

Initialit–Foundation

Parent/Carer information



whole-class instruction in literacy

What is Initialit–Foundation?

Initialit-Foundation, or Initialit–F, is a literacy program for all children in their first year of school to ensure that all children get off to the best possible start. It has been developed by MultiLit, a research-based initiative of Macquarie University.

What does Initialit–F do?

Initialit–F teaches children how to read and spell through daily lessons, using research-based teaching methods. It also uses a range of good quality storybooks to develop children’s vocabulary and oral language.

How does Initialit–F teach reading and writing?

Initialit–F teaches children that words are made up of sounds and sounds are represented by letters. Unlike learning to talk which children pick up naturally, children do need to be directly taught the relationship between sounds and letters.

An Initialit lesson should take place at least four times a week. The first 20 minutes are spent on the mat where the children are introduced to new letters and sounds in a set order. They will do a number of targeted activities to practise reading and spelling words with the new sound during this whole-class session. After the lesson on the mat, the teacher will work with different groups of children to help them read words, sentences and stories using all the sounds and letters they have been taught. While the teachers is working with a group, the rest of the class will be doing an activity to consolidate what they have been learning. This may be a spelling worksheet, a game to practise their tricky words, or more practice using an Initialit reader.

All children will greatly benefit from the structured nature of the program, regardless of how many or how few skills they bring to the task.

How does Initialit–F develop oral language and vocabulary?

Children will enjoy a quality storybook over four teaching sessions. They will learn three new vocabulary words per book and do fun activities to help them understand when and how to use those words. They will also discuss the themes surrounding the book and learn how stories relate to their own world. These sessions will provide opportunities for children to use new words, develop good listening comprehension and a love of literature. Specifically teaching children new words has a very positive impact on later reading comprehension.

How can I help with my child’s reading at home?

Read a storybook each day to your child and discuss the story, pointing out any new words to enrich their vocabulary. Spend time teaching your child nursery rhymes, songs and poems. Play language games. Talk about letters and sounds in the environment. When readers are sent home, make sure that you spend time listening to your child read, providing support to help them apply their knowledge about sounds and letters to the text.

Find out more

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