

Independence

Transition Roadmap

A Four-Phase Framework for Growing Independent Readers





How to Use This Roadmap

- ✓ Identify your child's current phase
- ✓ Plan support strategies for each phase
- ✓ Avoid rushing or delaying transitions
- ✓ Recognise readiness cues for transitions
- ✓ Set realistic expectations for timelines
- ✓ Celebrate progress at every stage

■ Phases overlap

Ages are approximate

Regression is normal

Read-alouds never stop!

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Phase 1: You Read

You are the primary reader, book curator, and enthusiasm model.

Birth – Age 6 & 5–7 years as primary Primary reader & world-builder

For the Parent

- Reading aloud multiple times daily
- Choosing books from library/bookstore
- Using expression and engagement
- Asking questions to build comprehension
- Making reading joyful and interactive

For the Child

- Listening to stories and looking at pictures
- Making connections and asking questions
- Building vocabulary through exposure
- Learning book concepts (front/back, L-to-R)
- Associating reading with joy

READINESS CUES FOR PHASE 2

- ✓ Recites books from memory
- ✓ Fills in words when you pause
- ✓ Points to words while reading
- ✓ Says 'Let me read it!'
- ✓ Shows interest in letter sounds
- ✓ Rhymes words playfully

■ ■ When you see 3–5 cues consistently: Begin introducing early reader books.

Let child 'read' familiar pages. Start pointing out simple words.

PHASE 1 ACTION PLAN

CONTINUE

- Daily read-alouds (15–30 min)
- Library/bookstore visits
- Building vocabulary through talk
- Responding to child's questions

START PREPARING

- Point out words occasionally
- Let child turn pages
- Pause to let child fill in words
- Introduce alphabet playfully

REMEMBER

- Don't rush — readiness varies
- Keep it joyful, never pressure
- Child's job: LOVE books
- Your enthusiasm builds their future

Phases 2 & 3

You Read Together • They Read, You Support



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Phase 2: You Read Together

Shared reading where both parent and child participate.

Ages 5–8

2–4 years

Co-reader, supporter & cheerleader

For the Parent

- Reading together, child participating
- Supporting child's decoding attempts
- Alternating pages or sections
- Continuing read-alouds of harder books
- Celebrating progress without pressure

For the Child

- Reading simple or decodable books
- Attempting to sound out words
- Reading dialogue or repeated phrases
- Asking for help with challenging words
- Building confidence and fluency

STRATEGIES TO TRY

- Popcorn reading (alternate pages)
- Echo reading (you read, they repeat)
- Choral reading (in unison)
- Dialogue reading (child reads character voices)
- Easy books for independent practice

READINESS CUES FOR PHASE 3

- ✓ Reads simple books without help
- ✓ Self-corrects when something sounds wrong
- ✓ Reads with expression
- ✓ Wants to read to themselves
- ✓ Can read 15–20 min independently
- ✓ Shows pride in reading

■ ■ When you see 3–5 cues consistently: Gradually reduce support, offer more independence. Continue reading complex books aloud to them.

PHASE 2 ACTION PLAN

TRY THESE

- Popcorn/echo/choral reading
- Give easy books for solo practice
- Dialogue reading
- Independent practice nearby

SUPPORT

- Help with words (no shame)
- Celebrate self-corrections
- Normalise mistakes
- Build stamina gradually

REMEMBER

- They still need read-alouds!
- Mistakes are learning
- Fluency takes years, not months
- Keep it fun and low-pressure

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Phase 3: They Read, You Support

Child reads independently, but you remain the safety net and mentor.

Ages 7–10

3–5 years

Safety net, encourager & mentor

For the Parent

- Available when child needs help
- Continuing read-alouds of challenging books
- Discussing books they're reading
- Helping navigate library/bookstore
- Modelling your own reading life

For the Child

- Reading independently as primary mode
- Choosing many of their own books
- Reading for pleasure without prompting
- Building stamina (30+ minutes)
- Developing personal reading preferences

READINESS CUES FOR PHASE 4

- ✓ Reads 45+ min without support
- ✓ Chooses books without help
- ✓ Manages own reading schedule
- ✓ Identifies as 'a reader'
- ✓ Recommends books to others
- ✓ Strong opinions about books

■ ■ When you see these consistently: Celebrate! Shift to mentor role. Continue optional read-alouds. Remain their companion and cheerleader.



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Phase 4: They Lead, You Companion

Child is a fully independent reader. You shift to fellow reader.

Age 9+

Lifelong!

Fellow reader & enthusiastic audience

For the Parent

- Sharing your own reading life
- Discussing books as equals
- Swapping book recommendations
- Occasional read-alouds by mutual choice
- Supporting without controlling

For the Child

- Choosing all their own books
- Managing their own reading time
- Engaging with books deeply
- Recommending books to you
- Sharing reading life by choice

- HOW YOU'LL INTERACT IN PHASE 4
- ✓ "What are you reading right now?"

✓ "You would absolutely love this author!"

✓ Audiobook road trips together
- ✓ "I just finished this — want to hear about it?"

✓ Texting each other about plot twists

✓ Bookstore trips as co-conspirators

PHASE 4 ACTION PLAN

YOUR NEW ROLE

→ Fellow reader: 'I loved that too!'

→ Enthusiastic audience

→ Trusted advisor

→ Reading companion

KEEP DOING

→ Show genuine interest in their reads

→ Share your own reading

→ Occasional read-alouds (their choice)

→ Celebrate their journey

DO NOT

→ Quiz them on books

→ Judge book choices

→ Track or manage reading

→ Compare to others

✓ This is the goal — celebrate it!

✓ They still value your interest

✓ Connection through reading continues to grow

✓ You have raised a lifelong reader!

PHASES AT A GLANCE

Phase	Ages	Child's Role	Parent's Role	Key Milestone
Phase 1: You Read	0–6	Listener & learner	Primary reader	Child shows interest in partic
Phase 2: Read Together	5–8	Co-reader	Co-reader & guide	Child reads simple books indep
Phase 3: They Read	7–10	Independent with support	Safety net & mentor	Child reads fluently without h
Phase 4: They Lead	9+	Confident independent	Fellow reader	Child manages own reading life



PLANNING WORKSHEET: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

1. Which phase best describes our current reading relationship?

- ☐ Phase 1: I read to my child ☐ Phase 2: We read together ☐ Phase 3: Child reads, needs support ☐ Phase 4: Child leads, I companion

2. What specific behaviours make me think we're in this phase?

3. Readiness cues I'm noticing for the next phase:

4. What concerns do I have about transitioning?

5. Based on our current phase, I will:

CONTINUE DOING:	START DOING:	STOP DOING:

6. I'll know we've transitioned when I see:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

My child is 8 but still in Phase 1. Is that a problem?

No! Ages are approximate. Readiness matters more than age. Focus on the cues, not the calendar.

My 10-year-old still wants me to read to them. Should I stop?

Absolutely not! Your child can be in Phase 3 for independent reading and still love read-alouds. That's i...

We seem to be going backwards. Why?

Normal! Regression happens during stress, new school, growth spurts, or reading slumps. Provide support w...

Should I push harder books if child only wants easy ones?

Easy books build confidence, fluency, and joy. Encourage variety, but don't forbid easy books. Balance is...

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Your goal isn't to reach Phase 4 as fast as possible.

*Your goal is to raise a child who loves reading, chooses books independently,
and shares their reading life with you throughout their lifetime.*

That happens gradually, with trust, patience, and lots of read-alouds.

— **Words That Bloom**