



SOUTHMORELAND PRIMARY CENTER



February 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope that this newsletter finds you well and enjoying a mild and not so snowy January. Here is to hoping we keep the good luck going!

In January, we administered our middle of the year reading assessments to help us to learn more about our students' reading levels. This is a part of our *Daily 5* and Guided Reading program. We are using



what we are learning to choose goodfit books for students at their instructional level and to assist students in finding books that are just right for them. On January 20th, author and children's poet Paul Orshosky visited and read to our students. We also celebrated a record **8 SUPER SCOTTIE BUS winners for the month!**

February will open with our 100th Day celebration which is tentatively scheduled for February 8th. Classrooms will celebrate Valentine's Day on the 14th. There is no school for students on the 20th (Presidents' Day). Please note that with the weather, dates may be changed as a result of cancellations. Also on February 24th is Read with Me at SPC Night from 6-8 at our building.

Attendance letters have been mailed. If you have received a letter and have questions, please contact us at your convenience. Also, please make sure that someone is available to meet your child when the bus comes to your stop so that we know that each student arrives at home safely. Thank you in advance for your help!

As always, we continue to pursue, with relentless focus, our mission of High Quality Learning for All. I thank you for your support of our school.

Respectfully,

Mr. Clara
Principal, SPC



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Reading Checkup for Soon-to-Be Readers (Grades Pre-K–1)

How are your children developing as readers, and what can you do to help? Use RIF's series of Reading Checkups to evaluate your children's progress through six stages of reading development, from picture-pointing to independent reading.

Each checkup describes the knowledge and skills that most children demonstrate at a given stage and suggests how they can be nurtured.

How to Use the Checkups

Use the reading checkups the way a doctor uses a growth chart. Look for a steady pattern of growth with a few lulls and spurts. That's a healthy sign that your child is doing well in reading.

Age or grade ranges are listed for each checkup, but just as a guide. We recommend that even if your child is already in school, you begin with the Reading Checkup for Babies and Toddlers and work your way forward. That way you will better appreciate the steady growth your child has already made toward becoming an independent reader.

How Parents Can Help

Parents play a key role in their children's reading development at every stage. As you mark your child's progress, don't forget to check up on what you can be doing to actively promote your child's interests and skills.

What Do the Checkups Mean?

Notice where most of your check marks fall. If your answers are mostly A's, your child may still be making the transition from an earlier stage. If the answers are mostly B's, your child is in the middle of this stage. If you checked mostly C's, your child is probably stepping up to the next level. If you have any concerns about your child's reading progress, talk to your child's teacher or pediatrician.



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Checkup for Soon-to-Be-Readers

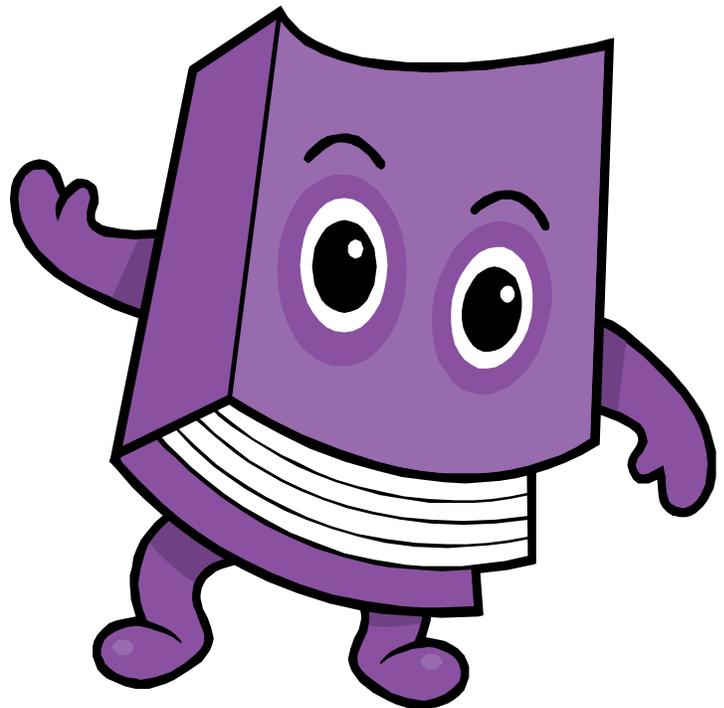
Children are soon-to-be readers when they know most of the letters of the alphabet and some of their sounds. They may ask, "Does this say boot?" and point to a word on the page that starts with "B." They can retell a story in more detail and may use book-like language, such as "Once upon a time."

Does your child...

1. Tell stories that have a beginning, middle, and end?
a. not yet b. sometimes c. often
2. Look at print and ask, "Where does it say this?" or "What does this say?"
a. not yet b. sometimes c. often
3. Spend time looking at books independently?
a. not yet b. sometimes c. often
4. Choose books to read over other play activities?
a. not yet b. sometimes c. often

Can your child...

1. Say the sound associated with each letter of the alphabet?
a. not yet b. some sounds c. most sounds
2. Recognize and sight-read words in a favorite book?
a. not yet b. a few words c. many words
3. Answer open-ended story questions like, "How do you think that made him feel?"
a. not yet b. sometimes c. often
4. Print the letters of the alphabet
a. not yet b. some letters c. most letters





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Not to worry! It is okay if your child...

1. Seems to be in this almost-reading stage for quite awhile.
2. Writes letters or words you can't decipher. Ask your child to read them to you.
3. Mixes up letters that look alike.

Raising Readers

Start Early: The First Three Years

Just as a child develops language skills long before being able to speak, the child also develops literacy skills long before being able to read. What parents do, or don't do, has a lasting impact on their child's reading skill and literacy.

Children develop much of their capacity for learning in the first three years of life, when their brains grow to 90 percent of their eventual adult weight.

When parents talk, sing, and read to their child, links among the child's brain cells are strengthened and new cells and links are formed.

Play is the work of young children. From the first lullaby to dramatization of a favorite story, music and other creative arts can stimulate language and literacy development. Parents can help build pre-literacy skills through dramatic play and one-on-one interaction.

Many pediatricians believe that a child who has never held a book or listened to a story is not a fully healthy child. Reading aloud to young children is so critical that the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that doctors prescribe reading activities along with other advice given to parents at regular checkups.

Despite the considerable evidence of a relationship between reading regularly to a child and that child's later reading development, 6 in 10 babies and 5 in 10 toddlers are not read to regularly by parents or family members.

Nurture Your Budding Reader: The Preschooler

Preschoolers with large vocabularies tend to become proficient readers. Parents who talk and read with their children can greatly enhance their vocabularies. The vocabulary of the average children's book is greater than that found on prime-time television. Yet more than 4 in 10 preschoolers are not read to regularly.



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Children ages 3 to 5 spend an average of 13 hours and 28 minutes a week watching television. When children are plugged into television instead of reading books, they are not developing key literacy skills that will prepare them for school and help them learn.

The single most significant predictor of children's literacy is their mother's literacy level. The more education a mother has, the more likely she is to read to her child. Some experts believe that for America's poorest children, the biggest obstacle to literacy is the scarcity of books in many homes. And while books are available at public libraries, only 37 percent of children aged 3–5 visit a library at least once a month.



Ready to Read: Heading for the Classroom

Parents are truly their children's first and most important teachers. It is clear that parents should not leave to schools alone the important tasks of language and literacy development.

Reading to a child for 30 minutes per day from infancy helps prepare a child to learn. A 5-year-old who has not been read to daily will enter kindergarten with far fewer hours of "literacy nutrition" than a child who has been read to daily from infancy. No teacher, no matter how talented, can make up for those lost hours.

Parents who value reading are more likely to visit the library and give books as gifts. Access to quality reading material should continue throughout a child's school years. The National Assessment of Educational Progress found that students with higher reading scores were more likely to report four types of reading material in their homes—encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers, and at least 25 books.

Parents cannot assume that schoolwork makes up for too much television. Children of all ages watch as much TV in one day as they read for fun in an entire week. Overall, children under age 13 spend 90 minutes a day in front of the TV—one-quarter of their free time.

Adults pass on to children their own expectations about education and achievement, both positive and negative. Shared enthusiasm about books and reading between a parent and child can deepen the child's interest in learning to read. Children who learn from parents that reading is fun may be more likely to sustain efforts to learn to read when the going gets tough.

Source: U.S. Department of Education.



Snow Delays and Cancellations



Cancellation or delay of school takes place only during extraordinary circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or public crisis. The administration is aware of the hardship, which can be caused by an abrupt cancellation; therefore, school will not be canceled unless a significant safety risk exists.

It is important that you share a **plan of action** with your child for such situations. Review this information with the child periodically. This information should include: what the child should do in the event of an unexpected early dismissal, cancellations and other emergencies, where the child should go (for example, neighbor, friend, grandma), if they are to call someone, and also inform the school via the teacher and office. At this point a note could be made on the emergency office card.

Parents should listen to WLSW Scottdale (104 FM); WCVI Connellsville (1340 AM); WPQR Connellsville (99.3 FM); WHJB Greensburg (620 AM - 107.1 FM); KDKA Pittsburgh (1020 AM); 3WS Pittsburgh (94.5 FM); WTAE Pittsburgh (1250 AM); Channel 2 (KDKA-TV), Channel 4 (WTAE-TV), Channel 11 (WPXI-TV), or Scottie (Southmoreland) Channel 39 or on HD 202. We will also send out SCHOOL MESSENGER notifications for those who are signed up for the service. Please contact your student's office if you need to update your account to receive these messages.

Notification of scheduled early dismissals will be reported in the Principal's Newsletter and/or monthly calendar.