) ● Use of a variety of letter-sound correspondence and spelling patterns (e.g., digraphs, rimes) to write new words ● Consistently use writing conventions (e.g., spacing, punctuation, and capitals) ● Write high frequency words with automaticity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage in daily authentic writing for different purposes with increasing stamina ● Write several complete ideas on a single topic with details ● Begin to organize writing with a clear beginning, middle and end ● Write a clear lead ● Use a variety of transition words/phrases (e.g., first, next, later) ● Use variety of sentence beginnings ● Organize writing based on the genre ● Use descriptive language (e.g., sensory, strong verbs, adjectives) ● Write longer and more complex sentences ● Apply a wide range of spelling strategies for increasingly complex words ● Consistently use writing conventions (e.g., spacing, punctuation, and capitals) ● Use co-constructed criteria to edit for conventions, sentence structure, organization, and spelling ● Write more high-frequency words with automaticity 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I using learners' writing to identify an instructional focus? ● Do I use mentor texts to provide a model for writing? ● Do I provide opportunities for learners to share writing and reflect on progress? ● Do I provide daily opportunities for authentic writing for different purposes? ● Am I providing instruction which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Background knowledge & Ideas ○ Sentence fluency ○ Vocabulary and word choice ○ Phonics and spelling strategies ○ Conventions ○ Organization ○ Reading/Writing relationship ● How do I integrate writing tools into the writing process (e.g., anchor charts, graphic organizers, word walls, and sentence starters)? ● Do I support the use of home language in the prewriting stage? ● Do I co-construct revision and editing criteria with learners?

Grade 3 Skills and Benchmarks

Essential Skill	December Benchmarks	March Benchmarks*	June Benchmarks*	Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction
	<i>Learners have the ability to...</i>			
Oral Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in partner, small- and whole-group discussion ● Use effective active listening habits in keeping with the learner’s cultural context ● Initiate, sustain, and extend conversations in various groups of different sizes ● Take turns as a speaker and listener in conversations ● Listen and respond to oral stories/read alouds with curiosity, wonder and inquiry ● Tell stories and share detailed personal experiences ● Express and explain opinions, and respond to questions and reactions of others ● Use intonation, expression, and tone in small and whole group interactions in response to audience and purpose ● Use complex sentences that include adverbs, adjectives, rich vocabulary, and transition words to connect phrases ● Respond to and give directions that are multi-step with increased complexity ● Use different kinds of language appropriate to audience and purpose ● Ask and respond to questions to seek clarification of others’ ideas to gather or consolidate information ● Use new words that are linked to a specific genre, content, and academic areas ● Use respectful language for resolving conflicts and generate possible alternatives and solutions 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I arranging opportunities for all learners to talk, listen, and share ideas? ● Do I model how to participate in discussions of various group sizes? ● Do I model how to vary language depending on the audience and purpose? ● Am I selecting read-alouds that support teaching complex sentence structures? ● Am I providing specific feedback related to instructional goals? ● Do I show learners that I value and appreciate their home language and allow its use?

Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use vocabulary precisely ● Define grade-appropriate vocabulary words by correct function and category ● Use synonyms, antonyms, homophones, and homographs ● Group words by categories and subcategories ● Use language and new language structures from read alouds ● Talk about their reading using vocabulary from the text ● Apply an increasing repertoire of vocabulary words to reading and writing ● Understand some figurative and multiple meaning language ● Use prefixes and suffixes precisely to change word meaning ● Analyze word structure to gather meaning about words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I creating opportunities to ensure learners encounter complex vocabulary? ● Am I providing intentional vocabulary instruction? ● Do I use diverse texts with rich vocabulary to support vocabulary instruction?
Phonological/ Phonemic Awareness	<p>Development in phonological awareness and phonemic awareness may progress over several years and some learners will need continued explicit instruction in this area. See Primary and Grade One benchmarks for guidance with phonological and phonemic awareness. See below for information on phonics.</p>	
Phonics and Word Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use letter symbol and sound (consonants, short vowels, long vowels, blends, digraphs, diphthongs, y as vowel/consonant) relationships to read words in connected text ● Use consonant clusters that blend two or three sounds (beginning, middle, end) to read connected text ● Use consonant letters that represent two or more different sounds ● Know consonant sounds which can be represented by different letters or letter clusters ● Use letter combinations that represent long vowel sounds, unique vowel sounds, all different vowel sounds ● Use “r” controlled vowel sounds ● Read high frequency words with automaticity (phonetically regular and irregular spellings) ● Read phonograms fluently (e.g., ight, th, ime, ough, tion) ● Use morphological units (e.g., inflectional ending, suffixes, prefixes) when decoding ● Use alphabetic knowledge to decode multisyllabic words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do I teach increasingly complex phonics skills as the year progresses? ● Am I modelling how to apply phonics skills when reading and writing? ● Do I provide learners with opportunities to demonstrate these skills when reading words in isolation and connected text? ● How do I know if learners consistently and frequently apply these skills to connected text?

Reading	December Benchmarks	March Benchmarks*	June Benchmarks*	Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction
<p>Development Reading Continuum P-3</p>	<p>Read instructional text level M with fluency and comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase reading stamina ● Read silently with comprehension ● Select a variety of Just Right texts based on reading needs and interests ● Respond to texts in various ways (talking, drawing, writing, representing) ● Self monitor and use strategies to maintain meaning ● Respond to literal, inferential, analytical, and critical questions about a text ● Use a variety of comprehension strategies to create meaning inclusive of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ summarizing relevant information (fiction and nonfiction) ○ making predictions ○ visualizing ○ making connections ○ Inferring ○ Analysing ○ critiquing (evaluating) ○ synthesizing 	<p>Read instructional text level O with fluency and comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustain comprehension across chapters and series ● Self correct words quickly, integrating all sources of information ● Engage in fluent reading that sounds like talking and supports meaning (appropriate phrasing, rate, intonation, expression, and attention to punctuation, etc.) ● Engage in conversations about books which demonstrate evidence of comprehension at the literal, inferential and analytical levels 	<p>Read instructional text level P with fluency and comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a range of reading strategies to construct meaning (known words/parts, base words, and prefixes/suffixes) ● Quickly solve new, more complex words in multiple ways ● Use features of text to determine content, locate topics, and obtain information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I using information from oral reading assessments to inform instruction? ● Do I provide 25-30 minutes per day for independent reading to practice skills? ● Do I consistently use small group instruction to accelerate progress? ● Do I model how to problem solve new and complex words? ● Am I providing reading instruction which builds on learners' strengths and provides an appropriate level of challenge? ● Am I providing learners with the opportunity to self-assess their progress and determine reading goals? ● Does my instruction focus on? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comprehension strategies ○ Reading strategies ○ Fluency ○ Text features ○ Genres ● Do the texts read aloud and in the classroom library reflect learners' diverse cultures and interests?

Writing P-3 Writing Exemplars Developmental Writing Continuum P-3	December Benchmarks	March Benchmarks*	June Benchmarks*	Questions to Guide Responsive Instruction
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write routinely throughout the day for a range of purposes ● Expand writing in a variety of genres by including details ● Organize writing with a clear beginning, middle and end ● Use a clear and interesting lead ● Use a variety of transition words/phrases appropriate to genre ● Use illustrations to clarify ideas ● Use a variety of simple and complex sentences ● Vary word choice to include interesting description (sensory images) ● Use vocabulary specific to a genre, content, or a content area ● Apply spelling strategies to write many unfamiliar words ● Edit writing for conventions and spelling ● Understand that revision makes written messages stronger and clearer to readers ● Write most high frequency words accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write routinely throughout the day for a range of purposes with increasing stamina ● Expand writing in a variety of genres by expanding the use of details and examples ● Organize writing with an interesting lead, well developed middle, and appropriate ending ● Expand on transition words and phrases ● Use illustrations and text features to guide the reader ● Use self-selected text features to enhance writing ● Use a variety of sentence beginnings and a combination of simple and complex sentences ● Use a range of interesting descriptive words to enhance meaning, including specific verbs and nouns and sensory detail ● Use memorable words or phrases appropriate to the topic ● Use a variety of words to indicate dialogue of multiple characters ● Apply a wide range of spelling strategies to spell increasingly complex words ● Write high-frequency words accurately ● Edit writing for conventions, sentence structure, organization, and spelling ● Use co-constructed criteria to self-evaluate and set writing goals 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I using learners' writing to identify an instructional focus? ● Am I providing learners with the opportunity to self-assess their progress and determine writing goals? ● Do I use mentor texts to provide a model for writing? ● Am I providing opportunities for learners to practice writing skills related to different genres and forms? ● Do I provide daily opportunities for authentic writing for different purposes? ● Do I provide opportunities for learners to share writing and reflect on progress? ● Am I providing instruction which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Background knowledge & Ideas ○ Sentence fluency ○ Vocabulary and word choice ○ Phonics and spelling strategies ○ Conventions ○ Organization ○ Reading/Writing relationship ○ Revision strategies ● Am I providing formative feedback on student work? ● Am I co-constructing revision/ anchor charts/rubrics with my students and regularly modeling their use?

Supports to Access if a Learner is Not Meeting Benchmarks

A systematic and collective effort is required to meet the needs of learners at their current stage of literacy development. Review the roles of the Teaching Support Team and the Student Planning Team highlighted in [Nova Scotia's Inclusive Education Policy \(2019\)](#). [Assessing Literacy P-3](#) supports a collaborative approach to literacy development.

Resources to Support Responsive Literacy Instruction

[P-3 Developmental Phonological Awareness and Phonics Continuum](#)

[Development Reading Continuum P-3](#)

[Developmental Writing Continuum P-3](#)

[P-3 Writing Exemplars](#)