

Instructional coaches, literacy leaders, and administrators all perform a multitude of roles and often seamlessly toggle between being a leader, mentor, partner, data manager, and coach. Their time spent with teachers building capacity is the linchpin for increasing teacher performance along with maximizing student growth and success. The Phonics Launch Fidelity Implementation Checklist was created to align with the Phonics Launch framework to provide a communication bridge between teachers, coaches, and administrators. The checklist provides common language and supports the implementation of each step in the Phonics Launch framework.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COACHES

The most effective coaches establish positive relationships with teachers and offer support in goal setting, planning, observation, and reflecting. This is known as a coaching cycle and is a flexible framework for organizing the collaborative partnership between a coach and a teacher. The Fidelity Implementation Checklist provides support for an inclusive and impactful coaching cycle at each point before, during, and after a Phonics Launch lesson.

When meeting with teachers **before** a lesson observation or coach-led demonstration of a lesson, coaches can use the Fidelity Implementation Checklist to lay a foundation for communication between the teacher and coach. Often new teachers, teachers new to a grade level, or interventionists who teach across grade levels can be overwhelmed with the instructional demands of providing small-group lessons for various groups. The breakdown of steps in the Phonics Launch framework allows for a laser-focused approach to coaching. Coaches and teachers can zoom in on a part (step) of the lesson to create a “starting place” to guide teachers to determine their focus. The coach and the teacher can set goals and together plan for a lesson. By isolating a portion of the lesson, novice teachers build confidence in one area before moving on to another step in the framework. This incremental growth will have a lasting impact on their teaching practice and in turn have a positive impact on student growth. When working with veteran teachers, the checklist allows for a bird’s-eye view of the entire lesson framework. We encourage teachers to scan the checklist to determine which step/part(s) they would like to polish. Having open conversations and using common language during a pre-conference maximizes a teacher’s practice and positively impacts student achievement.

Next, the checklist is used **during** a Phonics Launch lesson in the classroom. Depending on the comfort level of the teacher, the coach can either demonstrate or observe the lesson. Coaches and/or teachers use the predetermined section on the checklist. If the coach is in the role of the teacher, they can use a coaching move such as a voice-over to spotlight the planned section of the lesson and provide clarity during the coach’s demonstration. If the teacher is teaching, the coach can take anecdotal notes on the checklist. We recommend the coach directs their attention not only to the teacher but also to how the students respond to the instruction. When observing a veteran teacher, the coach completes all sections of the checklist.

After the lesson, the coach should schedule a time with the teacher to debrief. At the debriefing meeting, the coach facilitates a reflective conversation, asking the teacher how they felt the lesson went, how students responded to the lesson, and what parts they feel they may need some coaching on. Coaches can use the checklist to guide the conversation and plan for next steps. Precision and comfort with the expectations and procedures of the lesson framework frees cognitive space and in turn allows for more responsive teaching. The Fidelity Implementation Checklist provides support for coaches and teachers alike, helping to connect them with common language and a common goal: the acceleration of literacy learning and love of reading.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

The Fidelity Implementation Checklist provides a tool for administrators to use during an informal classroom walk-through. It’s important for administrators to communicate with teachers that informal walk-through observations are not intended to be punitive, judgmental, or evaluative. Rather, they are opportunities for an administrator to directly coach and support teachers.

The Fidelity Implementation Checklist orients administrators to the different steps in the Phonics Launch lesson framework. By completing a checklist during an informal walk-through observation, the administrator and teacher will have common ground to hold a post-observation conversation. These conversations are grounded in the practice and therefore become the foundation of positive communication. By using the same form as the instructional coach, there is a continuity of support provided to teachers. Administrators can simply place a check mark in the sections they observe as evident during the period of time they were present. The entire checklist does not have to be completed, but instead the administrator may observe a portion of the lesson and just check the steps they observe. Likewise, the checklist can be used for a more formal comprehensive observation of an entire lesson; in this case, the entire checklist would be used. After the observation session, administrators can meet with instructional coaches to share trends observed, best practices, and opportunities for additional coaching cycles.

Logistics	Evident	Work in Progress	Not Observed	Notes
Group consists of 3–4 students.				
Small-group table is clear of clutter unrelated to lesson.				
Process and procedures for small-group time are clear.				
All steps (1–3) of the lesson were completed.				
Total time does not exceed 10–12 minutes.				

STEP 1 (Days 1–4): Learning Letters/Phonemic Awareness 1–2 Minutes	Evident	Work in Progress	Not Observed	Notes
Bella and Rosie Letter Book (Days 1 and 3): Teacher is reading the letter book that corresponds to the target phonics skill in the lesson. As the teacher reads each word, the first sound is emphasized. Students repeat the process.				
Sorting Letters (Days 2 and 4): Teacher directs students to remove a letter from the easel. Students remove that letter from the easel, saying the letter name and the sound that letter spells.				

STEP 2 (Days 1–4): Phonics 2–3 Minutes	Evident	Work in Progress	Not Observed	Notes
One of the following activities is present (check one). Teacher is correctly facilitating the phonics activity. It is clear students are familiar with and comfortable utilizing processes and procedures for the activity. <input type="checkbox"/> Picture Sorting <input type="checkbox"/> Sound Boxes				

STEP 3 (Days 1 and 3): Applying Phonics 5–7 Minutes	Evident	Work in Progress	Not Observed	Notes
Teacher maps the new sight word prior to facilitating the book introduction (Day 1 only).				
A brief book introduction is provided.				
Teacher and students are choral reading the book.				
Students are pointing to each word during choral reading. Teacher is monitoring and holding students accountable for this reading behavior.				
Teacher is facilitating the discussion as indicated on the lesson card (Day 1 only).				
Teacher is facilitating an appropriate teaching point as indicated on the lesson card and/or by the needs of the small group (Day 3 only).				

STEP 3 (Days 2 and 4): Applying Phonics 5–7 Minutes	Evident	Work in Progress	Not Observed	Notes
Materials are present and effectively utilized.				
Teacher begins by dictating a sentence, then has students repeat it as they tap the table for each word in the sentence.				
Teacher draws a line to represent each word in the sentence on a sentence strip.				
Teacher helps students isolate easy-to-hear sounds in words. Students locate those sounds on the ABC Chart Card.				
One student writes the letter that spells the easy-to-hear sounds on the sentence strip, while other students practice on the bottom of their ABC Chart Card.				
Teacher writes the letters and sounds that haven't been taught.				
Teacher cuts up the sentence strip into individual words.				
Students work together to remake and read the cut-up sentence.				