



EMERGENT LITERACY TEACHING STRATEGIES

- **REPETITION:** *Repeated exposure to a variety of activities which focus on the same skill is key, eg. alphabet letters can be introduced through puzzles, magnets, electronic games, various 'writing' mediums (from icing to pipe cleaners), tactile mediums (from sandpaper to shaving foam etc.) Children typically enjoy repetitions of the same story and the same songs and poems, particularly their favourites.*

- **SYSTEMATIC EXPOSURE:** *We must be aware of the level at which a particular skill is being presented and then know how to further develop that skill, ensuring we maximize a child's level of engagement. (eg. matching identical uppercase letters is an easier skill than identifying specific letters or matching uppercase with corresponding lowercase letters).*

- **SUPPORTED PLAY:** *Given the right materials and adult models, a child should be able to engage in a variety of pretend 'reading and writing' activities such as making a grocery list, ordering from a menu, writing price labels or tickets, looking up a phone number, signing a work order or letter or even simply 'reading' a book out loud.*

- **EXPLICIT READING:** (Joint book-talk) This includes the following:
 - ~*pointing out concepts about books and print (eg. where we start reading, that there are spaces between words etc.)*
 - ~*highlighting sound patterns including rhyme and alliteration.*
 - ~*discussing unknown words to build vocabulary and background knowledge by giving alternate definitions that the child is already familiar with.*
 - ~*linking aspects of the story with the child's own life and experiences (eg. "Have you ever..?")*
 - ~*using specific types of prompts to encourage the child to become the storyteller (eg. completion prompts "It must be a...", open-ended questions "What do you think...?" recall prompts "Do you remember what happened when...?")*
 - ~*asking the child to make predictions about what might come next, what a character might be feeling or thinking or what the consequences of a character's actions might be, (eg. "What do you think might happen if...?" and "How do you think that makes him feel?")*

- **MULTI-SENSORY TEACHING:** We should be cognizant of combining multi-sensory experiences as we expose a child to a range of emergent literacy activities (ie. auditory, visual, tactile and kinesthetic experiences). For example, many blending and segmenting activities can combine a visual and an auditory component, even if the letters themselves are not introduced. By using blocks or pails to represent the 'parts' (which could be words, syllables or phonemes), beads can be dropped into or taken out of the pails or the blocks could be pushed together or separated to demonstrate blending or segmentation.

- **SCAFFOLDING:** This involves working with a child on an activity that he cannot do independently but can do with assistance. For example, a child may wish to write a description of his picture. An adult could ask the child what he wants to say and then he may be given one word which he is able to copy and he then uses invented spelling to complete the sentence.

- **USE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT:** Examples of print and activities involving reading and writing are typically everywhere in a child's environment, but an adult needs to bring them to the child's attention to give them *meaning*. We should point out street and restaurant signs, explain that we are reading the newspaper, checking grocery labels, writing a shopping list, selecting a DVD title. This demonstrates the *purpose* of the print and stresses the reading and writing activities that are involved.

Sources:

- Bennett-Armistead, V.S et al, *Literacy and the Youngest Learner. Best Practices for Educators of Children from Birth to 5*, Scholastic (1985)
- Gerbers, J.L, *Books are for Talking Too! 3rd Ed.* Pro-ed (2003)
- Trehearne, M, *Comprehensive Literacy Resource for Preschool Teachers*, ETA Cuisenaire (2005)

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