



**Early Reading and
Scientifically-Based Research**
**Implications for Practice in Early Childhood
Education Programs**

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Why is High-Quality Preschool Important?



- 68% of low-income 4th graders cannot read at the proficient level. (NAEP, 2000)
- 90% chance that a poor reader at the end of 1st grade will be a poor reader at the end of 4th grade. (Juel, 1988)
- A majority of reading problems can be prevented in preschool and the early grades. (NRC, 1998)

Why is High-Quality Preschool Important?



- Children in high-quality preschools display better language, cognitive and social skills than children who attended low-quality programs. (Cost, Quality and Outcomes, 1999)
- Children who participated in cognitive focused preschools were less likely to repeat a grade or be referred to special education. (Art Reynolds, 2000)

We know that...



- There is an indelible connection between language development, vocabulary, and early reading.
- Knowledge and content have an important role in developing language, cognition, and early reading skills.
- Reading is a learned skill, not a biological awakening.

We know that...

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- Children need coherent, intentional instruction in the preschool years.
 - The literacy environment at home and in school makes a difference.
 - Reading aloud to children is very important.
 - Preschool teachers need sustained high quality professional development.

We know that...



- All developmental domains are closely related.
- Growth in language and cognition should occur in the context of the other areas of development, including social, emotional, and physical.

A Place to Start



- Cognitive Development
- Language Development
- Book Reading
- Classroom Environment
- Professional Development

Federal Programs that Support Early Reading



- Title I, Part A
- Even Start Family Literacy Program
- Early Reading First
- Early Childhood Educator
Professional Development Program

Early Childhood Cognitive Development



“From birth through age 5, children are developing the language, thinking, physical, emotional, and social skills that they will need for the rest of their lives.”

-Helping Your Pre-School Child, 2002

Early Childhood Cognitive Development



What do we mean by “early childhood cognitive development” ?

Children's development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions, which help them to think about and understand the world around them.

- Teaching Our Youngest, 2002

Early Childhood Cognitive Development



Why is it important to stimulate children's cognitive development from the moment they are born?

- Research shows a strong connection between a child's cognitive development early in life and their later success in school and life.

e.g.: Children who can distinguish the building blocks of speech at 6 months are better at acquiring the skills for learning to read at 4 and 5 years of age.

(Good Start, Grow Smart)

Early Childhood Cognitive Development



What developmental research tells us about how to promote children's cognitive development:

- Young children learn most effectively from quality interactions with caregivers.
- Teachers support children's learning through scaffolding," which refers to a broad of interactive styles that support the young child's attention, cognitive and language skills.
- Scaffolding occurs in everyday situations.

- Dr. Susan Landry, 2001

Early Childhood Cognitive Development



What types of *scaffolding* can teachers provide that result in optimal cognitive and social outcomes for children?

- Providing classroom environments that expose children to print and materials that foster their understanding of concepts
- Responding to children's requests and signals promptly and sensitively
- Maintaining and expanding on children's interests in specific learning activities
- Providing children with choices and prompting children to make thoughtful decisions

Developing Listening and Speaking Skills



Through conversation with peers and teachers, children gain valuable language skills that are vital for their success in reading and writing. It is important for teachers to:

- Ask open-ended questions that invite children to expand upon their answers
- Present new words to children to expand their vocabularies
- Respond to questions and let children take the conversational lead so they may build their language skills
- Gently reinforce the rules of good listening and speaking throughout the day

Teaching about the Sounds of Spoken Language



Phonological awareness refers to children's ability to notice and work with the sounds in language.

Research shows that how quickly children learn to read often depends on how much phonological awareness they have when they begin kindergarten.

Teaching Strategies to Promote Phonological Awareness



- Choosing books to read aloud that focus on sounds, rhyming and alliteration
- Inviting children to make up new verses of familiar words or songs by changing the beginning sounds of words
- Playing games where children isolate the beginning sound in familiar words, and generate rhyming words

Teaching about Letters



Research shows it is important for young children to be able to:

- Recognize and name letters
- Recognize beginning letters in familiar words (especially their own name)
- Recognize both capital and lowercase letters
- Relate some letters to the specific sounds they represent

Teachers can reinforce teaching about letters through the classroom environment, by providing letters as manipulatives, by playing games with letters, and by helping children write letters.

Building Children's Background Knowledge and Skills



The more children know about their world, the easier it is for them to read and learn when they get to school.

Teachers can help children build knowledge by:

- Providing opportunities to explore and work with materials in a variety of ways in order to develop concepts: e.g., cooking, taking care of plants, dramatic play.
- Sharing informational books. Use books with photos or illustrations that children can easily understand.

Why is Reading Aloud to Children Important?



It helps them acquire the information and skills they need in life, such as:

- Knowledge of printed letters and words, and the relationship between sound and print.
- The meaning of many words.
- How books work, and a variety of writing styles.
- The world in which they live.
- The difference between written language and everyday conversation.
- The pleasure of reading.

Strategies for Reading Aloud



- Make reading enjoyable by choosing a comfortable place to read.
- Establish a pattern of reading frequently to children.
- Help children learn as you read.
- Ask children questions as you read.
- Encourage children to talk about the book.
- Read many kinds of books.
- Reread favorite books.

Book Reading vs. Book Sharing



Book Reading

- The adult reads the book to the child. The adult is the center in the process.

Book Sharing

- The child assists the adult in telling the story. The child and the adult share the reading process.

Strategies that Encourage Shared Reading



Teach Children About Books:

- Know how to handle the book appropriately.
- Recognize book features such as the front and back covers, and the top and bottom, of the book.
- Understand that a book has a title, was written by an author, and has drawings done by an illustrator.
- Recognize that printed letters and words run from left to right and from top to bottom.

Strategies that Encourage Shared Reading



Prior to Reading the Book

- Page through the book with the child.
- If re-reading a favorite, ask the child to recall what happens in the book.
- If reading a new book, ask the child to make predictions.
 - What do you see in the pictures?
 - What do you think this book is about?
 - What do you think will happen in the book?
- Listen to the child's answers.

Strategies that Encourage Shared Reading



While reading the book prompt the child to talk about the book.

- Ask What, Where, When, Why and How
 - What is that?
 - Where do you think they are?
 - What time is it in the story?
 - Why do you think she did that?
 - How do you think he felt?
 - How did they do that?

Strategies that Encourage Shared Reading



- Encourage the child to complete a part of the sentence.
 - Four little monkeys jumping on the ____,
One fell off and broke his ____.

Strategies that Encourage Shared Reading



- Relate events in the book to activities and events in the child's life.
 - Remember when we...?
 - Have you ever seen...?
 - When was the last time you felt...?
 - What's your favorite...?

Strategies that Encourage Shared Reading



- Allow time for the child to respond.
- Give the child appropriate feedback.
- Expand the child's response.



Basic Classroom Structure that
Encourages Development of
Language & Literacy

Why is the Environment Important?



“That the environment influences children’s behavior is a well-established maxim in early childhood education. As children engage in their environment, they adapt their intellectual tools to meet new situations or challenges, integrating thought and action. Both their mental and their physical processes are the means by which children achieve new understandings and developing skills.” (Roskos & Neuman, 2001)

Divide Classroom Space by Activity



- Classroom is divided by cupboards, screens or tables to define activities.
- Smaller spaces encourage greater language and collaboration, extended and richer conversation.

Enhance Dramatic Play Area



- Many classrooms include a housekeeping area for dramatic play.
- Add other authentic settings such as a bank, office, library, grocery store, flower shop, or zoo.

Have A Comfortable Place to Read

- The library should be inviting and provide lots of comfortable space for children to curl up with a book!
- Also encourage children to extend their reading experience with puppets, writing materials and listening equipment.

Allow Access to a Variety of Books

Books are

- Attractively displayed.
- Accessible to children.
- Diverse, including storybooks, alphabet & counting books, non-fiction concept books, and picture books from a variety of authors and publishers.

Allow Access to a Variety of Books



- Change the collection of books in the classroom based on the topics being studied in class using the local public library.
- Choose books that portray the cultural and language backgrounds of the children.

Have a Writing Center



The Writing or Journal Center is

- Attractive.
- Central to the room.
- Equipped with writing implements and paper.

Also, encourage children to identify themselves as writers.

Provide Opportunities to Write Throughout the Room



- Place paper, pens, pencils, crayons throughout the room.
- Encourage students to “write.”
- Allow students to observe teachers writing.

Display Children's Work



Children's work should be displayed throughout the room.

Creating a Print Rich Environment



A print rich classroom is one in which children interact with many forms of print including signs, labeled centers, wall stories, word displays, labeled murals, bulletin boards, charts, poems and other printed materials.

Research on Print in the Environment



- Design changes in literacy areas in the classroom that children see outside of the early childhood environment (e.g., cookbooks, writing tools telephone books newspapers) foster more involvement and increased literacy events (Hall, 1978)
- Preschool children spontaneously used almost twice as much print in their play than they did prior to the environmental changes (Neuman & Roskos, 1989)

Research on Print in the Environment



It is important for young children to:

- Recognize print in their surroundings.
- Understand that print carries meaning.
- Know that print is used for many purposes.
- Experience print through exploratory writing.

Caption Photographs, Pictures, and Drawings



- Discuss pictures and captions with children.
- Encourage children to dictate their labels for their own artwork.

Post Information



- Feature posters, calendars, and bulletin boards that display information.
- Build activities around engaging children in this information.

Label Objects and Areas of the Room

- Meaningful print displayed throughout the room.
- Objects that children see and use in their lives are labeled.
- Print is placed at children's eye level.

Include Printed Items for Dramatic Play



Ideas include

- Menus, order pads, play money
- Recipes, empty food cartons, marked measuring spoons and cups
- Memo pads, envelopes, and address labels



Professional Development Activities

The statutory definition lists 15 activities that a grantee must include in a context relevant to preschool, some of which are...

High-quality Professional Development includes activities that:



Improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects they teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified.

High-quality Professional Development includes activities that:



- Are an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans.
- Give staff the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards.
- Are aligned and directly related to these standards and assessments, and to curricula and programs tied to them.

High-quality Professional Development includes activities that are:



High-quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom.

High-quality Professional Development includes activities that:



Advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are:

- Based on scientifically based research
- Strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers

High-quality Professional Development includes activities that are:



Developed with extensive participation of
teachers, principals, parents, and
administrators of schools to be served under
the ESEA.

High-quality Professional Development includes activities that are:



- Designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments.
- Provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs.

High-quality Professional Development includes activities that:



Are, as a whole, regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development.

High-quality Professional Development includes activities that:



Instruct teachers on how to use data and assessments to inform and instruct their classroom practice.

Having information about children's progress helps teachers plan their teaching, and can help teachers identify children who need special help.

Teachers can monitor children's progress by:

- Observing them in daily activities and interactions.
- Collecting samples of their drawings, paintings, and writing.
- Keeping notes about what they say and do.
- Encouraging them to talk about their own progress.
- Using valid screening tools.
- Talking with parents and caregivers about children's progress.

High-quality Professional Development includes activities that:



Include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents.



Early Reading and Scientifically-Based Research

Thank you for attending!

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