

## How Nutfield Teaches Your Child Reading Skills

All classes in the elementary schools in Derry Cooperative School District use a reading program called Four-Blocks™ Literacy Model developed by Patricia M. Cunningham and Dorothy P. Hall. There is no Four-Blocks for kindergarten because it is not developmentally appropriate for the 5-6 yr. old learner.

“A developmentally appropriate kindergarten is like a good home, where children can learn through playing, cooking, watching, listening, acting, reading or pretend reading, and writing or pretend writing. It is a place where they can explore their environment, ask questions and answer questions. It is a place where the teacher is like a parent—reading to the children and talking about the stories they read; writing for children and allowing them to write for different purposes; having time to explore their community on fieldtrips; and talking about those experiences together. It is a place where children clean up after themselves, learn more about familiar and unfamiliar topics (usually called themes), and learn more about what interests them most— themselves. Most importantly, it is a place where children learn that reading provides both enjoyment and information, and they develop the desire to learn to read and write.” (Hall and Cunningham, 1997)

Knowing all this about kindergarteners, the authors, with the help of kindergarten teachers, devised a program that is developmentally appropriate for the young learner. This program is known as Building Blocks™.

The good news is the kindergarten classes at Nutfield have been using Building Blocks™ for the last several years. There are six blocks to the Building Blocks™ program.

"The six blocks are:

- Children learn that reading provides both enjoyment and information, and they develop a desire to learn to read.
- Students also learn many new concepts and add words and meaning to their speaking vocabularies.
- Children learn print concepts, including how to read from left to right, how to read a page from top to bottom, etc.
- Children develop phonemic awareness, including the concept of rhyme.
- Students learn to read and write some interesting-to-them words, such as “Pizza Hut”, “cat”, “bear.”
- Students learn some letter names and sounds usually connected to the interesting words they have learned.” The Teacher’s Guide to Building Blocks™ by Dorothy P. Hall and Elaine Williams

Regardless of where your child will be attending first grade, this program provides the necessary pieces to the puzzle that we call literacy.

We are often asked by parents for suggestions for things they can do at home to help their child in this learning journey. Visit the Hallway page of the Web site, to find more information on supporting your child as they develop their reading skills.