

The Ready4K team recommends these rules for translating complex and rich messages into something every parent can understand and do...

1. Break down complex topics into manageable activities

Write understandable, actionable messages for parents by mapping each high-level education standard onto a WHAT a WHY and a HOW.

WHAT do you want families to do or know?

WHY is it important?

HOW can they do it?

HOW can they keep this learning going?

Create a WHAT, WHY and HOW that leverage parents' relationships with their children and build off of the things they are already doing.

FACT: Describing the things you do builds language skills. These skills make it easier for kids to share their thoughts. Their reading skills get stronger, too!

TIP: Describe your actions during daily activities. As you do the dishes, talk about it. Try, "I'm pouring in the blue soap." Make sure you use lots of details.

GROWTH: Keep describing. Now it's your child's turn. As they play a game ask, "What are you doing?" Ask for details, "How do you play? Why do you like it?"

2. Write with equity, access and empowerment in mind

Standard: Count up to ten objects using one-to-one correspondence (one object for each number word) with increasing accuracy.

When children count objects 1-by-1 they learn that we count to find out "how many."

Wording is often the difference between a message that feels overwhelming and distancing, and one that feels inclusive and empowering.

Look for the simplest, warmest way to communicate the learning goal. If you can't explain a concept in simple terms, it may require too much background knowledge for a parent to successfully explore it with their kid.

3. Level your text to maximize accessibility

The average reading level in the USA is 7th to 8th grade. You can use the **Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability Formula** in Microsoft Word to calculate the grade level of your text ([see instructions here](#)).

If the grade level is too high, here are some tricks to try:

1. Shorten your sentences. Try for a period instead of a comma.
2. Eliminate uncommon words or jargon.
3. Choose words with fewer syllables.
4. Include fewer descriptors and more action.

Averages

Sentences per Paragraph	4
Words per Sentence	7
Characters per Word	4.3

Readability

Flesch Reading Ease	90.9
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	2.3

...and these rules for ensuring your messages are opened, read, and acted upon.

4. Short is sweet

Research has shown that people typically read the first one and a half lines of text in a paragraph, with less reading after the first paragraph. By the end, they're skimming the left side of the page. Keep your messages short and sweet so you don't lose your opportunity to motivate your parents!

5. Formatting is your friend

Raw Text	Formatted
Ready4K complements the work of teachers by helping parents act on teachable moments.	Ready4K complements the work of teachers by helping parents act on teachable moments .
We accomplish this by requiring no teacher hours to develop the curriculum or enroll parents; giving parents standards aligned insights targeted to their child's age or grade; and covering a whole-child curriculum that includes SEL, academic, physical development, and parental support content.	How We Support Teachers <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. No teacher time needed to develop the curriculum or enroll parents2. Standards aligned insights targeted to their classroom's ages or grade level3. Whole-child curriculum includes crucial SEL, academic, physical development, and parental support content.
And research shows this strategy can lead to 2+ months of growth over a school year.	And research shows this strategy can lead to 2+ months of growth over a school year.

Use formatting to help your families find the most important information in your message, because otherwise they might not find it at all.

Here are some simple strategies to focus attention on key words and phrases:

- Use bullets and numbers
- Choose one pop-out color
- Stick with a single font

6. Create a crystal-clear call-to-action (CTA)

If you have something you need your families to do - whether it's show up to a virtual event, fill out a survey, or return a form - it needs to be crystal clear and unmissable. If your families don't take action, your message will have missed the mark.

7. Grab 'em from go

Use your **subject line** to tell your reader what your email has to offer. If you have one message, make it the subject line. If you're sending a digest, put your most important piece of news in the subject line.

8. Right-size the context

Save your personal note for your closing remarks. It will let your families know you're thinking of them without pulling critical time and attention from the news you need to share.

Bonus Rule: Lots to Share? Make it a Digest!

When you have a lot of news and resources to share, turn your email into a digest! Start off with a skimmable content list, then use headers and CTAs for every section.

This helps your reader find the content they need and elevates more of your essential news above the fold. If you're using Gmail, [make your digest a template](#) to save yourself time.

Today's Digest

1. Get a Tablet for Each of Your Kids
2. Access Free Home Internet
3. Attendance Requirements
4. New Meals Options

1. Get a Tablet for Each of Your Kids
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Visit [CTA.org](#) to apply