

Literacy across the Preschool Curriculum



Reading and writing develop naturally when children use print every day. Adults can combine words and pictures to create printed materials that children can easily read. Preschoolers can be encouraged to do much of the writing themselves. They can also dictate words that adults write for them. Here are some ways to include print across the curriculum to help meet the Illinois Early Learning Language Arts Benchmarks. (See Illinois Early Learning and Development Benchmarks 1.B.ECa, 2.C.ECa, 4.D.ECa, and 5.B.ECc.)

-  **Post signs where children can see them.**
Label activity centers, shelves for toys and supplies, the restroom, the library, and play-ground areas. Put up daily snack signs or meal menus. Combine print and pictures to create directions for classroom pet or plant care. Provide a sign-up board where children can choose their day's activities.
-  **Bring print materials into dramatic play.**
Help the children make menus for a restaurant, signs for a dental office, or shelf labels for a store. Provide materials to make mailboxes for a post office, and invite children to send each other mail.
-  **Encourage children to communicate in print.**
Help the children write brief letters to send home about classroom activities. Show them some ways to invite family members or children in other classes to special events. Ask them to write thank-you notes to visitors or field trip hosts.
-  **Use children's dictations to document their work.**
Involve the class in writing a story about a field trip. Have some children help you label photos from a project. Ask children to dictate information about a project or a pet to share with visitors or others who use the classroom space. Encourage them to make signs with titles for the block structures they have built.
-  **Link literacy to music and movement.**
Use words and pictures to create cards showing simple movements for children to act out. Add signs to an obstacle course. Post a list of songs children often request during classroom sing-alongs. With the class, write new words to familiar songs for group singing.
-  **Set up a reading center.**
Stock a variety of reading materials related to topics the class is studying. Include fiction and nonfiction, picture books, and magazines. Add books made by children and books with audiotapes. Help the children make a classroom dictionary of new words. Provide journals for children to write about their interests.
-  **Provide simple instructions for cooking and crafts.**
Make illustrated cookbooks with recipes that children can follow on their own. Post picture-based directions for making play materials such as play dough, finger-paint, baker's clay, and bubbles.
-  **For related Web resources, see "Literacy across the Preschool Curriculum" at <http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tips.htm>.**

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



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