

Dear Parents,

Welcome to *First Little Readers*! This set of 25 adorable books was designed for you and your child to enjoy together. These delightful stories center on favorite topics like school, play, and friends. In addition, the books are tailored to fit your child's particular skills and needs, helping you maximize the learning opportunities. Don't worry—you don't have to be a literacy expert to teach your child to read. *First Little Readers* and this little guide are all you need to do just that!

Enjoy!
The Editors



About Guided Reading Levels

Many teachers use the guided reading system to build literacy skills in their classrooms. The key to the system is leveling—choosing books at just the right level for each individual child. The Level A books in this set were written specifically for children who are just beginning to read. Short sentences, repeated words, and patterned text are just some of the features to support your beginning reader. To see how you can help as a parent, check out the quick, easy tips that follow. Then get ready to have some fun—and give your child a great start on the road to reading success!

Tips for Using *First Little Readers*

Before Reading

- Look at the cover of the book with your child. Read the title and talk about the illustration together. Then page through the book and discuss the pictures, inviting your child to predict what the story might be about. For example, the pictures in *I Like School* show a boy engaged in different school activities.
- Help your child make connections between the pictures in the book and his or her own experiences. For example, ask: *What do you like to do at school? Do you think we'll see it in the story?*
- If the book contains any concepts that may be new to your child, talk about them ahead of time. For example, you might discuss the picture on page 3 if your child hasn't used an easel before. The more background knowledge kids have before reading, the better!
- Finally, talk with your child about ways to figure out unfamiliar words. For example, children can look for beginning and ending sounds, and use pictures for clues.

During Reading

- Let your child read the book aloud as you look on, noting your child's strengths and challenges. What problem-solving strategies does your child use to figure out words or correct mistakes?

- When children struggle with a word, it can be tempting to jump in and read it for them. However, you can provide support and guidance while letting your child do the work. For example, you might provide clues like these for the word *paint* on page 3: *What's the first letter? What sound does it make? What is the boy doing in the picture? Does it start with the p sound?*

After Reading

- First, talk with your child about the story. What parts did your child like most and least? Why?
- Next, talk about the experience of reading itself. Did your child encounter any problems, and if so, what did he or she do to solve them?
- As you discuss the more challenging parts of the book, remind your child of the different tools available for figuring out words. For instance, children can break words into parts, use what they know about letters and sounds, and look for context clues in text and pictures.
- You might also like to use this time to practice fluency (reading with expression) with your child. For example, you might point out a sentence ending with an exclamation point and read it in an excited voice, having your child copy your tone.
- To see how well your child understood the story, ask him or her to retell it. Encourage your child to describe what happened using his or her own words. For more tips on assessing your child's progress, see the checklist on the back page of this guide.



Tips for Assessing Progress

While the chart below can help you assess your child's progress in different areas, keep in mind that learning to read isn't something that happens all at once. Reading involves using many skills, and these skills are acquired at different rates by different children; it happens along a continuum, and even the same child might one day be challenged by something that came easily the day before. What's most important in developing reading skills is—not surprisingly—reading! So keep sharing books with your child, and your child will learn to read—and love it!

Reading Skills Checklist			
Does your child...	Not Yet	Sometimes	Regularly
follow the print with his or her eyes (i.e., without using a finger)?			
recognize most words, or use letters and sounds to figure them out?			
use context clues from pictures or text to figure out a new word's meaning?			
self-correct by rereading to pronounce a difficult word or to improve expression?			
use question marks and other punctuation to guide expression?			

First Little Readers™

A

I Can Draw!

by Deborah Schecter



SCHOLASTIC



I can draw a seal.



I can draw a clown.



I can draw a king.