STAR Early Literacy Skill Definitions

General Readiness

Most of the General Readiness skills involve what are called "oddity tasks", i.e. identifying one thing that's different from the others.

- **Word length (written)**: Ability to identify the longest or shortest word in a set of written words.

- **Position words**: Ability to interpret spoken "locator" words; such as over, beside, under, in, first, last, etc.

- **Differentiating letters**: Ability to identify, in a set of written letters, which letter is different from the others.

- **Differentiating words from letters**: Ability to identify, in a set of letters and words, which is a letter or which is a word.

- **Numbers (oral and print)**: Ability to count objects, recognize numerals, understand ordinal numbers, and differentiate between numbers and letters.

- **Word pairs**: Ability to identify, in a set of two or three written words, whether the two words are the same or different, or which word out of three is different from the others.

- **Word boundaries**: Ability to differentiate between words and punctuation or white space in written sentences, to identify the number of words in the sentence.

- **Differentiating shapes**: Ability to identify, in a set of geometric shapes, which shape is different from the others, and to identify simple shapes by name (circle, square, triangle, rectangle, etc).

- **Completing sequences**: Given a simple sequence of objects that forms a pattern, ability to identify the object that comes next in the pattern.

Graphophonemic Knowledge

Graphophonemic Knowledge skills deal with how letters and letter sounds are related to written letters and words.

- **Matching upper and lower case letters**: Ability to match an upper case letter to a lower case letter, or a lower case letter to an upper case letter.

- **Recognizing alphabetic sequence**: Given an alphabetic sequence of two letters, the ability to identify the letter that comes either before or after them in the alphabet.

- **Naming letters**: Ability to identify a letter by name.

- **Recognizing letter sounds**: Ability to identify a letter by the sound it makes.

- **Using alphabetical order**: Ability to identify which word comes first or last in alphabetical order.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic Awareness involves the ability to differentiate, manipulate, and understand the units of spoken words (phonemes).

- **Identifying rhyming words**: Ability to match two words that rhyme through named pictures, named words, and unnamed words.

- **Blending word parts**: Ability to identify the word made by combining spoken parts of one-, two-, and three-syllable words, such as /ta/ /ble/ to make "table".

- **Blending phonemes**: Ability to identify the word made by combining individual phonemes (units of sound in the English language), such as /sh/ /oo/ to make "shoe".

- **Discriminating beginning, medial, and ending sounds**: Ability to identify, in a set of two- or three-named pictures, whether the two pictures have the same or different beginning, medial, or ending sound, or which picture out of three has a different beginning, medial, or ending sound than the others.

- **Comparing word length (oral)**: Ability to identify, in a set of three named pictures, which word (picture name) is the longest or shortest.

- **Identifying missing sounds**: Ability to listen to two spoken words and then click on the letter that was left out of the first word to make the second word, such as the "n" in "barn" versus "bar."

Phonics

Phonics is a decoding or word attack skill involving the application of phonemic awareness to "sound out" and read printed letters and words.

- **Matching and recognizing long vowel sounds**: Ability to identify the picture or word that has the same long vowel sound as the target word or, given a long vowel sound, the ability to identify a word that has that sound.

- **Matching and recognizing short vowel sounds**: Ability to identify the picture or word that has the same short vowel sound as the target word or, given a short vowel sound, the ability to identify a word that has that sound.

- **Identifying beginning consonant sounds**: Ability to identify the picture or word that has the same beginning consonant sound as the target word or, given a consonant sound, the ability to identify a word that begins with that sound.

- **Identifying ending consonant sounds**: Ability to identify the picture or word that has the same ending consonant sound as the target word or, given a consonant sound, the ability to identify a word that ends with that sound.

- **Replacing beginning and ending consonants**: Given a named picture or word, the ability to change the first or last letter or letter sound and identify the new word that is made.

- **Replacing vowels**: Given a named picture or word, the ability to change the vowel letter or sound and identify the new word that is made.

- **Identifying medial short vowels**: Ability to identify the vowel letter in a spoken short vowel sound word.

- **Identifying medial long vowels**: Ability to identify the vowel letter in a spoken long vowel sound word.

- **Matching sounds within word families**: Given an onset or rhyme sound, the ability to identify a picture or word that contains that sound, such as /wh/ in "whale" and /ing/ in "king".

- **Identifying consonant blends**: Ability to identify a picture or word that contains the target consonant blend, such as /sp/ in "spoon," or given a word with a consonant blend, the ability to identify the letters that make up the consonant blend sound, such as the "sw" in "swim".

- **Identifying consonant digraphs**: Ability to identify a picture or word that contains the target consonant digraph, such as /ch/ in "chip," or given a word with a consonant digraph sound, the ability to identify the correct spelling of the word.

- **Substituting consonant sounds**: Using named pictures, unnamed pictures, named words, and unnamed words; the ability to substitute beginning or ending consonant sounds in words and identify the new word that is made, such as "sounds like "skill", but ends with /n/ "skin".

Vocabulary

The Vocabulary items measure listening and reading vocabulary.

- **Matching words and pictures**: Ability to match a picture with a spoken high-frequency word, such as "door".

- **Recognizing synonyms**: Ability to identify the picture or word that means about the same as the target word given alone or in-context within a story.

- **Recognizing antonyms**: Ability to identify the picture or word that means the opposite of the target word given alone or in-context within a story.

Structural Analysis

Structural Analysis skills involve analyzing the structure of words and the ability to create or build new words from parts of words.

- **Finding words**: Ability to create a new word by combining a word plus another beginning, medial or ending letter, such as "ask" + m = "mask".

- **Building words**: Given a rime group, such as "ape", the ability to identify a word that can be made from that rime, such as "cape".

- **Identifying compound words**: Ability to create or identify the compound word made from two smaller words.

Comprehension

Comprehension skills involve the ability to read and understand words, sentences, and paragraphs.

- **Reading and understanding words**: Ability to read words alone and in context, or to listen to a story and identify the word(s) that answer a comprehension question about the story.

- **Reading and completing sentences**: Ability to read sentences and to select the word that makes sense in the sentence, or listen to a story and identify the sentence that answers a comprehension question about the story.

- **Reading and understanding paragraphs**: Ability to read a paragraph and identify a word or sentence that answers a comprehension question about the paragraph.