

Presentation for Early Childhood Investigations
October, 2013

The ECE Director's Guide to Must-Have Literacy Practices in Early Education Classrooms

Nell K. Duke
University of Michigan

Plan for this Presentation

- Why start so early with literacy?
- Expectations for literacy development
 - Birth to three
 - Ages four and five
 - End of kindergarten
- Must-have practices to help children meet these expectations

Why Start So Early with Literacy?

- Literacy knowledge is an excellent predictor of children's later school achievement.
- Literacy builds language knowledge.
- Literacy provides a way for children to learn about the world around them.
- Literacy can serve many purposes at home and in early childhood environments.
- Literacy can be a source of great joy for children.

Birth to Three-Year-Old Accomplishments

From Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999, p. 59

- Recognizes specific books by cover.
- Pretends to read books.
- Understands that books are handled in particular ways.
- Enters into a book-sharing routine with primary caregivers.
- Vocalization play in crib gives way to enjoyment of rhyming language, nonsense word play, etc.
- Labels objects in books.
- Comments on characters in books.
- Looks at picture in book and realizes it is a symbol for a real object.

Birth to Three-Year-Old Accomplishments

From Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999, p. 59

- Listens to stories.
- Requests/commands adult to read or write.
- May begin attending to specific print, such as letters in names.
- Uses increasingly purposeful scribbling.
- Occasionally seems to distinguish between drawing and writing.
- Produces some letter-like forms and scribbles with some features of English writing.

Three- and Four-Year-Old Accomplishments

From Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start Resource Center (2010). *The Head Start child development and early learning framework: Promoting positive outcomes in early childhood programs serving children 3 – 5 years old*. Arlington, VA: Author.

Three- and Four-Year-Old Accomplishments

Book Appreciation and Knowledge

The interest in books and their characteristics, and the ability to understand and get meaning from stories and information from books and other texts.

- Shows interest in shared reading experiences and looking at books independently.
- Recognizes how books are read, such as front-to-back and one page at a time, and recognizes basic characteristics, such as title, author, and illustrator.
- Asks and answers questions and makes comments about print materials.

Three- and Four-Year-Old Accomplishments

- Demonstrates interest in different kinds of literature, such as fiction and non-fiction books and poetry, on a range of topics.
- Retells stories or information from books through conversation, artistic works, creative movement, or drama.

Three- and Four-Year-Old Accomplishments

Phonological Awareness

An awareness that language can be broken into words, syllables, and smaller pieces of sound.

- Identifies and discriminates between words in language.
- Identifies and discriminates between separate syllables in words.
- Identifies and discriminates between sounds and phonemes in language, such as attention to beginning and ending sounds of words and recognition that different words begin or end with the same sound.

Three- and Four-Year-Old Accomplishments

Alphabet Knowledge

The names and sounds associated with letters.

- Recognizes that the letters of the alphabet are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named.
- Recognizes that letters of the alphabet have distinct sound(s) associated with them.
- Attends to the beginning letters and sounds in familiar words.
- Identifies letters and associates correct sounds with letters.

Three- and Four-Year-Old Accomplishments

Print Concepts and Conventions

The concepts about print and early decoding (identifying letter-sound relationships).

- Recognizes print in everyday life, such as numbers, letters, one's name, words, and familiar logos and signs.
- Understands that print conveys meaning.
- Understands conventions, such as print moves from left to right and top to bottom of a page.
- Recognizes words as a unit of print and understands that letters are grouped to form words.
- Recognizes the association between spoken or signed and written words.

Three- and Four-Year-Old Accomplishments

Early Writing

The familiarity with writing implements, conventions, and emerging skills to communicate through written representations, symbols, and letters.

- Experiments with writing tools and materials.
- Recognizes that writing is a way of communicating for a variety of purposes, such as giving information, sharing stories, or giving an opinion.
- Uses scribbles, shapes, pictures, and letters to represent objects, stories, experiences, or ideas.
- Copies, traces, or independently writes letters or words.

Three- and Four-Year-Old Accomplishments

Receptive Language

The ability to comprehend or understand language.

- Attends to language during conversations, songs, stories, or other learning experiences.
- Comprehends increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
- Comprehends different forms of language, such as questions or exclamations.
- Comprehends different grammatical structures or rules for using language.

Three- and Four-Year-Old Accomplishments

Expressive Language

The ability to use language.

- Engages in communication and conversation with others.
- Uses language to express ideas and needs.
- Uses increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
- Uses different forms of language.
- Uses different grammatical structures for a variety of purposes.
- Engages in storytelling.
- Engages in conversations with peers and adults.

End-of-Kindergarten Accomplishments

The most widely used end-of-kindergarten accomplishments presently are the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

See:

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>

Must-Have Practices

(Disclaimers: (1) The broad categories are must-haves, perhaps not all the specifics; (2) This is not an exhaustive list)

Read Alouds

Print-Referencing Read Alouds

- Verbal and non-verbal strategies for drawing children's attention to print during adult-child read aloud (e.g., Justice & Ezell, 2002; Justice, McGinty, Piasta, Kaderavek, & Fan, 2010), such as:
 - running finger under words
 - noting specific letters and features of print
 - asking where to start
 - counting words
 - pointing out print within pictures

Interactive Read Alouds

- Read interactively
 - Ask questions and make comments
 - Especially higher-order questions and explanations
 - Engage child/children in extended conversations
 - Encourage chiming (saying parts with you)
 - Elaborate (when child makes a comment, such as "yuck" and you elaborate on it)
 - Provide feedback (e.g., "Yes, I think so too.")
 - Point out ("Look at . . .", especially when children are unlikely to notice an important detail on their own)
 - Manage (e.g., "Let's go on to the next page now.")

(E.g., Mol, Bus, & de Jong, 2009)

Vocabulary Instruction During and After Read Aloud

- Kid-friendly explanations at point of contact
- Ask children to say the word
- Use support within text:
 - Graphics
 - Repetition
 - Context?
- Revisit after reading: examples, nonexamples
- Reuse at other times

Let's think it through with the words *dainty* and *den*

(E.g., Beck & McKeown, 2007)

Encouragement to Write Every Day

Surround Children with Materials for Drawing and Writing

- A variety of writing instruments
- A variety of paper
- Dry-erase boards and chalkboards
- No-mess materials
- Computers
- Manipulatives
- Craft supplies
- Edible writing and drawing materials
- Infant-and-Toddler-Safe Materials

Sensory-Oriented Drawing and Writing Activities

- sand tray
- salt tray
- textured letters
- alphabet cookies (making and eating)
- foam
- finger painting
- and so on

Scaffolded Writing

(e.g., Bodrova & Leong, 1998)

- Ask the child the message she/he would like to write.
- Repeat this message with the child.
- Draw one line for each word using a highlighter or pen.
- Have the child write one “word” per line (however the child can).
- Read and reread the message as needed.

Interactive Writing

Interactive writing involves young children in contributing to a piece of writing.

- It is synonymous with or similar to (depending on whose description you read) shared writing or “sharing the pen.”
- There is research indicating that interactive writing fosters literacy development.

Literacy-Enriched Dramatic Play Environments

Literacy and Dramatic Play

- Dramatic play promotes many aspects of development
- Literacy-enriched dramatic play is especially good for promoting literacy.

Literacy and Dramatic Play

- Nearly any dramatic play theme provides literacy opportunities:
 - E.g., Housekeeping, Boat, Grocery Store, Veterinary Clinic, Pizza Parlor, Campout, Flower Shop, Firehouse, Airplane, Restaurant, Post Office, Library, and many more!

Literacy and Dramatic Play

- It is important to:
 - follow the child' s/children's lead, being open to new uses for literacy artifacts.
 - model use of unfamiliar literacy artifacts.
 - model curiosity about literacy artifacts.
 - allow artifacts to "travel."

Oral Word Play

Oral Word Play

- Babbling
- Rhyming series
- Tongue Twisters
- "Count the Beats"
- "Going on Vacation"
- "Who Gets Up?"
- Songs, such as:
 - *Down by the Bay, The Name Game, Apples and Bananas, Old MacDonald, Willoughby Wallaby Woo*
- Segmenting and Blending Games

Oral Word Play

- Word play can focus on vocabulary as well, as in:
- Categories game
 - I Spy. . .
 - Twenty questions

Instruction in Letters AND Sounds

Components of Letter-Sound Knowledge

- How letters are shaped and formed
- Names of letters
- Sound(s) associated with letters
- Sound(s) associated with groups of letters



A little more about letter names

Sometimes:

- The sound the letter represents isn't in the letter's name!
- The sound the letter represents comes first in the letter's name.
- The sound the letter represents comes second in the letter's name.

And

- The vowel in the letter's name varies. (e.g., *b, f, j, q, r*)

Rich Conversation

Rich Conversation

- Talk about your activities
- Talk with children whenever and wherever you can
- Ask open-ended questions
- Take advantage of quiet times for talk
- Get close
- Really listen

Rich Conversation

- Respond to children and expand on what they say
 - Child: [*Points to light on the ceiling.*]
 - Adult: You like the light.
 -
 - Child: [*Points to a photo of a dog on a book cover.*] Doggie!
 - Adult: What a cute doggie!
 - Child: Brown.
 - Adult: Yes, that's a brown dog.

Rich Conversation

- Tell stories
- Tell and *explain*
- Get beyond the here and now
- Engage in pretend talk
- Encourage peer-to-peer talk
- Consider teaching baby signs
- Provide props that promote oral language
- Make time for extended discourse

Rich Conversation

- Use a rich, but not too rich, vocabulary
- Use vocabulary in supportive contexts
 - Use words that really fit
 - Provide language-based and visual clues for figuring out new words
 - Include taxonomic information
 - Promote curiosity about words
 - Praise children when they ask you about a word they don't know
 - Praise children when they let you know they don't understand
 - Model questions and curiosity about words

Rich Conversation

Things Not To Do:

- Correct children
- Demand “complete sentences”
- Insist on a “quiet” room during learning times
- Dismiss child/children’s home language

Note: Children should speak their native language at home

Making a Wide Variety of Texts Available throughout the Room(s), Including in a Fantastic Book Nook

The Book Nook – Not Just for Books and Not Just a Nook

- A: Alphabet and Other Concept Books
- B: Board Books
- C: Computer Software
- D: Directions
- E: Email and Electronic Texts
- F: Flannel Boards
- G: Guides
- H: How-To Books

The Book Nook – Not Just for Books and Not Just a Nook

- I: Informational Texts
- J: Junk Mail
- K: Kitchen Magnets
- L: Library Books
- M: Magazines
- N: Novelty Books
- O: Out-and-About Books
- P: Poems

The Book Nook – Not Just for Books and Not Just a Nook

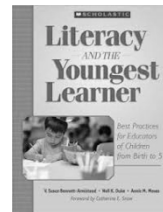
- Q: Quiz books, Cards, and Machines
- R: Recipes and Cookbooks
- S: Storybooks
- T: Touch-and-Feel Books
- U: Use-up Books
- V: Vinyl Books
- W: Web Sites
- X: Maps and Other Reference Materials
- Y: You-Make-It-Yourself Books
- Z: Zany Books

Tons of Experiences to Build Content Knowledge

Thank You

To all of the teachers and children whose work is shown in this presentation.

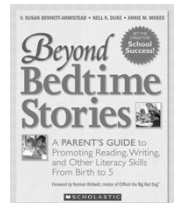
Further Information



↑ A book for educators of children birth to five



↓ A DVD Guide for Workshops for Early Childhood Educators



↑ A book for parents of children birth to five