

Early literacy

Resource booklet for families



This resource booklet has been designed to accompany the learning from home resources designed for teachers. Each booklet covers a different learning area and is designed to be used by families in the home so they can offer play experiences that will support their child's learning in this area. It also unpacks some of the learning that will happen.

The learning outcome that links to this resource booklet is:

Learning Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media

The learning concepts covered in this resource are:

- Sounds and words carry meaning
- Words are all around
- Writing skills

Families play a key role in developing children's language and literacy skills. Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they read or write in the same way that they do at school.

Families are encouraged to investigate and explore play experiences incorporating local Aboriginal history and culture, when and where appropriate.

Sounds and words carry meaning

There are many play experiences that can be offered in the home to support children's early literacy development and extend their learning in a range of ways.

Play experiences

Sharing books is beginning literacy:

- Sit with children and look at a simple book every day. Talk about the sound that letters make, support children to recognise a letter/s from their name and apply the sound to it.
- Point to the words and pictures in the book as you read.
- Show children how to hold books and turn the pages.
- Book talk is an important part of reading. Chat about the book before, during and after reading and really encourage your child to talk about their ideas and ask questions about the book.
- Choose a variety of text types when reading to your child, for example, fiction (made up story) and non-fiction (true or real life).

- Think of what is in the home and how you model your own reading habits- newspapers, magazines, novels, pamphlets, textbooks, recipe books, comic books.
- Story books read online can also be used. For example:
 - storylineonline.net
 - uniteforliteracy.com
- Provide props for children to re-enact known stories verbally using materials from around the home and the environment. For example, sticks, gumnuts, feathers.

Questions to support your child's learning

Here are some questions you can ask at different times before, during and after reading the book:

- What would you like to read about?
- Look at the cover – what do you think this book is about?
- What is happening in the pictures?
- What do you think is going to happen next?
- What was your favourite part of the book?
- Who was your favourite character in the story? Why did you like that character?

What will your child learn?

- That sounds and words have meaning
- Learning how books work is part of learning to read
- Learning about words and pictures and the enjoyment of sharing a book.
- Increased vocabulary and language skills
- Engagement with storytelling, beginning to recognise the connections between written, oral and visual representations.

Words are all around

There are many play experiences that can be offered in the home to encourage children to understand that words carry a message.

Play experiences

- Point to road signs when out with children. Explain what the words say and what they mean.
- Point out logos and symbols, for example Kmart, KFC and let children know that they are reading when they can name them.
- Look at the words on food packets and tell children what say.
- Show children your name on letters that you receive in the mail.
- Look at magazines and newspapers. Cut letters and words and paste. Discuss left to right conventions when placing words on paper.
- Find items around the environment and explore what is written on them and what the meaning is.

Questions to support your child's learning

- Explain what the words that you find say and what they mean.
- Encourage children to have a guess at what a word might say with particular reference to the context the word is in is. For example, the word 'milk' on a carton of milk or 'open' on the front door of a shop.

What will your child learn?

- Words and symbols carry a message or meaning.
- They can 'read' by recognising and recalling what the symbols mean.

Writing skills

There are many play experiences that can be offered in the home to help your child develop an awareness of the use of symbols as a means of communication.

Play experiences

- Provide children with opportunities to draw and make marks – children can benefit from trying a range of drawing utensils, for example pencils, crayons, textas, paint brushes. Gather and organize these materials, along with some paper, in a box that your child can decorate and have access to.
- Magnetic letters can be used to make words on the fridge.
- Encourage your child to write their own name on drawings.
- Set up a pretend office with writing utensils for children to use. For example, pens, pads, old telephone books or key boards.
- Make shopping lists or menus with your child and encourage them to make their own. Use pictures of food from magazines to support this.
- Use the outdoor environment for drawing and writing. For example, use:
 - sticks in the sandpit/tray as a medium for drawing outside
 - a bucket of water and a paintbrush can be used to draw and write on driveways, fences
 - chalk for drawing on concrete.

Questions to support your child's learning

- Support your child to read their writing aloud. Create somewhere to store and display their writing.
- Use your child's experiences to create links between talking, writing and reading. Ask your child:
 - to talk about an experience or something that interests them
 - what part of the conversation they would like you to write
 - to write down their ideas. Use your home language
 - to read back the writing
 - to draw a picture or create something to match the writing
- Scribbles and drawings are an important first step to writing and should be encouraged.

What will your child learn?

- Writing and drawing are an important way to express ideas and stories.
- The use of symbols is a means of communication that has many purposes.