

Reading and Writing in Pre-K

Teachers support the development of reading and writing skills by creating an environment that actively involves children in meaningful literacy activities. Activities using print should occur throughout the instructional day-- in large group activities, small group and independent play. A "print-rich environment" incorporates books, all types of writing materials, lists, charts, language experience activities, samples of writing efforts and center props that promote reading and writing. Materials for writing and reading should be included in all the center areas in the classroom. Children can make signs in the block center, write phone messages and grocery lists in the house area, make books or write letters in the art area.

Literacy Activities for the Pre-K Classroom

Labeling--Label materials using pictures, drawings or objects. Include the name of the object on the label. Use lower case letters when making labels.

Charts—Make charts meaningful to the children by creating your own. Hang charts in the classroom at eye level to allow children to use independently.

- **Helper Chart**—Draw pictures of jobs in the classroom on a sheet of poster paper. Have children trace one hand on construction paper and cut out. Write the child's name on the hand and use Velcro to attach to the chart.
- **Daily Schedule**—List daily schedule on poster paper or large sheet of craft paper. Attach pictures of the children engaged in the activities, drawings or catalog pictures.
- **Attendance Chart**—Write each child's name on a library pocket or envelope and attach to poster paper. Write each child's name on a body shape. When a child arrives at school, he finds his shape and inserts it in the pocket. Another idea: Draw a large house shape and a school shape on poster paper. Write each child's name on a seasonal shape. Attach Velcro to chart and names. Child moves name from house to school.
- **Favorite Song Chart**—List the favorite songs and finger plays of the class on chart paper or poster paper. Draw a picture clue for each song. During large group time, have children select songs from chart.
- **Songs and Finger Plays**—Write words to a favorite song or finger play on chart paper. Add simple drawings for key words. Point to words when reciting the finger play and hang on a wall at the children's eye level for them to use independently.
- **Recipes**—When using cooking activities in the classroom, write ingredients and directions on chart paper. Add drawings of ingredients and procedures.
- **Weekly Calendar**—Time is a difficult concept for young children to understand. A weekly calendar increases understanding by breaking the time down into smaller segments. A weekly calendar can be made by cutting five school shapes (bus shapes or other favorite shapes) out of construction paper and two house shapes. Label each shape with a day of the week. Laminate or cover with contact paper. Attach to wall at eye level.

During morning circle or afternoon recall, use a wipe off marker to write on something special about the day on the shape (add a simple drawing to illustrate). Another simple week calendar can be made by writing days of the week on a narrow sheet of poster paper. The day's events can be written on a sticky note and attached below correct day.

Language Experience Activities—Language experience activities help students understand that print is “talk written down.” Language experience can be used as a group activity or individually when a child is dictating information. Individual stories can be put together to form a class book. Children love to read books they have helped create. Spell aloud frequently when writing stories so children can hear your thought processes and learn the names of the letters in a natural way.

- **Morning Message**—Begin day by writing name of day on board. Add information concerning special activities for the day or other information such as names of children who are absent. Wipe-off boards, chalkboards, chart paper or laminated poster paper are good for recording morning messages.
- **Daily News**—Have children dictate a story about day. Hang for parents to see.
- **Field Trip Story**—A field trip provides a wonderful opportunity for a class story and reinforces sequence (“What did we do first?” etc.).
- **What Did I Learn?**—When completing a unit of study, have students dictate what they have learned.
- **Complete Sentences**—Ask students open-ended questions and record their answers.
- Hang chart stories at eye level when completed and change frequently.

Class Books—Children love books they have helped create. These books will be the most popular in the library area.

- **Repetitive Books**—There are endless variations on repetitive books such as Brown Bear, Brown Bear by Bill Martin, Jr. Repetitive books establish the rhythm of language and allow children to “read” by themselves. At the beginning of the year make a class Brown Bear book. Cut 10 manila file folders into a bear shape (have the back of the bear against the fold). Use a hole punch to make holes on the fold side, lay the folders on top of each other and use rings to hold the book together. On each page of the book, glue a picture of a student. Finish with the words (ex. “Karen, Karen, who do you see? I see Justin looking at me”). By using different colors of ink for the name, the students learn to quickly recognize the names.
- **The Apple Tree**—The Apple Tree is a repetitive book and a counting book. Have students finger paint large sheets of paper. When paintings are dry cut tree shapes to fit on 10 sheets of construction paper (Use 12” x 18” paper to create a Big Book). At the bottom of each page write the rhyme:

Look! Look!
See! See!
How many apples in the tree?

Glue tree shapes to the construction paper and attach apple stickers to the trees. Bind book with rings or binders. When reading the book, stop and count together the apples on each page.

- **Baggie Books**—Cut construction paper to fit inside plastic zipper sandwich bags. Have students draw pictures and record dictation. Slip inside sandwich bag. Place bags together, punch holes inside the zipper side. Bind with twisted pipe cleaners or rings.
- **Sentence Strip Book**—Make a “Days of the Week” book by printing names of days of week on sentence strips. Punch hole and add ring. Use sentence strips or other types of stiff paper and have children glue pictures of school activities on strips and record their dictation.
- **Class Phone Book**—A class phone book will reinforce number and name recognition. Print students’ names and phone numbers on separate sheets of paper. Add phone number. Bind and place in housekeeping area near telephone. Keep paper and pencils near the phone in the house area for taking messages.
- **Class Books**—Use language experience activities for creating class books. Have students draw pictures related to a topic and record the students’ dictation. Use construction paper or tag board to make a cover. Allow the students to check out the books to take home. As an adaptation, cut paper in seasonal or thematic shapes to make a shape book related to the topic.
- **Journals**—At the beginning of the year, staple paper together or purchase a notebook for each child for a journal. Once a week, have students write their name and draw a picture. The journal will illustrate the students’ progress during the school year.

Word Cards—Have an assortment of cards with words and pictures for the children to read and copy.

- **Color word cards**—Glue a piece of construction paper or paint a color on an index card. Write name of color below.
- **Picture cards**—Cut pictures from catalogs or draw simple pictures on cards and write the words below.
- **Rebus Cards**—Use rebus cards with simple drawings to illustrate play in a center area or provide step-by-step directions for activities.

Environment Print—Environmental print is the print that surrounds the children in their everyday life. Children learn to read many words by seeing the associated logo.

- **Logo Book**—Cut name and logo from fast food paper bags and from other food packages. Glue onto construction paper and bind.

- **Cereal Box Book**—Cut the front off dry cereal boxes. Punch holes in sides of box front and use rings to join together.

Writing Activities

Reading and writing activities are interrelated and are promoted by the classroom environment. When pictures are used with words in classroom schedules, labeling, chart stories, word cards, children are learning to read and learning to copy words. Rather than having children copy worksheets, provide writing opportunities that are varied and meaningful for the children. Writing progresses in stages from scribbles, to random letter formation, to copying words. Each child in the Pre-K classroom will be at a different stage of development.

- **Writing Names**—Young children are anxious to learn to write their name. Encourage children to write their name on all their papers. Accept the writing level the child is capable of. Children at this age level often reverse letters or write from right to left. Adults should spell aloud when writing a child's name. Have name cards available for children to copy. Encourage children to write names on lists in the classroom. A "waiting list" may be necessary for a popular area or toy. A list can be kept at a center for children to sign in when they visit the center. Use a notebook for each child and have children "sign in" each day when arriving at school.
- **Letter Activities**—Use manipulative activities for letter activities—sand paper letters, zip-lock bags of hair gel for tracing letters, trace letters in sand, salt, finger paint.
- **Postcards**—Create wipe-off postcards for children to use. Cut tag board into 6 x 9 inch rectangle, glue a canceled stamp in the corner. Draw vertical line down middle of postcard and add lines for address. Cover with clear Contact paper or laminate. Children can use a wipe-off marker to write messages on the postcards.
- **Play dough Alphabet Cards**—Cut construction paper into 9" x 12" pieces. On each piece of paper write an alphabet letter using a felt tip marker. Cover with clear contact paper or laminate. Place in center with play dough for children to form letters.
- **Wipe-Off Boards**—Children enjoy using wipe-off boards for writing. A wipe off surface can be made by laminating or covering a piece of poster board with contact paper.
- **Sign - Up Sheets**—Have a paper for children to sign their name when they work in a center area—Print at top of paper: "I worked in the art center today" and have space below for children to sign their name.
- **Survey Sheets**—Have students take surveys about likes and dislikes. At top of paper write "My Favorite Ice Cream" (or "My Favorite Pet", or "My Hair Color", etc.). Add pictures to illustrate and divide the paper into columns. Students sign their names beneath the appropriate column.
- **Message Center**—Have an area in the room (bulletin board or back of a shelf) that serves as a message center. Children can hang writing efforts in the message center.



- **Letters**—Decorate edges of paper to make fancy stationary. Place in a center with envelopes (recycle envelopes received in mail) for students to write letters to families and friends.

Writing Opportunities for Center Areas

Dramatic Play

- Post Office—Have letters, envelopes and sticker-stamps for mailing letters.
- Doctor Office—Paper and pencils for prescriptions, appointment calendar.
- Police Station—Paper and pencils for tickets and accident forms.
- Home Living—Pads by telephone for messages, paper for grocery lists, cards for recipes,
- Restaurant—Clipboard and paper for taking orders.
- Office—pads, appointment book, typewriter, forms, applications, calendar

Writing Area (or Art Center)

- Unlined paper of all colors, sizes and shapes,
- Pencils, markers, colored pencils, crayons
- Word/picture cards to students to copy
- Stationary and envelopes
- Official looking forms
- Stamps and ink pads
- Book making materials

Block Area

- Paper and pencils for making signs for block structures.
- Tickets for policemen, clipboards for reports, message pads.

Table Toy Area

- Paper and pencils to draw and write about constructions and designs.

Science Area

- Paper and pencils to draw and write about animals, plants or other items in science area.

This list is not exhaustive nor is it intended to endorse specific products or suppliers.

Please refer to GELDS (Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards) for specific standards and indicators.