

[NAPLAN literacy and numeracy skills using visual supports](#)

With the NAPLAN fast approaching it can be a good time to identify and understand how well developed your child's literacy and numeracy skills are. However it can also be a stressful time for both the children and their families, especially for children whose skills are not developing easily. Irrespective of their NAPLAN scores, children need effective literacy and numeracy skills for functional life skills (using money and time) as much for academic progress (reading, spelling). To help children finding literacy and numeracy development challenging, did you know that Kid Sense literacy skilled Occupational Therapists (OT's) can help?

Here are some activities that our therapists use to develop literacy and numeracy skills:

- **Story Mapping Techniques:** At Kid Sense we use many different ways of helping children to put their imaginative ideas down on paper. This can include using a 4w (who, where, when, what) structure, mind maps, a mountain story plan (starting with the setting and characters, adding in what happens in the story as you travel up the mountain, the main event or problem when you reach the peak of the mountain, and then the resolution and ending as you go back down the mountain). These visuals can help support a child to be able to generate their ideas, plan them into a logical sequence and get all of the information they need written down.
- **COPS editing visual:** This is a visual that we find helps children practise self-editing of their own work. This includes checking for C= capitals, O= overall does your writing make sense?, P= punctuation - have you used ?,

!, “, and S= spelling.

- **‘bed’ letter orientation technique:** This is a visual to help identify the orientation and formation differences between ‘b’ and ‘d’. You can also make a ‘bed’ by touching both knuckles together as you put your thumbs up on both hands, where the thumb on your left hand is the ‘b’ (start of the bed) and the thumb on your right hand is the ‘d’ (end of your bed).
- **‘p vs q’ visual:** This visual of a prince (‘p’) and queen (‘q’) helps identify the orientation and formation difference between ‘p’ and ‘q’.
- **Long vowel alternative spelling visual table:** As we know the English language is complex, with many alternate spellings of the same sounds. This table can help children ‘see’ the different spellings for the same sound and the rules within which they operate, so that you can use the correct one in your words.
- **Number line:** This can help to visually ‘see’ and understand simple addition, subtraction and assist with skip counting in order to help this task become a more purely ‘mental math’ skill. You can use a whiteboard marker to physically jump and move between the numbers.
- **Number grid of 1-100:** This is a great way to assist with skip counting, so that a child can visually see and count the numbers. It can also help your child to understand any patterns.
- **Visual timers:** These can help children; give meaning to time (eg how long is 5 minutes), practise getting a task complete within in a set period of time, work under a time pressure and assist with their time management. Seeing the time slowly disappear helps them to process how long a task may take, rather than just being told they have ‘half an hour’ (whatever that means if you don’t understand time).
- Overall, OTs have lots of different visual strategies to assist with letter formation, letter sizing (‘sky, ground, water’ visuals), idea generation, spelling, story writing and numeracy concepts.

Here are some suggestions that you may find helpful to continue developing literacy development in the home environment:

- **Letter and number magnets** on the fridge so that your child can practise spelling words, sequencing numbers or even ‘making’ their sight words with the magnets.
- **Play word games and do crosswords** to help develop vocabulary and

spelling

- **Read** with your child each day
- Get your child to **write letters or emails** to friends and family
- Get your child to **write the shopping list** for you or write in birthday cards
- Get your child to **make collages of each letter sound** (e.g. 'r' sound) of drawings, pictures from magazines or shopping catalogues, and writing words that start or include the sound r.
- Incorporate the **use of visual supports** as much as possible to assist with retaining skills as many of us retain visual more than auditory information

If you feel that your child requires further support (or *you* need more fun ideas to practice these skills at home that match your child's skill levels), you may find Kid Sense Occupational Therapy and/or Speech Pathology beneficial for your child's literacy and numeracy skills.

Remember, NAPLAN can be a stressful time for children if they are given or feel too much pressure. By providing a stress free environment and encouraging them to try their best while also developing their foundation skills at home also (in fun and creative ways) can be a way to better understand your child and their learning needs, and get the most out of the NAPLAN.

Contact us today to make an initial enquiry or book an assessment for your child
on 1800 KID SENSE (1800 543 736)

