Building a Strong Foundation for Literacy

Literacy begins with a strong oral language foundation. Through conversation, teachers interact with each child with a goal of expanding language structures and vocabulary. Rhymes, songs, and fingerplays develop phonemic awareness and an appreciation of the sounds and patterns of language.

Children are read to every day. Exposure to a wide variety of quality children’s books helps to develop a love of reading. There are over 2,000 books in the Center’s library. Children are encouraged to browse through books on their own, and to enjoy time in the cozy reading corner.

Teachers help children to discuss books, make predictions, ask questions, and relate stories to their own experiences. Children retell familiar stories through pretend play, and by using flannel boards and story props. These activities build listening comprehension and awareness of story structure.

The classroom is a print-rich environment. Children see examples of meaningful print every day. Many older preschoolers learn to recognize familiar sight words. Children are also encouraged to browse through books on their own, and to enjoy time in the cozy reading corner. The Writing Center is a place where children can draw (an early writing activity) and experiment with writing and a variety of writing tools.

Preschoolers develop language experience charts. The teacher records the children’s words on chart paper and then reads them back to the group. Preschoolers develop language experience charts. The teacher records the children’s words on chart paper and then reads them back to the group.

Preschoolers are exposed to the alphabet through games and meaningful experiences with print. Most learn to identify letters, and many begin to make some letter-sound associations. Preschoolers are exposed to the alphabet through games and meaningful experiences with print. Most learn to identify letters, and many begin to make some letter-sound associations.

Highly decodable books and predictable stories are made available to older preschoolers who are beginning to associate letters and sounds. Some children begin to read simple texts.