



For Professionals: Exploring Language and Literacy Everyday With Children



In your everyday work with children, try to identify language and literacy concepts that are developmentally appropriate. Weave the language and literacy concepts into learning centers, investigations, and book reading...

...by reading aloud

Read aloud to children at least once a day

Read to children in small groups and individually

Encourage children to look carefully at the book itself: cover, end papers, and title page

Note the names of the author and illustrator and the dedication page

Occasionally point out key features of print (left-to-right/top-to-bottom progression, spaces between words, punctuation)

Take time to introduce a new book to children

Choose books that reflect the diversity of our world

Read different kinds of stories: non-fiction, fantasy, funny, sad, rhyming

Get to know books before sharing them with children

Sit so that all children are comfortable and can easily see the illustrations

Be dramatic! Be silly—play with different voices, make funny or scary sounds, shout, whisper, pause dramatically or speed up when there's a lot of action and slow down at the end of a book



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Read the same book in different ways:

- Straight through with as few interruptions as possible
- “Read” the pictures instead of the words
- Before reading a page, ask children to predict what might happen
- Encourage children to say repeating phrases

Re-read the same book many times

...by talking

Help children make connections between stories and their own experiences

Build vocabulary by discussing one or two words that might be new to children. Use the new words as often as possible

Engage in conversations about:

- The story’s setting—where it took place
- The characters—what they did or said, what they are like
- The sequence of events in the story—beginning, middle, end
- The problem and solution in the story
- How the story makes children feel

Find opportunities to talk about similarities and differences in words and sounds

Let children supply missing rhyming words when reading rhyming stories and poems

Engage children in retelling the story

Talk about the books you are reading

Refer to books in your conversations with children

Have brief discussions when you reach the end of stories



Ask children to tell about their favorite stories at circle time

Help extend rather than direct children's conversations

... through activities

Engage children in activities related to the books you read

Sing songs, play rhyming games, recite nursery rhymes, chant poems

Help children act out favorite stories

Encourage children to make up silly rhyming words and chants

Play games that involve giving or following directions, introduce new vocabulary or involve making sounds

Provide materials that encourage language development such as puppets, flannel boards, etc.

Help children write their own books

... by encouraging writing

Have a variety of writing materials available: pencils, markers, paper, blank books, magazines, envelopes, menus, and maps

Expose children to the power of print aside from books: signs, labels, etc.

Involve children when you read and write notes that pertain to them

Find meaningful ways for children to write: labels, signs, notes to family members

Make sure children see you reading and writing

Notice and comment on letters and their sounds



...with displays

Display books on shelves that children can reach

Display classroom books in more than one place, rather than all of them in the book area

Display letters, words and other written symbols at children's eye level

Display children's drawings and writing

Write down and display children's own language

Include meaningful print, such as signs and messages, in your learning environment

...by supporting language and literacy in the home

Make families aware of their children's interests, skills and abilities

Encourage children to bring favorite books from home to share with the group

Let children borrow favorite books to take home

Make sure families know the hours that the public library is open

Invite family members to be guest readers

Tell family members about books their child really enjoys

Schedule book-making workshops for families

Encourage families to provide children with easy access to paper, pencils, markers and crayons

