Guiding Your Child's Literacy Journey: Tools, Confidence, and Questions That Matter

Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center

June 2026
ReadOhio Literacy Academy

The Ohio State University
Center on Education and Training for Employment

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Who We Are

We support the development and academic achievement of children by providing tools and trainings to Ohio families and schools for building effective family-school partnerships.

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Happy
Earth Day

Learning Objectives

- Describe the many ways I support my child's literacy
- Explore free resources from the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center's website on a variety of literacy topics.
- Practice having a conversation about my child's reading skills.

AGENDA

Opening

- Literacy Bingo!

Presentation

- Resources from the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center

Collaboration

- Using the Sandwich Method in Parent-Teacher Conversations

Closing

- Debrief
- Promos

Greeting!

Family Engagement in Literacy Bingo

- Say “Hello!”
  - Find someone
  - Introduce yourself
  - Discuss something you each do from the bingo board
  - Write that person’s name in the space
  - Find someone new!

- First person to have a complete row wins a prize!

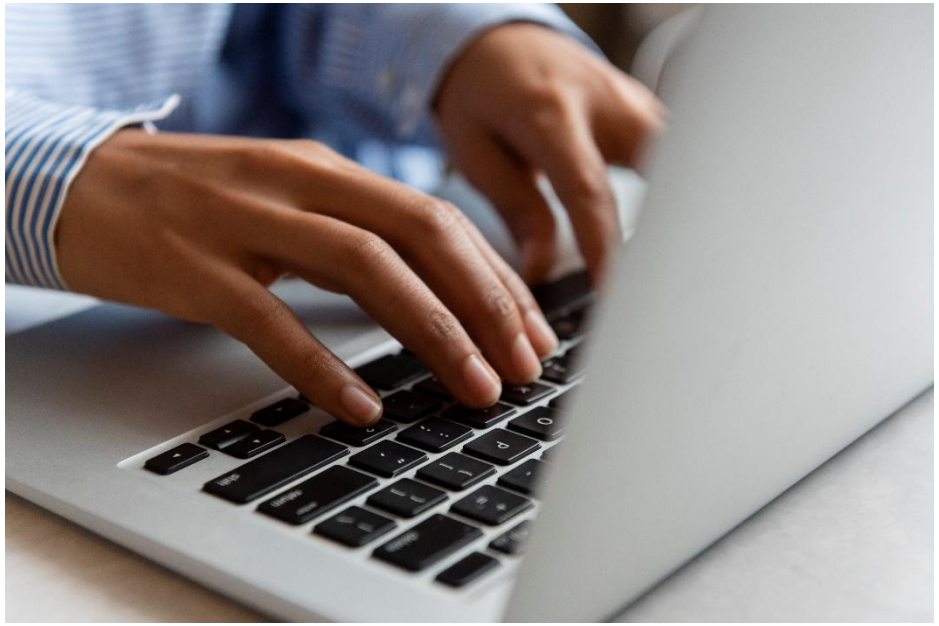
A Resource for *You*

- Resources to support birth through high school graduation!
- Resources for…
  - Science of Reading
  - Dyslexia
  - Third Grade Reading Guarantee
- Templates to use

Literacy Toolkit:

ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu

Visit the Toolkit!



Learning Milestones

Learning at Home

Communicating with School & Questions to Ask

Getting Help

https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/family-literacy-toolkit/

Scavenger Hunt

1. Explore the Literacy Toolkit or table resources.

2. Use a sticky note and write down **the name** of 1 resource you find.

3. Include on the sticky note **how you might use it**.

https://go.osu.edu/literacytoolkit

I can explore free resources from the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center's website on a variety of literacy topics.

Show & Tell

Share with someone at your table the resource you found and how you could use it!

Resource Highlight:
Science of Reading: Questions to Ask Handout

For Early Readers and Writers

- Is my child reading at, above or below grade level?
- What **letter sounds** does my child know?
- Can they **sound out** words and then blend the sounds to read them?
- Which specific **reading** skills has my child already learned, and which skills are they working on right now?
  For example:
  - short vowels(cat, pop)
  - blends - two or more consonants in a row (flag, jump)
  - digraphs – two letters that make one sound (ship, path)
  - silent or magic "e" (kite, mile)
  - vowel teams (rain, play) etc.
  - r-controlled words (for, car, her)
- Ask the teacher for copies of the **lists of skills (scope and sequence)** and ask where on the list your child is doing well and where they need practice.
- How is my child's **handwriting** or letter formation? (Is it automatic and smooth?)
- Can they break sounds apart in words to **spell** them?
- Which **hard-to-spell words** are they having trouble with? (Note to parents: These are sometimes called red words, high frequency, or sight words)
- Which specific types of words are they having trouble with?
- Is my child in **any small groups** for reading or writing? **What are they working on** in those groups? Which materials are being used in the small groups? How will the small group time help them with the specific skills they need to work on?
- What can I do at home?

Sandwich Method for Parent-Teacher Conversations

I can practice having a conversation about my child's reading skills.

The Sandwich Method

Top of the Sandwich:

Positive feedback to start conversation

Middle of the Sandwich:

Question or constructive feedback

Bottom of the Sandwich:

Closing statement to express gratitude, commitment to working together, and action/next steps

The Sandwich Method

Hi teacher,

I've loved getting your weekly classroom updates and reminders. I have a quick question for you.

I've noticed at home that my child can get stuck pretty easily on 4 letter words.

I was wondering if you could share with me:

Which specific **reading** skills has my child already learned, and which skills are they working on right now?

For example:

- short vowels(cat, pop)
- blends - two or more consonants in a row (flag, jump)
- digraphs – two letters that make one sound (ship, path)
- silent or magic "e" (kite, mile)
- vowel teams (rain, play) etc.
- r-controlled words (for, car, her)

Thank you so much for giving me some clarity about what you're focusing on right now, and how my child is doing. I would appreciate any decodable book suggestions you have. I will look for them at the library. Also, my child absolutely LOVES dance party Friday time in your class. Thank you for giving her that to look forward to.

You Try!

Science of Reading

Questions to Ask Your School

Is your local school using good materials and teaching strategies to teach kids to read?

Here are some questions to ask about the science of reading at Open Houses, Parent Teacher Conferences, and other meetings with teachers to get the conversation started.

General Questions

- **What approach** do you use to teach reading and writing? (Note to parents: It should be a structured literacy approach, not balanced literacy or whole language.)
- **What curriculums** or programs do you use? (Note to parents: There might be more than one, but the main materials used should be on the state approved list.)
- **How much time** do you get to spend giving direct instruction using those materials each day? Each week? (Note to parents: It is not okay if they only spend a small percentage of the literacy learning time using state approved materials.)

School isn't following the science of reading?

Your role as a parent is very important in Ohio, which is a "local control" state. Here are some steps to take if a teacher or school is not following the science of reading:

- **Talk to the teacher and building administrator** (Principal or Assistant Principal, for example) in an email or meeting to share your concerns. Share state law and the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's Read Ohio web pages that back-up your concerns.
- If you still have concerns: **Talk to** a **district leader** (Superintendent, or if your child goes to a Community School talk to the school sponsor).
- If you still have concerns: **Talk to your local school board** of education who have approved the policies and procedures of your child's school. Contact information for the school board is usually on the district website or student handbook.
- **Talk to other concerned parents** and send a message to the school as a group. Other Ohio parents have had success with this strategy.
- If you need help working with the school board or district: **Talk to your Area Coordinator**. There is a contact list on the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's website.

Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center at The Ohio State University

Ohio Department of Education & Workforce

Sandwich Method for Having Parent-Teacher Conversations

Sandwich Method	My Responses
Top: Positive feedback (e.g. child's experience in classroom, teaching strategy, teacher communication)	
Middle: Concern/Question	
Bottom: Closing statement (e.g. gratitude, commitment to working together, action/next step)	

Reflection

1. What would success look like if the conversation goes well?

2. What would happen?

Questions on pg. 2-3

Collaborate!

Share & Provide Friendly Feedback

- Praise
- Question
- Suggestion

Individual Reflection

What would success look like if the conversation goes well?

What would happen next?

Debrief

What is one thing you heard today that makes you **feel encouraged or more confident** as a parent?

What is one new piece of information or a resource that you **want to remember**?

What is one simple activity or tool you **will try with your child** this week?

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Register today at go.osu.edu/FamilyEngagementSummit

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Your feedback matters to us!

https://go.osu.edu/parentliteracy

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