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Phonics Sequence Reference Guide

Mapping Montessori reading materials to the Science of Reading phonics progression

How to Use This Guide

This reference maps the traditional Montessori reading material sequence to the corresponding phonics progression from current reading science. Use it when planning reading instruction, communicating with families about where their child is, or selecting decodable texts that match a child's current skill level.

Montessori Material	Phonics Skill	Decodable Level	Typical Age Range
Sandpaper Letters (individual)	Letter-sound correspondence (all 26 letters)	Pre-reader	3–4.5 years
Moveable Alphabet (early)	Phoneme blending, CVC word encoding	Pre-reader / Level 1	3.5–5 years
Pink Series (reading objects, cards)	Short vowels: a, e, i, o, u CVC, CCVC, CVCC patterns	Level 1	4–5.5 years
Blue Series	Consonant digraphs (sh, ch, th, wh) Consonant blends (bl, cr, st...)	Levels 2–3	5–6.5 years
Green Series	Common phonograms: ai, ay, ee, ea, oa, ow, igh, etc.	Levels 3–5	5.5–7 years
Phonogram Reading Boxes / Advanced	R-controlled vowels (ar, or, er, ir, ur) Long vowel patterns, Silent-e	Levels 4–6	6–7.5 years
Word Study / Extended Reading	Multisyllabic words Morphology (prefixes, suffixes) Advanced phonograms	Levels 7–8	7–9 years

Key Notes for Guides

— Children encode (write) before they decode (read) in Montessori — this is normal and research-supported.

— The Moveable Alphabet is used for phoneme-grapheme work before a child reads independently. Do not wait for reading fluency to introduce it.

— Decodable texts should closely match the child's current material level. Avoid leveled readers that rely on memorization of irregular words before the phonics pattern is taught.

— Digraphs and blends (Blue Series) are often introduced alongside continued CVC work — the materials reinforce each other.

— The Green Series covers many phonogram patterns. Cross-reference with your decodable book set to ensure text exposure matches instruction.

— Fluency builds after phonics accuracy is established. Repeated reading of decodable texts at the child's level is more effective than moving to harder texts prematurely.