

TN Foundational Skills Instructional Practice Guide (IPG)

Daily Pre-K-2 ELA instruction includes both knowledge building and foundational skills instruction. Strong foundational skills instruction is grounded in a sounds-first approach.

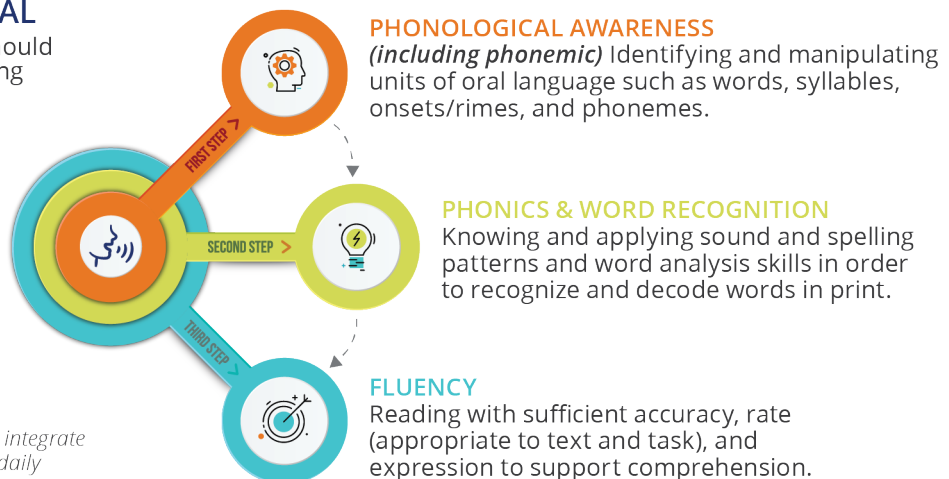
What is sounds-first instruction?

A sounds-first approach acknowledges the fact that children’s ability to notice and manipulate sound is the first step in foundational skills development. This approach puts “sounds first” in two ways: (1) the youngest children work extensively in isolated sound practice (phonological awareness) even before beginning to identify letters, and (2) foundational skills lessons continue to begin with sounds of words and emphasize sounds patterns even as children shift their focus to phonics and decoding (practicing letter-sound correspondences, word recognition, and fluency along with advanced phonemic awareness). Older research indicated that students should move away from phonological awareness and focus on phonics in first and second grade. Current studies (Liben, Kilpatrick, and Paige) indicate that all foundational skills lessons should emphasize the progression from sounds-based activities to fluency in daily lessons. The emphasis inside each lesson should shift as students’ development of automaticity changes. Frequently, students are at different developmental rates and will need multiple avenues for practice and reinforcement in daily lessons.

ALL FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS LESSONS should demonstrate the following components and focus



Note: A teacher may choose to integrate these components into varied daily structures and lesson designs.



Using the TN Foundational Skills IPG:

During each foundational skills lesson walk-through, focus on interactions between materials, teacher moves, and student engagement through practice. These interactions demonstrate classroom examples of the indicators below and might include modeling with instructional materials as well as practice exercises, tasks, and informal assessments. More importantly, focus on observable outcomes such as student work, student application, and student discussions. All three Core Actions should be observable in a foundational skills lesson, but if a walk-through does not span a complete lesson, then not all indicators may be visible. A foundational skills lesson may include any of many different structures, such as: whole-class instruction, student independent practice, collaborative tasks, small-group instruction, centers, and assessment opportunities. However, the structures in the lesson are not the focus; instead, the walk-through team should focus on which core actions are visible to determine what feedback is most beneficial for the teacher.

TN Foundational Skills Instructional Practice Guide	
Culture of Learning: Environmental Readiness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students complete instructional tasks, volunteer, and/or ask appropriate questions. • Students follow behavioral expectations and directions. • Students execute transitions, routines, and procedures in an orderly and efficient manner. • Students are engaged in the work of the lesson from start to finish; there is a sense of urgency about how time is used. • Students and their teacher demonstrate a joy for learning through positive relationships and strong classroom culture that is responsive to student interests, experiences, and approaches to learning. 	Notes: Yes No
Core Action 1: Using Systematic, Sounds-First Materials	
This section focuses on the use of a sounds-first sequence found in the high-quality materials within and across lessons. High-quality lessons should be grounded in <i>current</i> research and aligned to TN foundational skills standards.	
<p>A. The daily lesson accurately uses a sounds-first sequence to address grade-level standards as defined by high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) and is situated clearly within a systematic scope and sequence of foundational skill development within HQIM.</p> <p><i>One or more of the following focus areas should be present. Check any that are observed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Isolated sounds: phonological/phonemic awareness (should be included in every lesson)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Letter-sound correspondences (phonics) and word recognition should extend from an emphasis on sounds</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fluency: reading with appropriate accuracy, rate, and expression should extend from sounds and phonics components (K–2)</i> <p><i>Instruction should follow materials and ground daily instruction in sounds first.</i></p> <p><i>Instruction should connect past foundational skill components to current lessons; teacher and/or students should make connections between new and previously taught skills as well as begin with sounds connections and build into phonics and fluency skills.</i></p> <p><i>If lesson does not include consistent student practice with sounds before decoding, supplemental materials are used to ground the lesson in sounds work.</i></p>	Notes: Yes No
Core Action 2: Using Effective Instructional Practices	
This section represents the teacher actions within the lesson, such as what the teacher says, models, and assigns to lead students intentionally through foundational skills in the lesson. The teacher actions respond to students’ needs and where they are in the learning process.	
<p>A. The teacher’s instruction uses modeling appropriately to support student learning. <i>Lesson objective is communicated clearly to students; pronunciation (articulation) of sounds (phonemes) is clear and correct (ex: clipping the schwa); precise modeling of blending, segmenting, and other content-specific tasks is used as appropriate.</i></p>	Yes Mostly Somewhat Not Yet N/A

<p>B. Instruction utilizes routines and structures that encourage students to decode text systematically rather than to guess its meaning using cueing methods that divert attention from the words themselves.</p> <p><i>Teacher does not refer to pictures as a word solving strategy. Teacher focuses instruction on systematically determining sounds, decoding, and blending rather than using pictures as hints to determine words. Other cueing methods, such as context clues and MSV, are not used in place of sounds-first decoding.</i></p>	<p>Yes No</p> <p>Mostly Not Yet</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>C. The teacher models and elicits student practice through a variety of classroom structures appropriately defined within materials and lesson.</p> <p><i>When a student is first learning a skill, heavy teacher modeling is needed. As the student becomes more proficient, there is less modeling and more student practice. There is a clear balance of teacher modeling and student practice based on students' skill level.</i></p>	<p>Yes Somewhat</p> <p>Mostly Not Yet</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>D. During student practice, the teacher responds to student actions and adjusts feedback to help students practice with accuracy.</p> <p><i>On-the-spot corrections, confirmations, or other feedback; scaffolding based on observations of students and their work; practice opportunities present for those who need more or far more practice.</i></p>	<p>Yes Somewhat</p> <p>Mostly Not Yet</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>E. The teacher executes a lesson that provides students with opportunities to connect foundational skills to making meaning from listening and/or reading and through speaking and/or writing.</p> <p><i>This section may occur in a blended knowledge-building lesson or through a direct lesson on foundational skills.</i></p> <p><i>Examples: Oral or written text-dependent questions used with decodable text; student-friendly definitions provided for unfamiliar words; newly decoded/blended words used in meaningful and accurate ways when answering text-dependent questions.</i></p>	<p>Yes Somewhat</p> <p>Mostly Not Yet</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Core Action 3: Using Student Engagement (Practice)</p> <p>This section represents what students say and do throughout the lesson. The formats in which students engage can be designed to include whole group, small group, independent, and teacher-supported tasks and practice; however, core action three focuses on the quality of student practice rather than the structure of the practice.</p>	
<p>A. All students participate actively in the lesson through listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing.</p> <p><i>All students engage with focus skills through oral and/or written language. One or more of the following should be present. Check any that are observed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Listening <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Writing 	<p>Yes Somewhat</p> <p>Mostly Not Yet</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>B. All students practice target foundational skills in decodable text. (K–2)</p> <p><i>Student reading includes some use of decodable text (sentences or text containing previously taught high-frequency words and sound/spelling patterns) read and/or reread for accuracy/automaticity. Note: This indicator is applicable once students have learned enough sound and spelling patterns and high-frequency words to read meaningful text.</i></p>	<p>Yes Somewhat</p> <p>Mostly Not Yet</p> <p>N/A</p>

<p>C. All students persevere with productive struggle when practice calls for additional attempts, extended practice time, and/or trial and error of target foundational skills. <i>Students are responsible for most of the content-specific thinking and work in the lesson.</i></p>	<table> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>Mostly</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Somewhat</td> <td>Not Yet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N/A</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Yes	Mostly	Somewhat	Not Yet	N/A	
Yes	Mostly						
Somewhat	Not Yet						
N/A							

Feedback/Next Step Guiding Questions	
<p>Core Action 1: Systematic, Sounds- First Materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the observed portion of the lesson did not start with sounds and sequence to phonics and fluency, how is this intentional sounds development being addressed? (Note that fluency is not applicable to Pre-K.) • How are activities sequenced to demonstrate the sequence of sounds to fluency? How does the lesson remind students which skills have already been learned, and which they will be learning next?
<p>Core Action 2: Effective Instructional Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there were times when the teacher’s modeling was inaccurate or unclear, what resources or opportunities could support improvement? • Did the teacher provide instruction that enabled ALL students to practice and most students to meet the objective? If yes, how? If no, what other practice strategies might assist in developing mastery? • What evidence can help us assess whether all students are moving toward proficiency with this lesson’s target foundational skill(s)? (during student practice)
<p>Core Action 3: Opportunities for Student Engagement (Practice)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of practice opportunities do students frequently have other than those observed in this lesson? • What evidence can help us assess whether practice opportunities support all students in mastering the target skill(s)? • [K–2] How does the decodable text students are reading support the lesson’s direct instruction and target skill(s)?