



Literacy and Young Children

Props and Activities

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Literacy Props for Play Centers

- * **Fast food restaurant:** menus, order pads, cash register, magnetic board and letters to post specials of the day, recipes, product boxes, writing utensils, calendars, product containers, play money, newspapers, open and closed sign, business hour sign, etc.
- * **Office:** paper, telephones, directories, maps, typewriter, computer, newspapers, weather information, travel section, calendar, appointment book, message pads, signs, file folders, in/out trays, index cards, business cards, assorted forms, play money, ledger sheets, clipboards, post it notes, large plastic clips, writing utensils, etc.
- * **Supermarket:** labeled shelves, food containers, cash register, food posters, brown bags with store name on them, sign with store hours, telephone, shopping receipts, checkbooks, coupons, promotional flyers, play money, etc.
- * **Post Office:** paper, envelopes, address books, stamps, cash register, mailboxes, mail carrier bag, assorted forms, stationary, writing utensils, computer address labels, large plastic clips, small drawer trays, poster/signs about the post office, etc.
- * **Airport:** signs posting arrival and departure, tickets, boarding passes, luggage tags, magazines and books for a waiting area, safety messages on the plane, name tags for airport staff, writing utensils, forms, play money, cash register, menu for flight, etc.
- * **Gas station:** toy cars and trucks, receipts for sales, road maps, auto repair manuals, advertisements for automobile equipment, writing utensils, forms, cash register, play money, etc.
- * **House:** storybooks, telephone book, telephones, emergency number decal, cookbook, blank recipe cards, labeled recipe boxes, magnets, stationary, coupons, grocery store ads, play money, empty food boxes/containers, small message boards, calendars, notepads, writing utensils, large plastic paperclips, checkbook, etc.
- * **Library:** library book return cards, stamps, children's books, bookmarks, writing utensils, sign in/out sheet, stickers, ABC index cards, telephone, phonebook, calendars, posters, file folders, etc.
- * **Doctors office:** trade books for waiting room, magazines, telephone book and telephone, eye chart, message pad and pencils, signs ("Doctor is in", "Doctor is out", "Open", "Closed"), pamphlets for children about health (brushing teeth, eating good foods, wearing seatbelts), file folders with health charts, index cards cut in quarters for appointment cards.
- * **Construction company:** order forms, pencils, hard hats, toolboxes, canvas aprons for carrying tools, mobile phones, catalogs and advertisements from hardware and home supply stores, photos, postcards, drawings, blueprints, and pictures of buildings under construction and completed, books showing construction stages of buildings, markers and cardboard for making signs, trucks and machinery, books showing uses of various tools and vehicles.

Adapted from

Schindanz, J. A. (1999). *Much more than ABCs: The early stages of reading and writing* (pp. 92-93). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

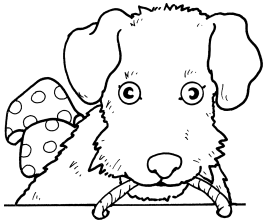
Nueman, S. B., Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (2000). *Learning to read and write: Developmentally appropriate practices for young children* (pp. 34-35). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Activities

Rhyme

- ★ Read poetry with lots of rhyme. Ask the children to listen for words that rhyme and to raise their hand when they hear a word that rhymes with . . . , etc.
- ★ Use children's books or poems to identify rhymes.
- ★ Draw a picture of an object with many parts and have the children guess which part is next by giving a rhyming word. For example, before drawing a clown's head say, "It is something that rhymes with the word red." You can do the opposite: start out with a drawing in chalk and erase one part at a time. "The next thing I need to erase rhymes with 'ties' (eyes)"

- ★ Give each child a picture card. Another child will have a picture that rhymes (e.g. one child will have a *dog* and another child will have a picture of a *log*. All pictures need to be identified first. Then start with one child. That child says the name of his/her picture and shows it. The children in the group try to say their picture names quietly and see if they are the one with the match. The matching pictures go together in the pocket chart. Children can do similar activities alone in a center (picture sorts).



"Simple" Phonemic Awareness (counting phonemes, isolating and matching individual sounds, blending, and segmenting words into phonemes)

- ⊗ Matching beginning sounds: "Big R, little r what begins with R?" (*Dr. Seuss' ABC's* book). Start with children's names in the class, then go to other things. Draw a picture and write the word beside the picture on a chart.
- ⊗ Match picture cards or real objects that have the same sound (at first work with the initial sound, later move to the end sound, then the middle sound).
- ⊗ "People sounds": Three children line up representing three sounds that together make a word. They say "their" sound and the class needs to blend them together and say what word they made. Do the opposite for segmenting.
- ⊗ Children's alphabet books: many possibilities for thinking of words that start with a particular sound from simple ABC books (and make your own) to more complex like *My Name is Alice* (old jump rope rhyme) where the child must think of words in several categories (names, location, object) to make up new a version (B my name is Bonita and my husband's name is Barney we live in Boston where we sell boxes.)
- ⊗ Use blocks that link together. One block represents one sound. Link the blocks together as you say and blend the sounds. The children guess the word.
- ⊗ Variations on Elkonin's "boxes" (phoneme counting, segmenting, and blending). Use chips or other small objects, one to represent each sound in a word. Say the word, ask how many sounds the children hear (stretch out the sounds if necessary). The number of sounds = the number of chips needed. Demonstrate on the overhead by moving the chips and blending

the sounds into words. Eventually allow the children to do the same with chips/ objects at their desk.

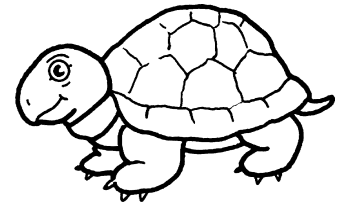
“Compound” Phonemic Awareness (deletion and substitution)

- * Create new variations on songs, poems, and predictable book patterns by substituting one sound for another. For example, the Raffi songs *Down by the Bay* (“Did you ever see a goose kissing a caboose, down by the bay?”) and *Apples and Bananas*.
- * Use children’s books or poems that have a pattern as a base for creating a silly version substituting a different initial consonant such as the book, *Brown Bear* “I saw a little girl looking at me”.

Phonemic Awareness and the Print Connection: Phonics

When you connect letters with sounds you are making the sound/ print connection and providing initial experiences with phonics. However, it is important that with emergent readers you move from sounds to print (letters), not print (words, or letters) to sounds. In other words, don’t skip on the oral activities with emergent readers! A few of the activities above included a print connection (e.g. the “Big R, Little r” chart and creating a new alphabet book). The following are additional appropriate phonics activities for kindergarten. We will discuss more phonics activities when we move into more of a focus on beginning readers and word “detective” work.

- ❁ Interactive/shared reading with attention to letters (“Sherice what letter makes the /t/ sound? Please come up and put your fingers around the letter that makes the /t/ sound. What word do you think this might be? How do you know that word is turtles?” (She probably will say something about the picture.) “How else do you know that word is turtle?” (If the child does not attend to the letter t then the teacher should. “The t gives us another clue that this word is ‘turtle.’ The title of our book is *All About Turtles*.”)
- ❁ Interactive writing - teacher demonstrations of the sound/ print connection as you create charts (letter charts, thank you notes, retellings, lists for project planning, etc.).
- ❁ Encouragement of and demonstration of writing connected to play and drawing.
- ❁ Engagement of everyone in writing to whatever level they can handle (drawing accompanied by scribbling and teacher dictation through conventional spelling).
- ❁ Extend your use of “boxes” from just sounds to the sound/ print connection putting a letter or letters in each box (demonstrating that sometimes a sound is represented by more than one letter).
- ❁ Today’s word. Once you have demonstrated with boxes connected to print and done interactive writing so the children can represent some sounds with letters, try the secret word of the day. Tell the children the word and ask them to write how they think it is spelled (e.g. in their journal). Then unlock the “mystery” word and demonstrate with boxes for the whole group.



Phonemic awareness, development of letters knowledge, concept of word, and beginning sound/letter learning (early invented spelling) are the key issues of the emergent reader preliterate stage (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 1996).

Good sources of phonological and phonemic awareness activities as well as phonics (print connection) activities:

- Adams, M. J., Foorman, B. J., Lundberg, L., & Beeler, T. (1998). *Phonemic awareness in young children: A classroom curriculum*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- Bear, D., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., & Johnston, F. (1996). *Words their way: Word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling instruction*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Ericson, L., & Juleibo, M. F. (1998). *The phonological awareness handbook for kindergarten and primary teachers*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Fitzpatrick, J. (1997). *Phonemic awareness: Playing with sounds to strengthen reading skills*. Cypress, CA: Creative Teaching Press.



Phoneme Awareness Songs

Sound Matching Songs

(Jimmy Cracked Corn and I Don't Care)

Who has a /d/ word to share with us?

Who has a /d/ word to share with us?

Who has a /d/ word to share with us?

It must start with the /d/ sound!

(Elicit response)

Dog is a word that starts with /d/

Dog is a word that starts with /d/

Dog is a word that starts with /d/

Dog starts with the /d/ sound.

Sound Isolation Activities

(Old MacDonald Had a Farm)

What's the sound that starts these words:

Turtle, time and teeth?

(wait for response from the children)

/t/ is the sound that starts these words:

Turtle, time and teeth.

With a /t/, /t/ here, and a /t/, /t/ there.

Here a /t/, there a /t/, everywhere a /t/, /t/.

/t/ is the sound that starts these words:

Turtle, time and teeth!

What's the sound that starts these words:

Chicken, chin, and cheek?

(wait for a response from the children)

/ch/ is the sound that starts these words:

Chicken, chin, cheek.

With a /ch/, /ch/ here, and a /ch/, /ch/ there.

Here a /ch/, there a /ch/, everywhere a /ch/, /ch/.

/ch/ is the sound that starts these words:

Chicken, chin, cheek!

What's the sound that starts these words:

Daddy, duck, and deep?

(wait for a response from the children)

/d/ is the sound that starts these words:

Daddy, duck, and deep.

With a /d/, /d/ here, and a /d/, /d/ there.

Here a /d/, there a /d/, everywhere a /d/, /d/.

/d/ is the sound that starts these words:

Daddy, duck, and deep!

Medial sounds:

What's the sound in the middle of these words:

Leaf, and deep and meat?

(wait for a response)

/ee/ is the sound in the middle of these words:

Leaf, and deep and meat.

With a /ee/, /ee/ here, and a /ee/, /ee/ there.

Here a /ee/, there a /ee/, everywhere a /ee/, /ee/.

/ee/ is the sound in the middle of these words:

Leaf, and deep and meat!

Final Sounds

What's the sound at the end of these words?

Duck and cake and beak?

(wait for response)

/k/ is the sound at the end of these words:

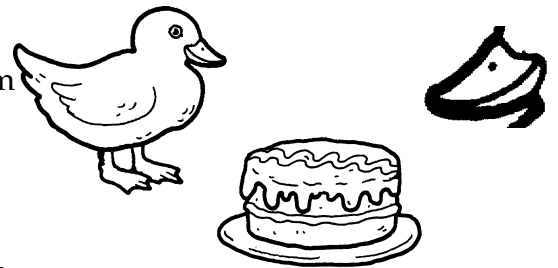
Duck and cake and beak.

With a /k/, /k/ here, and a /k/, /k/ there.

Here a /k/, there a /k/, everywhere a /k/, /k/.

/k/ is the sound that starts these words:

Duck and cake and beak!



Sound Blending

(If You're Happy & You Know It)

If you think you know this word, shout it out!

If you think you know this word, shout it out!

If you think you know this word,

Then tell me what you've heard,

If you think you know this word, shout it out!

(Teacher says a segmented word such as /k/-/a/-/t/, and children respond by saying the blended word.)

Sound Addition/ Substitution Activities

(Someone's in the Kitchen with Dinah)

I have a song that we can sing,
I have a song that we can sing,
I have a song that we can sing,
It goes something like this:

Fe-Fi-Fiddly-i-o
 Fe-Fi-Fiddly-i-o-o-o-o
 Fe-Fi-Fiddly-i-oooo
 Now try it with the /z/ sound!

Ze-Zi-Ziddly-i-o
 Ze-Zi-Ziddly-i-o-o-o-o
 Ze-Zi-Ziddly-i-oooo
 Now try it with the /br/
 sound!

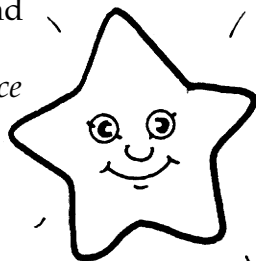
Bre-Bri-Briddly-i-o
 Bre-Bri-Briddly-i-o-o-o-o
 Bre-Bri-Briddly-i-oooo
 Now try it with the /ch/
 sound!

Che-Chi-Chiddly-i-o
 Che-Chi-Chiddly-i-o-o-o-o
 Che-Chi-Chiddly-i-oooo
 Che-Chi-Chiddly-i-o!

Segmenting

(*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*)

Listen, listen
 To my word
 Then tell me all the sounds you
 heard: *race*
 (slowly)
 /r/ is one sound
 /a/ is two
 /s/ is last in *race*
 It's true.



Listen, listen
 To my word.
 Then tell me all the sounds you
 heard: *coat*
 (slowly)
 /k/ is one sound
 /o/ is two
 /t/ is last in *coat*
 It's true.
 Thanks for listening
 To my words
 And telling all the sounds you
 heard!

(For two sounds only)
 Listen, listen

To my word
 Then tell me all the sounds you
 heard; *go*
 (slowly)
 /g/ is one sound
 /o/ is two
 And that is all in *go*
 It's true.

Counting Syllables

(*Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*)

Listen Listen to the parts
 Then tell me how many parts
 there are.

Get ready let's [] BUT
 TER FLY
 Do it again [] BUT TER
 FLY

One more time [] BUT
 TER FLY
 How many parts in BUT TER
 FLY

(*Old MacDonald Had a Farm*)
 We're going to count the part of
 words

Let's [] 1 - 2 - 3 (1 and 2 for
 2 syllable words)
 Listen close for all the parts
 Let's [] 1 - 2 - 3

[] BA NA NA [] BA NA
 NA
 BA NA NA BA NA
 NA
 Let's [] BA NA NA

Now tell me how many parts
 there are (pause for answer)
 Yes, that's right there's 3
 (if incorrect sing)
 Let's [] that again

[] - can use jump, clap, pat,
 slap, stomp, etc.

Note: use any 3 syllable word
 (e.g. cowboy hat, butterfly)

Rhyming Songs

(*Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*)

Pop and top and stop all
 rhyme.

What is the part that makes
 them rhyme?

OP is in pop and top and stop.
 Now tell me the sound is
 (pause) OP.

Pop and top and stop all rhyme
 What is the part that makes
 them rhyme?

(*Old MacDonald Had A Farm*)
 Old MacDonald had a farm,
 E I E I O.

Like pop top stop all end with
 OP.

Pop top stop. Pop top stop.
 These all end with OP.

OP is the sound that makes
 these words rhyme.

POP AND TOP AND STOP

note: you can substitute in any
 series of rhyming words
 (e.g. ox, box, fox, or cat, hat,
 rat)

From "Developing phonemic
 awareness in young children."
 by H. K. Yopp, (1992, May). *The*
Reading Teacher, 45 (9), 699-702.

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