

Letters, Sounds and Words™ Program Overview

- Accelerated expansion and implementation plan for growth in NEW and existing regions of the province and beyond.
- Mobilizes and engages school communities as a part of school and school board improvement plans.
- Delivered in schools across the province of Ontario by Strong Start - trained Volunteer Coaches during the instructional day.
- Focuses on young learners, children aged 5-9 including Multi Language Learners, to help develop early foundational literacy and language skills.
- Teachers select which children would benefit most from the program and in which Strands they are enrolled (Letters, Sounds, Words or Building Words).
- Uses expertly designed, fun, interactive, games and activities for children to develop and practice early foundational literacy skills and knowledge.
- Trained community volunteers work one-on-one with children who provide caring support and encouragement.
- Each child has a pre- and post-assessment, and gains are measured and shared with the school principal and school board senior team.
- Children develop a sense of belonging, greater confidence, and improved learning achievement.



"The Strong Start program aligns directly with the Ontario curriculum because the students are learning those foundational skills of letters, sounds and words, and that's directly connected to the reading and writing program."

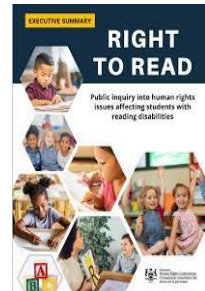
– Bobbie Chatha, Principal

Letters, Sounds and Words™ Program Alignment

Ontario Human Rights Commission – Right to Read Report (2022)

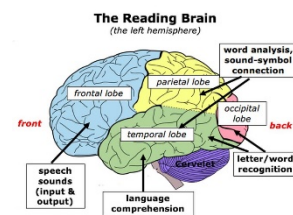
Recommendations:

According to the Right to Read Report, learning to read is a basic and essential human right. Literacy skills are one of the strongest predictors of a child's future success in life. Teaching children foundational "word-reading skills" at a young age (4-7) is most effective. Intervention programs and early screening are needed and must be used to inform program decisions for individual children and boards' strategic plans.



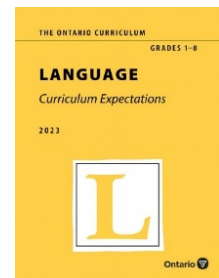
Science of Reading and the Reading Brain:

A Reading Brain must be created as it does not exist from birth. The Reading Brain forms the "orthographic pathways" through practice and repetition. The Science of Reading, evidence-based research, includes effective instructional practices that support learning to read. The components of a comprehensive literacy approach include phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.



NEW Ontario Language Curriculum Expectations (2023):

Literacy is essential for success. The NEW Ontario Language Curriculum is designed to support children in developing language and literacy knowledge and skills. Reading instruction for young learners focuses on understanding foundational components of sound structure in spoken words, alphabet knowledge and blending of sounds to decode and encode words. (Phonological and Phonemic awareness). Accurate word recognition by integrating these subskills through structure and practice supports fluency, expression, and comprehension.



"Identifying and intervening early sets the children up for success."

(Right to Read Report Executive Summary-pg.10)

"Principles of effective structured literacy instruction include explicit instruction, systematic and cumulative curriculum, differentiation, opportunities for practice and feedback, and effective instructional strategies."

(Educators Science of Reading Glossary, Heggerty-pg.6)

"Reading is one of the most fundamental learning and life skills. It affects all academic achievement and is associated with social, emotional, economic, and physical health. However, learning to read does not happen naturally."

(Program Planning: Ontario Curriculum, Language 2023)