

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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What is Initialit-1?

Initialit-1 is a literacy program for all children in their second year of school (Year 1). It has been developed by MultiLit, a research-based initiative of Macquarie University.

What does Initialit-1 do?

Initialit-1 teaches children how to read and spell through daily lessons, using research-based teaching methods. It also uses a range of engaging storybooks to develop children's vocabulary and oral language.

How does Initialit-1 teach reading and writing?

Initialit-1 teaches children that words are made up of sounds and that those sounds are represented by letters. Unlike learning to talk, which children do without formal instruction, children need to be directly taught the relationship between sounds and letters. In Initialit-1 children will build upon the knowledge of the alphabetic code that they gained in their first year of schooling (Foundation). They will learn that a letter or letters can make different sounds, and that two or three letters together can make a sound. They will also learn key terminology such as 'vowel', 'syllable', 'phoneme', 'grapheme', and 'digraph'.

An Initialit lesson will take place at least four times a week. The first 25 minutes are spent on the mat where the children are introduced to new letters and sounds or a grammatical concept 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 teacher 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 (words with irregular spelling patterns that cannot be sounded out letter by letter), or more practice using an Initialit reader. As your child's reading becomes more confident, they will be able to read a variety of texts.

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

How does Initialit-1 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 think about how the story relates to their own world. These sessions will provide opportunities for children to use new words, express their thoughts clearly writing full sentences, improve their listening comprehension and develop a love of literature. Specifically teaching children new words has a very positive impact on later reading comprehension. The books will also be linked to a writing task.

How will my child be assessed in Initialit-1?

There will be regular opportunities to assess your child's developing reading and spelling skills. Progress monitoring, Stop and Checks and Cumulative Reviews are built into the program. Children's reading progress relates to their ability to lift words off the page both accurately and fluently. Reading comprehension is assessed more informally during time spent in reading groups.

How can I help with my child's reading and spelling 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. Help your child learn to spell the target words which relate to the sounds they are learning. Practise reading and spelling tricky words. A list of words is found at the back of the Home Reading Diary.

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. Talk about what they are reading, checking for comprehension.

Find out more

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InitialLit-2

Parent/Carer information



whole-class instruction in literacy

What is InitialLit-2?

InitialLit-2 is a literacy program for all children in their third year of school (Year 2). It has been developed by MultiLit, a research-based initiative of Macquarie University.

What does InitialLit-2 do?

InitialLit-2 teaches children how to read and spell through daily lessons, using research-based teaching methods. It also uses a range of engaging storybooks to develop children's vocabulary, oral language and writing. InitialLit-2 will be used daily during the time set aside for literacy. InitialLit-2 meets the requirements of the Australian National Curriculum.

How does InitialLit-2 work?

By the time children are in Year 2, they have learnt that words are made up of sounds represented by letters. They should be able to work out most words they encounter for reading and spelling without guessing. The focus now moves to reading comprehension and spelling.

There are four main teaching components in InitialLit-2 spread across the week.

- ▶ Comprehension and fluency
- ▶ Spelling
- ▶ Grammar
- ▶ Vocabulary (using children's literature)

During the first 25-40 minutes of a lesson, the teacher will introduce a new concept to the children in a very clear, explicit way. A number of areas will be covered during the course of the program. Children will learn to use different comprehension strategies to help them understand what they are reading and they will practise reading with expression. They will learn the various ways to spell the sounds of English, as well as some spelling rules to help them make the correct choice. They will also be introduced to some simple and useful grammatical concepts to help with their writing.

After the new concept has been taught, the teacher will work with different groups of children in turn, helping them to develop their reading fluency and comprehension using a variety of reading material. The rest of the class will be engaged in different activities to consolidate what they have learnt.

How does InitialLit-2 develop oral language and vocabulary?

Throughout the year, children will enjoy listening to a number of quality storybooks. There are four teaching sessions dedicated to each book. 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 think about how the story relates to their own world. There is also a writing task used alongside the book.

How will my child be assessed in InitialLit-2?

Your child's developing reading comprehension and spelling skills will be assessed regularly. Spelling is formally assessed twice a term and comprehension is assessed once a term.

Will my child only be doing InitialLit-2 during literacy?

In addition to InitialLit-2, your child will be spending time during the week on different writing tasks. Sometimes the writing tasks will be based on the storybook used in InitialLit-2 or on the grammar lesson taught in InitialLit-2.

How can I help with my child's reading and spelling at home?

Take the time to listen to your child read regularly. They may like to choose their own book, or they may have brought a book home from school. Even if your child can read well, it is still appropriate and pleasurable to read to your child. This is a way of exposing your child to books that they may find difficult to read themselves. Provide a mix of non-fiction and fiction books to enjoy together. Discuss the story, pointing out any new words that may enrich their vocabulary.

It is also useful to help your child learn to read and spell the tricky words taught in class. A list of these words is found at the back of the Home Reading Diary. Your child may also bring home spelling words to practise.

In addition to supporting your child's reading and spelling, there are many ways to build your child's vocabulary and oral language. Talk about words in the environment: the way they are spelled, what they mean, what they convey. Make up stories together, do a crossword, play I Spy, sing songs, answer riddles, visit the local library, limit screen time.

What if my child is struggling to learn to read?

Some children do struggle to learn how to read. Talk to your child's teacher if you are worried about their reading or spelling. It is important to address any difficulties as early as possible so that extra support can be put in place to help them catch up.



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PARENT INFORMATION SESSION WHAT CAN YOU DO AT HOME?

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify rhyming words in songs and books• Clap syllables in a range of words• Develop word awareness by counting the words in simple sentences. e.g. "I am going to swimming"• Ask you child what sounds they can hear at the beginning, middle and end of CVC words or in syllables
DECODING/ PHONICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage your child to look closely at the words they are reading to decode all the sounds to blend• Use letter tiles to manipulate the sounds in words e.g. change the word mat to sat
VOCABULARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check for understanding when you encounter more sophisticated words in the environment or in texts.• Explain what new words mean in child friendly language• Use and show new words in context and provide opportunities for your child to reuse and practise new vocabulary• Expose your child to a range of good quality literature. <u>The Premier's Reading Challenge</u> lists and <u>Children's Book Council of Australia</u> are a great place to start!
READING COMPREHENSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read a range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction• (e.g. picture books, chapter books, poetry) to your child• Discuss the story and themes arising from the book, checking for comprehension• Ask your child to retell the story• Ask your child to tell you why he/she liked or did not like the book• Discuss characters and their traits