

## Concepts About Print Knowledge and Assessment

Based on their home and early school experiences with print—bedtime stories and read alouds, big book shared reading, shared writing and their very independent adventures with pretend reading and writing—young children come to kindergarten and even first grade with different understandings about the subjective conventions that we use to communicate meaning in print. An assessment of each child’s level of understanding, and sometimes misunderstandings of these conventions helps teachers know what their students are attending to in print and what still needs to be learned. Teachers actively acquire this knowledge about each child daily as they work with children using texts. This knowledge enables teachers to design and focus teaching points in literacy mini-lessons and other classroom literacy experiences that move children forward in their understanding of how print works. Where is the front of the book? Where does the story start? Where do I start reading and where do I go after that? What is a letter? What is a word? These are important literacy understandings that can develop through guided, hands-on experience with reading and writing in the literacy workshop. An assessment of emergent literacy print concepts should include:

- Book orientation knowledge
- Understanding of principles involving the directional arrangement of print on the page
- The knowledge that printed text contains the story (as well as illustrations)
- Understanding of significant reading terminology such as **word, letter, beginning of sentence, and top of page**
- Understanding of simple punctuation marks

(Gillett and Temple, *Understanding Reading Problems: Assessment and Instruction*)