



LET THE CHILDREN

PLAY # 3

PLAYFUL LEARNING

1

Gayle Karen Robertson

THE EDI MEASURES:

○ **Physical Health and Well-Being**

Children are healthy, independent, rested each day

Social Competence

Children play and get along with others, share, show self-confidence

○ **Emotional Maturity**

Children are able to concentrate on tasks, help others, show patience, are not often aggressive nor angry.

THE EDI MEASURES:

○ **Language and Thinking Skills**

Children are interested in reading and writing, can count and recognize numbers, shapes

○ **Communication Skills and General Knowledge**

Children can tell a story, communicate with adults and other children

- EDI results are a reflection of what happens in children's early years and the strengths and needs of children's communities.
- Research tells us that children who begin school ready to learn will have future successes in learning throughout their lives.

WHAT DOES THIS TELL US ABOUT CHILDREN

- The EDI has been able to provide good information on 5 domains of development which are being used to predict readiness for Grade 1.
- We are going to look at a few activities that support the area of Emotional Maturity and the area of Language and Thinking Skills, specifically Basic Literacy Skills.

○ Emotional Maturity - Prosocial

Children who are considered “Ready” are able to concentrate on tasks, help others, show patience, are not often aggressive nor angry

Children who are considered “Not Ready” in the sub-scale of Prosocial and helping behaviour means they never or almost never show most of the helping behaviours. They do not help someone hurt, sick or upset, and do not invite bystanders to join in.

○ Emotional Maturity - Aggression

Children who are considered “Ready” are able to concentrate on tasks, help others, show patience, are not often aggressive nor angry

Children who are considered “Not Ready” in the sub-scale of Aggressive behaviour often show most of the aggressive behaviours. They get into physical fights, kick or bit others, take other people’s things, are disobedient or have temper tantrums.

○ Language & Thinking Skills – Basic Literacy

Children who are considered “Ready” are interested in reading & writing, can count & recognize numbers & shapes.

Children who are considered “Not Ready” in the sub-scale of Basic Literacy do not have most of the basic literacy skills. They have problems identifying letters, attaching sounds to them, rhyming, going from left to write, and writing their own names.



LET'S LOOK FIRST AT

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING --

SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND

EMOTIONAL MATURITY.

- Emotional well-being and social competence provide a strong foundation for emerging cognitive abilities. . . . Social development and regulation of behaviour are as much a part of development as cognitive learning.

(Shonkoff in NIEER 2007)

- The significance of social-emotional learning (SEL) in education policy is highlighted in major reports such as *Neurons to Neighbourhoods* from the National Research Council (2000),

THE COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Researchers and practitioners agree that social - emotional learning includes 4 components:

- 1. Emotional self-regulation & self-awareness**
- 2. Social knowledge and understanding**
- 3. Social Skills**
- 4. Social Dispositions**

(Epstein, 2007)

THE COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

1. **Emotional self-regulation & self-awareness**

- characterized by growing ability to focus and organize actions, to follow rules and procedures, to defer gratification and be flexible.

2. **Social knowledge and understanding**

- knowledge of social norms and customs; teacher's role is to establish a supportive group environment – a community

THE COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

3. Social Skills

- strategies for interacting with others. Teachers help children learn what is appropriate.

4. Social Dispositions

- character traits such as curiosity, generosity etc which are shaped both by temperament and environmental influences.



Social Emotional Behaviour

The observant adult will watch for signs of social learning such as the child's ability to:

- Spend time watching others play
- Play by self with own toys/materials
- Play parallel with others with similar toys
- Play with others in group play





Social Emotional Behaviour

The observant adult will watch for signs of social learning such as the child's ability to:

- Make friends with other children;
- Join play in a positive way;
- Maintain role in ongoing play in a positive way;
- Resolve play conflicts in a positive way.





Social Emotional Behaviour

The observant adult will watch for the child's ability to:

- Separate from caregiver without difficulty;
- Make eye-contact with the teacher/adult in charge;
- Develop secure attachment with teacher/caregiver;
- Make activity choices without adult's help;





Social Emotional Behaviour

The observant adult will watch for the child's ability to:

- Play roles confidently in dramatic play
- Stand up for own rights;
- Display enthusiasm about doing things for self.
- Take turns and wait for turns.





Social Emotional Behaviour

Looking for children's ability to do these simple social actions will help to identify those in need of more guidance.

They may need more one on one or small group teaching of skills.

Children may need help in labelling emotions and in understanding them.





EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- In the preschool and early school years, children probably do not learn social competence through direct instruction – such as lessons, lectures, magic circles, workbooks exercises . . . Especially when attempted with the class as a whole.
- **Instead children learn through the guidance they get from their interactions and behaviours.**

(Katz & McClellan 1997)



A report by the American Academy of Pediatrics (Ginsburg 2007) pleaded for the restoration of play to develop social-emotional skills such as building resilience, managing stress, and forming relationships with adults and peers within and outside the family.

The report said parents should be guided to pay attention to these needs of the child



PLAY



- Dramatic play is an effective way to learn and practice social skills. Children who become more engaged in dramatic play where they must play alongside each other in play involving make-believe, verbal interaction and which is sustained for some time were found to have improved self-control.



EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- Researchers and early childhood practitioners recognize the value of explicit adult intervention in such areas as conflict resolution and violence prevention.

(Levin 2003)

- Young children can learn how to solve problems collaboratively and contribute to classroom policies through group strategies such as class meetings.



LIFE SKILLS

- For children to negotiate the world successfully, they need to develop six strengths which grow out of positive beliefs about the world around them and culturally appropriate skills.

Jenna Bilmes, 2004

SIX LIFE SKILLS



1. Attachment
2. Affiliation
3. Self-regulation
4. Initiative
5. Problem-solving
6. Respect

Because of time constraints we will discuss only the first 3 of these important life skills.

Those interested in reading more about it should look for the book:



Beyond Behaviour Management

Joanna Bilmes

Redleaf Press

2004



ATTACHMENT DEFINITION

- Attachment means a long-standing and emotionally strong tie between two people.

Research on attachment has shown us that young children form strong attachments with parents and with others and that those attachments have a strong impact on learning.

1. ATTACHMENT – *“I HAVE A GROWN-UP WHO CHERISHES ME AND KEEPS ME SAFE.”*

- Children must believe there is an adult they can count on to nurture them and keep them safe.
- Children who have no trust in adults often resist when teachers try to help them.
- Instinctively we act positively toward children who are behaving appropriately and less positively toward those who are not.
- When disapproval doesn't work we look for stronger ways – often rewards and punishment.



- Attachment bonds with early childhood caregivers and teachers predict the quality of their relationships with future teachers.
- That means your relationships with children in your care directly impact on their future relationships with other teachers in the future.





Remember the crucial value of one good relationship.

In the words of scientist Urie Bronfenbrenner

“In order to develop normally, a child needs the enduring, irrational involvement of one or more adults. . . In short, somebody has to be crazy about the kid!”



2. AFFILIATION – *“I CAN HAVE A FRIEND AND BE A FRIEND.”*

- To become a happy, productive member of society children need to identify themselves as members of a group.
- Children who value being members of the group (class) are interested in the well-being of the group and learn to apply empathy, social skills and conflict resolution. They have basic friendship skills.

2. AFFILIATION – *“I CAN HAVE A FRIEND AND BE A FRIEND.”*

- Some children may feel alienated from the group (cultural, ability, physical differences) or a lack of reaching out by others.
- They may exhibit problematic behaviour – physical aggression, crying, tantrums, withdrawal, becoming a ‘loner’.
- They may not know how to join a group and attempt to enter play aggressively or negatively.

2. AFFILIATION – *“I CAN HAVE A FRIEND AND BE A FRIEND.*

- The quality of peer relationships in early childhood predicts later success in intellectual growth, self-esteem, mental health, and school performance .”(Bukowski & Sippola, 1996, in *The Company They Keep*,)
- Unpopular children do not perform as well in school and are more likely to drop out of school in adolescence. They are more likely to get into legal trouble and have emotional or mental problems as adults.

(Amidon & Hoffman 1965) (Parker & Asher, 1987) (Roff et al 1972) (Cowen et al 1973).



- Friendships may actually be necessary for children to learn how to truly understand and care about others' thoughts and feelings.
- Teachers need to be alert to children's early relationships and be ready to teach, scaffold and support as children learn to recognize their own emotions and those of others.



FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE – IDEA

- I introduce the friendship circle in the second week of the year, typically, and tie it together with several other introductory community building activities.

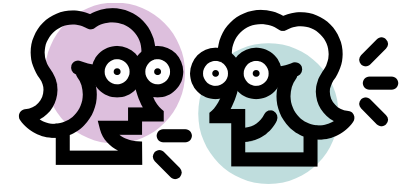
TEACHER IDEA - Read more: <http://www.brighthouse.com/education/k-12/articles/4366.aspx#ixzz11glX8uTQ>

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

- I begin my year by establishing a friendship circle. The friendship circle meets once a week to discuss classroom conflicts, share jokes, or offer compliments.
- I put a chart up on the wall on Monday and the kids sign up throughout the week. On Friday we gather in a circle and go through the list of kids who have signed up.
- We establish ground rules together for listening and responding while in the circle and it is a great way to end the week.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

- Sometimes I introduce an object (stuffed animal for example) that can be passed to the speaker so the kids know who has speaking rights at a given moment.
- The friendship circle, if done consistently, is something all the children look forward to each week. They especially love sharing jokes, but it is also nice when the kids offer their peers compliments and are able to bring problems to the circle that we can resolve together in an open forum.



WHAT DO YOU DO TO HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP FRIENDSHIPS?

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3. SELF-REGULATION – *“I CAN MANAGE MY STRONG EMOTIONS AND AM IN CONTROL OF MY BEHAVIOUR.”*

- Children who are unable to manage their emotions can be very difficult.
- To manage emotions children must:
 - Have a basic understanding that actions have consequences, both positive & negative;
 - Know what kinds of behaviour are culturally acceptable (**boys cry? girls use cars?**)
 - Have an awareness that **they**, not their emotions control their behaviour and they have the power to manage their emotions.

3. SELF-REGULATION – *“I CAN MANAGE MY STRONG EMOTIONS AND AM IN CONTROL OF MY BEHAVIOUR.”*

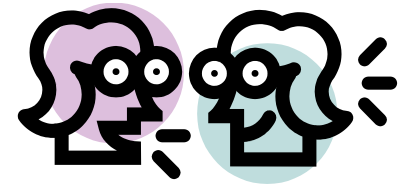
- Children learn about emotions from the people around them. Their models affect their behaviour.
- Some children struggle with change and transition because they don't understand that feelings change. They may become frightened when asked to change activity or when routines or physical environments change.

3. SELF-REGULATION – *“I CAN MANAGE MY STRONG EMOTIONS AND AM IN CONTROL OF MY BEHAVIOUR.”*

- Emotional awareness is understanding that you have feelings, being able to identify and name those feelings, and recognizing that others have feelings that may be the same or different than yours.
- We must be careful not to judge emotions but not allow children to behave in cruel or unsafe ways as a result of their emotions.

- Planning allows children to make choices about where they will play and what they will do there. Planning is a step along the way to **self-regulation**.





HOW DO YOU HELP CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT THEIR EMOTIONS IN A PLAYFUL WAY?

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RESPONSIBILITY IN THE ENVIRONMENT

- Over a century ago Maria Montessori started creating special materials that would allow children to take more responsibility for themselves – e.g. small pitchers so they could pour milk or water, small scissors so they could cut for themselves.





- Today we can ensure our classroom materials are readily accessible without help from adults.
- We start with making a few materials available and increase access daily and weekly.
- We teach responsibility by creating signs that show where everything is stored.



WHO'S IN CONTROL?

- Anyone who works with children knows how difficult it is to control difficult children and the rest of the class.
- The only person we can control is ourselves.
- So what can we do?

...the more we “manage” students’
behaviour and try to make them do what
we say, the more difficult it is for them to
become morally sophisticated people who
think for themselves and care about
others.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

- If we don't want to be seen to be constantly managing children's behaviour, saying yes and no we need to work hard at arranging the environment so that children know what is expected of them.

“If a child doesn’t know how to read, *we teach.*”

“If a child doesn’t know how to swim, *we teach.*”

“If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, *we teach.*”

“If a child doesn’t know how to drive, *we teach.*”

**“If a child doesn’t know how to behave, *we.....
.....teach?punish?*”**

“Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?”

Tom Herner (NASDE President, Counterpoint 1998, p.2)

PROSOCIAL SKILLS GAME

- **Parachute** – where children hold the edges of the parachute and a ball or balls are placed on it. The group is required to work together to launch the ball into the air.

Adults point out that the ball goes higher when everyone works together. They need to play together.

PLAY GAMES THAT HELP CHILDREN GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

- Use children's names so they feel part of the group – and others hear their names as well.

- **Sing** (to the tune of Farmer in the Dell)

We're happy Chelsea's here.

We're happy Chelsea's here.

Let's clap and smile and welcome her,

We're happy Chelsea's here.

GAMES TO DEVELOP IMPULSE CONTROL

○ Traditional Games:

- Red Light, Green Light
- Simon Says
- Mother May I
- London Bridge
- Ring Around the Rosie
- Freeze Tag
- Ready Set Go
- Red Rover – Red Rover let blue come over!

GAMES TO DEVELOP IMPULSE CONTROL

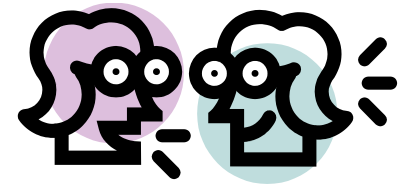
- **Sing the BINGO song** – It teaches behavioural inhibition when claps are substituted for letters. Do it every day and challenge children to restrain themselves from singing the omitted letters.
- **Play Patterned action songs** like Miss Mary Mack

GAMES TO DEVELOP IMPULSE CONTROL

- **Do Activities that involve changes in pace** like moving to music at different speeds etc.
- **Play Freeze Songs** like *Pause* from the album “Movin’” by Hap Palmer

READING TO CHILDREN

- Read stories that show children treating each other with respect and kindness.
- Talk about the emotions shown by the characters;
- Ask the children how they think a character might be feeling;
- Ask what someone could do to make the character feel better.



HOW DO **YOU** HELP
CHILDREN DEVELOP
SOCIAL SKILLS IN A
PLAYFUL WAY?

**NOW LET'S LOOK AT
BASIC LITERACY SKILLS –**

***CHILDREN INTERESTED IN READING
& WRITING, COUNTING &
RECOGNIZING NUMBERS & SHAPES.***

TEACHING LITERACY THROUGH IMAGINATIVE PLAY

- Literacy learning in the Early Years is embedded in play. Early childhood educators have always recognized the value of play for social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development.
- Oral language develops through social interaction and through play at the sand and water table and other traditional Early Years Centres. (ELA Curriculum – Overview p, 9)

TEACHING LITERACY THROUGH IMAGINATIVE PLAY

- Play is recognized as an important vehicle for developing all aspects of literacy because it provides a functional, meaningful, setting for language development.
- Teachers promote and extend students' reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and representing skills by helping them create imaginative centres around themes in the classroom.

(ELA Curriculum – Overview p, 9)

There are a few things you can do to make the reading of books and stories really helpful to your child.

The first is to have fun. Make reading time special. Cuddle up in a comfortable place. Laugh together, hug, be silly. Help your child to learn that books are associated with good feelings and good times.



Use prediction to get kids thinking.

Look at the cover and ask,

“What do you think this book is going to be about?”

“Why do you think that?”

Stop now and then and ask,

“What do you think will happen next?”

“Why?”

BUT DON'T ASK QUESTIONS ALL THE TIME!



Follow the reading with a few questions about the book such as:

“Which part did you like?” Why?

“Did any part of this story make you think about a different story? Which one?”

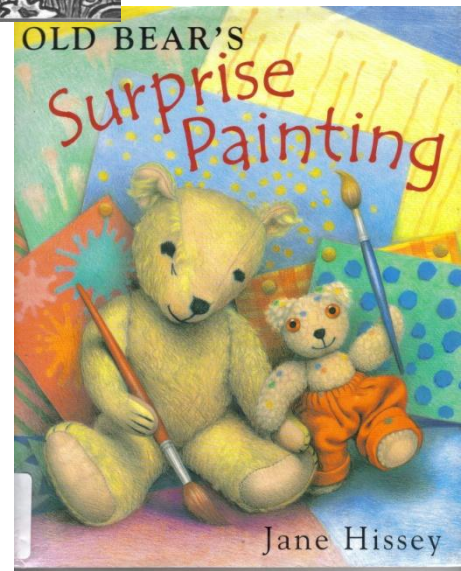
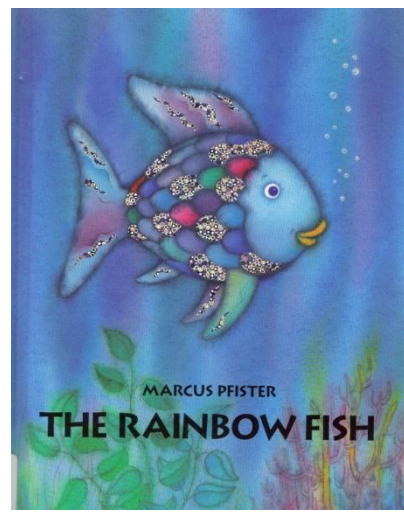
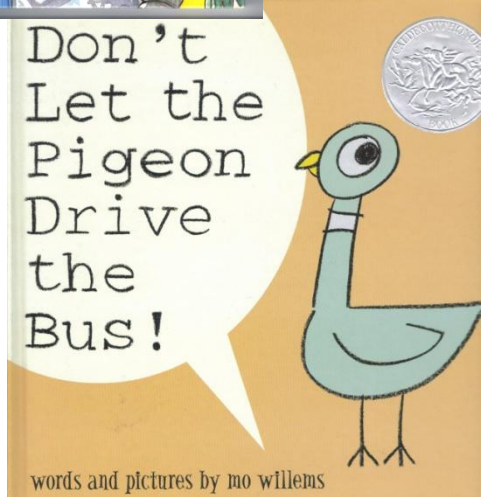
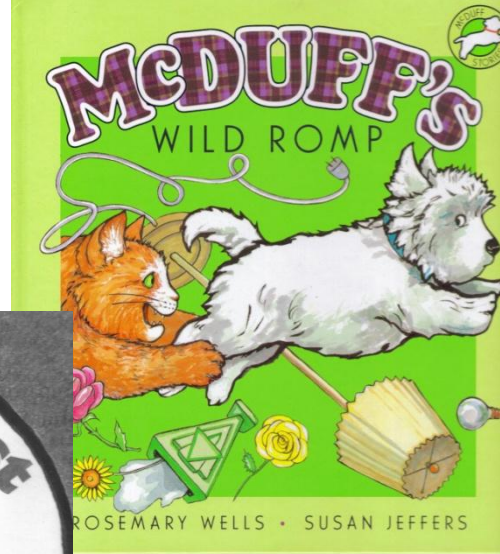
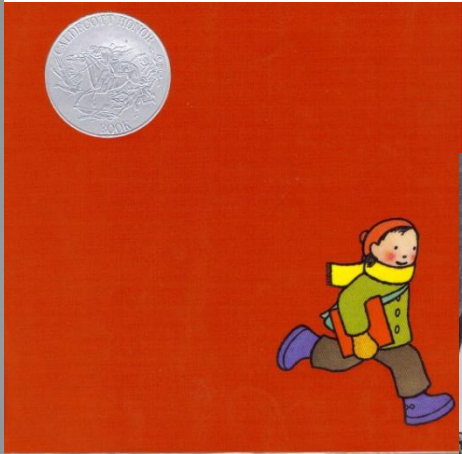
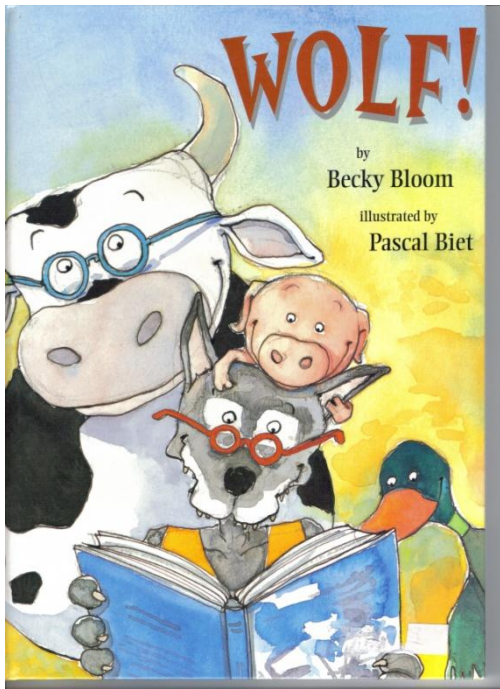
Did it make you think about anything else you know?



Read to your Children:

- Do it often, minimum once a day
- Read old favourites over and over again.
- Talk about the books you read
- Let your kids see **you** read something.
- Go to the library and get a library card.
- Help your children own a few books.







SAY VERSES AND RHYMES TOGETHER

This is even easier than reading books
because you can do it anytime, anywhere!



WHY SAY VERSES AND RHYMES WITH YOUR CHILDREN?



The research says that children's ability to tell the difference between different sounds when they hear them is a strong predictor of their readiness to learn to read.

(Marilyn Jager Adams, "Beginning to Read" 1990)





Verses and rhymes are a great way to develop children's language and their comfort with all kinds of words.

They can also help children relax and focus.

Don't shout to gain attention. Just start chanting a familiar (or new) rhyme.



Say verses and rhymes together...



- . . . While you carry your little ones around, while you feed them, change them, hold them.
- . . . While you walk with your toddlers, push them in a stroller, wash them etc.
- . . . While you play with your children, push them on the swings, help them dress, drive in the car, etc.



PLAY WITH FAMILIAR RHYMES

Baa baa black sheep ⇨ Jaa jaa jack jeep
⇨ Laa laa lack leep ⇨ Maa maa mack meep

Twinkle twinkle little star ⇨
Twinkle twinkle little bat, etc.





One of the best ways to get children used to hearing sounds and playing with sounds is to say rhymes, poems, chants and to play with the sounds – substituting letters and changing words.





TRY SOME FINGERPLAYS

Round and round the garden

Like a teddy bear

One step, two step,

Tickle her under there!

Round and round the playground

Like a Bobbi-Jo

One step, two step

Tickle her under there!



THIS LITTLE PIGGY

This little piggy went to market

This little piggy stayed home

This little piggy had roast beef

And this little piggy had none.

And this little piggy went wee, wee, wee,
wee, wee all the way home.

This little Jeremy went to market

This little Jeremy stayed home . . .



THIS LITTLE LOON

This little loon went to market

This little loon stayed home

This little loon had roast beef

And this little loon had none.

And this little loon went wee, wee, wee, wee,
wee all the way home.

Raven Bear Moose Caribou

Wendy

Jordan

Ryan

Bryden



BANNOCK AND BANNOCK

Bannock and bannock

(hold out two hands flat in front of you)

And bannock and tea

(pinch finger and thumb and pretend to sip tea)

Make some bannock for kookum and me

(point away from yourself and then to yourself)

Pull it from the oven

(pretend to pull bannock out of oven)

Spread it with jam

(pretend to spread jam on hand)

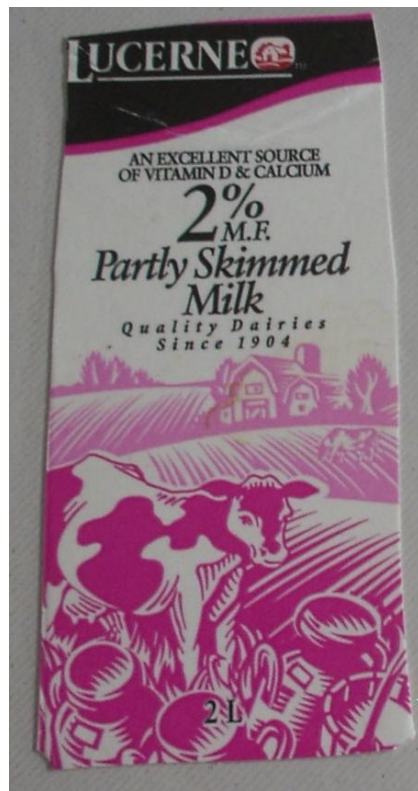
And put it in your tummy as fast as you can.

(pretend to eat and then pat tummy)



DON'T FORGET ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT – IT'S ALL AROUND YOU!

- It's the print you see around you – on food packages, signs, labels, etc.

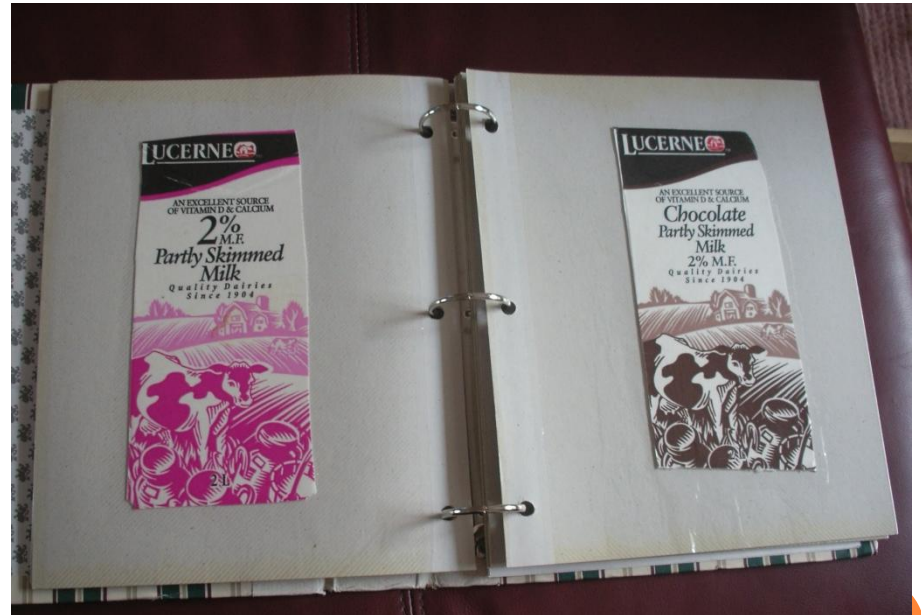


Zellers

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Print Awareness

The research is very clear. Students who begin school with strong print awareness skills have a real advantage in learning to read.

Ideally, **by the time they finish kindergarten**, students should be familiar with books and other printed matter and be able to recognize and write most of the alphabet. These skills are developed both at home and in school settings.

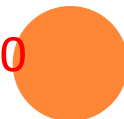


Adults must consciously teach print awareness through intentional literacy experiences throughout the day.

Print awareness consists of:

- ✓ *concepts about books,*
- ✓ *concepts about print and*
- ✓ *attitudes toward reading and writing.*

“Kindergarten Teacher’s Resource Book”, Nelson 2000



Concepts About Print

Understanding the concepts about print that govern written language is an important milestone. Some of the concepts are:

- ✓ Pictures are different than print
- ✓ Print is read from left to right
- ✓ Oral language can be written down and read back.
- ✓ Alphabet letters have names and represent sounds
- ✓ Words are separated by spaces.
- ✓ English text starts at the top left-hand corner of a page.




When reading with your child sometimes run your finger under the print as you read.

Point to the name of the book and say “This is the title of the book. It says”

Read the name of the author and say this is the name of the author. The author is the person who wrote the book.

This is the name of the illustrator. That is the person who drew the pictures for this book.



Sometimes ask your where you should start reading.

When you reach the end of a line ask the child where to go next.

Point to a word like “dog” and say “This word says dog. It begins with the letter ‘d’. Can you find another letter ‘d’ on this page?”



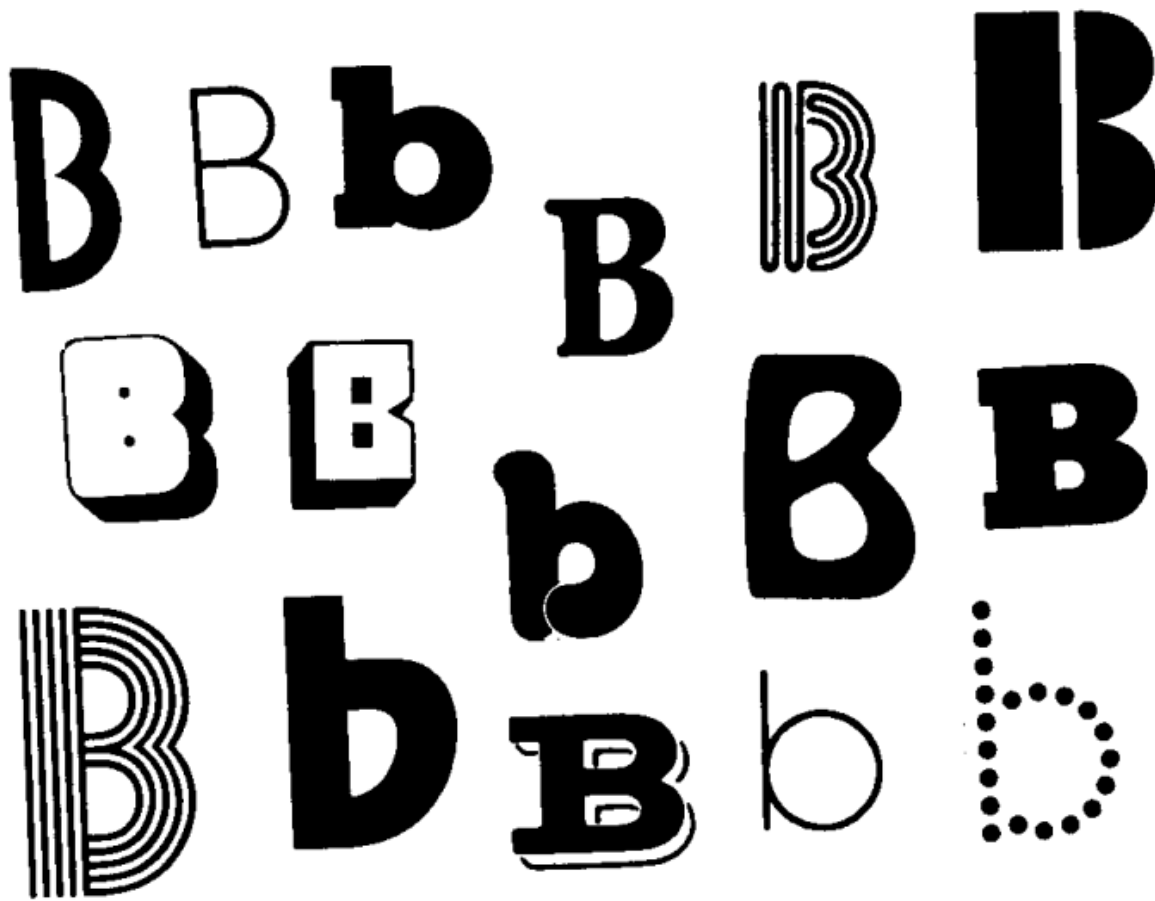


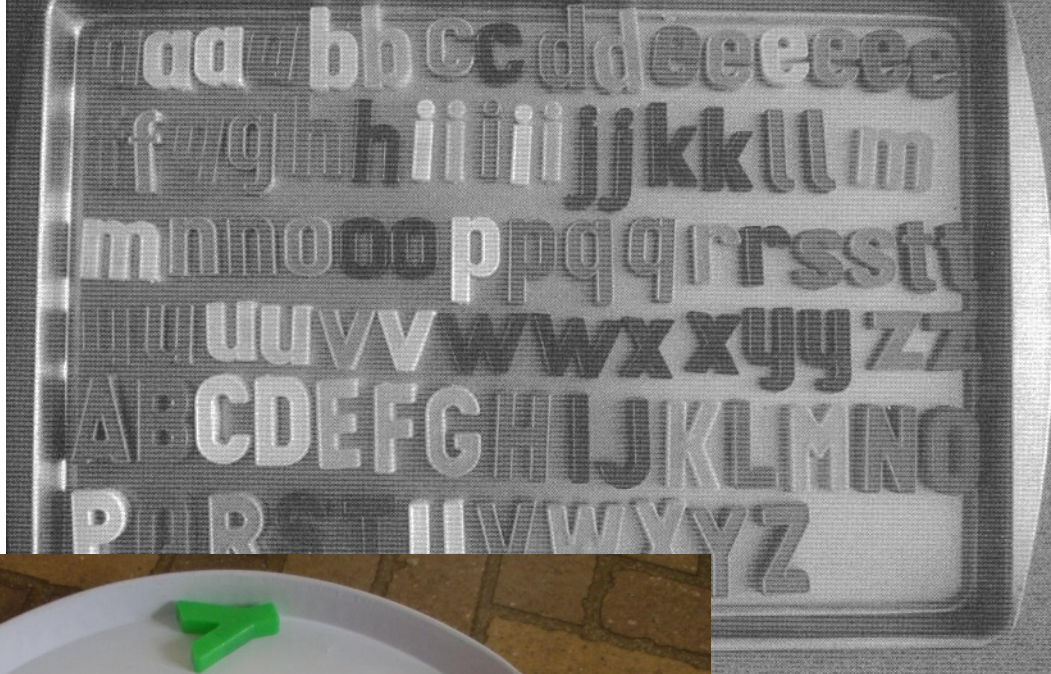
FIGURE 5-11 Different Print Styles

**Cut letters
out of
newspapers
and flyers
and make
letter
posters**

Make your own traffic signs to play cars




Magnetic letters, cookie sheet from the Dollar Store.



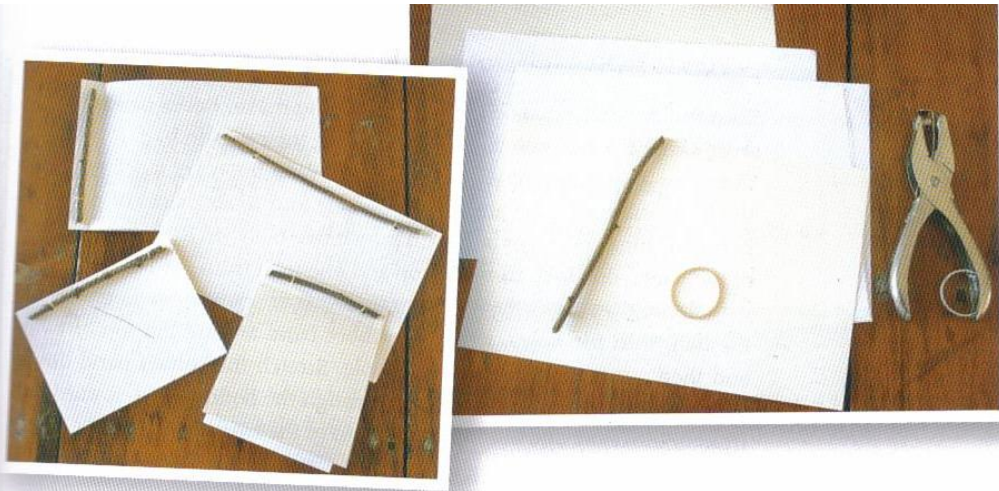
Sort those letters – make your own rules





**Make
your own
alphabet
book
with a
digital
camera**





Make your own books.

Try a twig book using paper, hole punch, twig, elastic band.

Materials

One to two 8½ x 11 inch sheets of cover stock paper

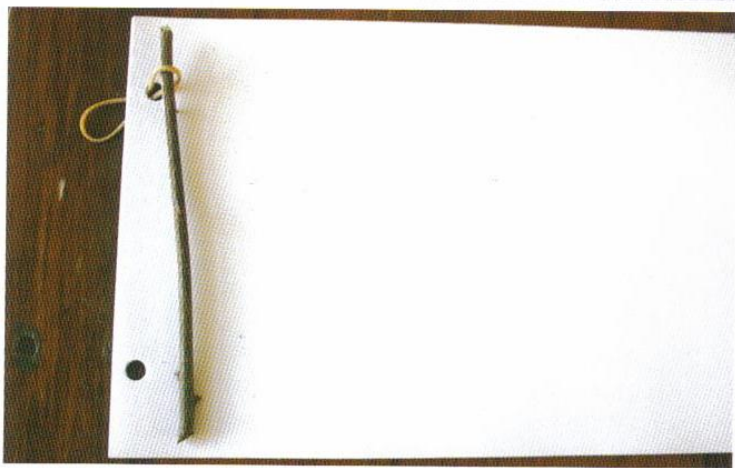
Two to six sheets of 8½ x 11 inch blank white paper or Story Paper printa-

bles 1–5, depending on your child's writing stage (see pages 199–203)

A hole punch

One twig, about ¼ inch in diameter and the height of your book

One large, thick rubber band



From: Playful Learning



We had a rabbit
as a pet with
my sister, because
it was funing with
the rabbit then I saw
it in the grass
and I saw some



Gabrielle

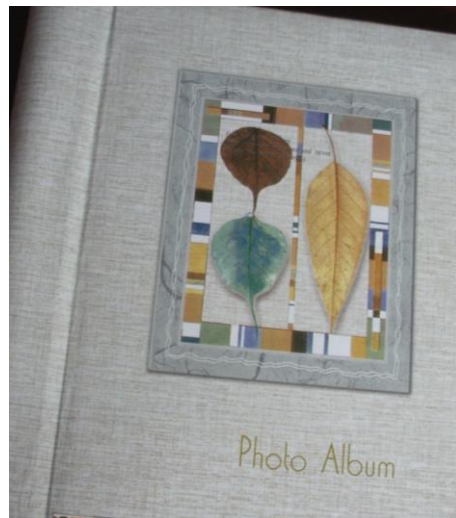
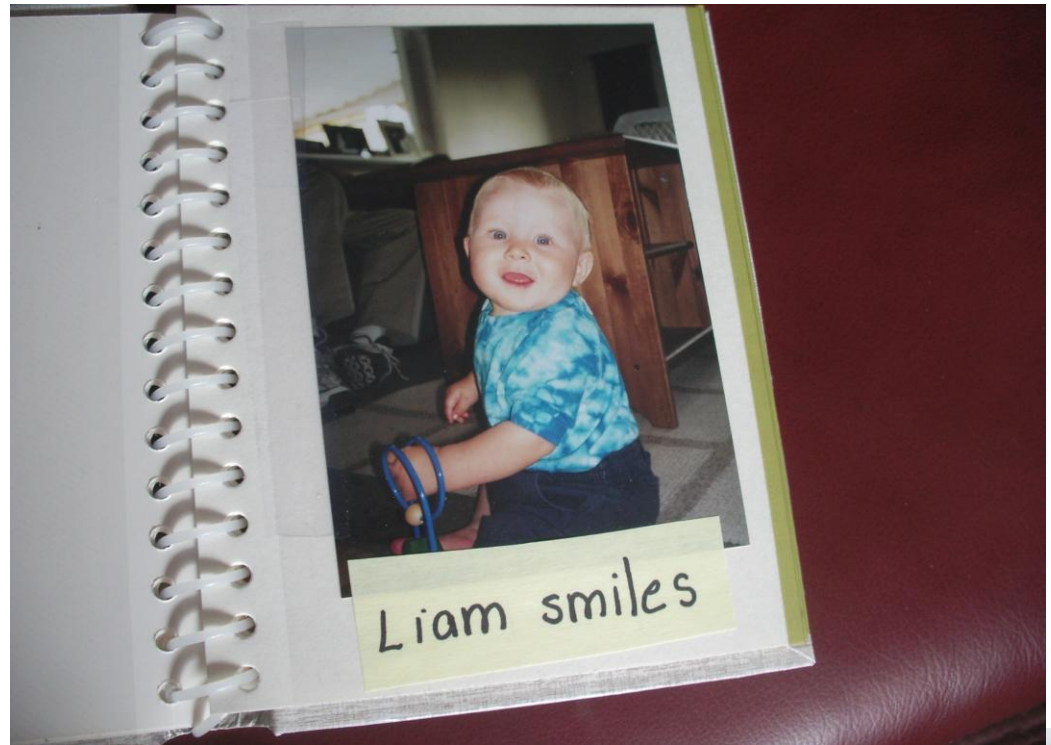
Jalyn

Justin

Kaylie

Matthew

Make your own book with a cheap photo album, family pictures and your own captions.





Make your own alphabet tubs using 'found around the house' stuff. Collect one letter at a time. Later sort and classify



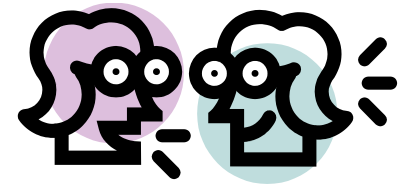
Need a pointer? Try a chopstick with an eraser on the end. Great for going on a letter hunt at home or at the store.

**Make a menu.
Take orders**



**Open a
restaurant**





HOW DO **YOU**
HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP
LITERACY SKILLS IN A
PLAYFUL WAY?

- It is our belief that rich childhood play is the only secure foundation from which children should enter into the future.
- We cannot see the solutions to the apparent overwhelming problems facing the inhabitants of earth but the ingenious and divergent thinking that surfaces when we play gives us hope.

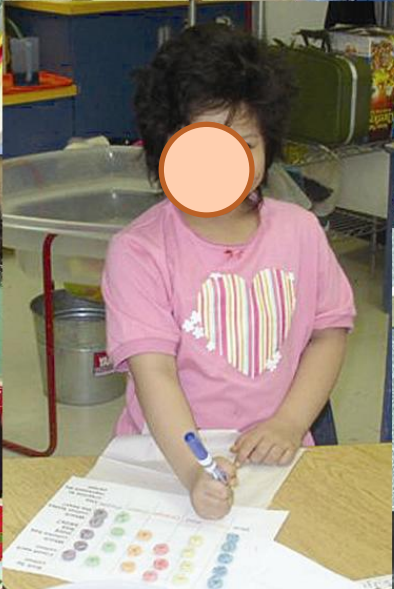
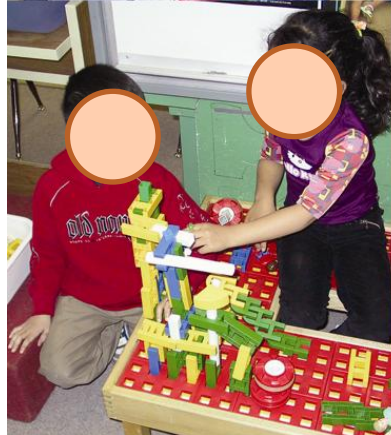
(Paraphrased from *Tumbling Over the Edge: A Rant for Play*,
Bev Bos & Jenny Chapman, 2005)

Create pockets of hope where children can experience the joy, vitality, richness, pleasure and challenges of unfettered play in homes, gardens, neighbourhoods, parks, schools and schoolyards. The children who play there will take with them the seed of productivity, support, nurturance and courage throughout their lives.

(Tumbling Over the Edge: A Rant for Play,

Bev Bos & Jenny Chapman, 2005)

IT'S UP TO YOU TO LET THE CHILDREN PLAY!



“Let the Children Play # 3” is the third in a series of 4 PPT presentations by:
Gayle Karen Robertson for the Manitoba Regional Forums, Spring 2012

Forums hosted by:

Healthy Child Manitoba

Early Childhood Development Unit

Early Learning & Child Care

Manitoba Parent Child Coalitions

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