

What is Literacy?

Literacy means all the activities involved in speaking, listening, reading, writing and appreciating both spoken and written language.

During the preschool years, children are changing in their ability to communicate with others. As they grow and develop, so do their early literacy skills. Through their involvement with a print rich environment along with an opportunity to communicate, children begin to acquire emerging literacy skills.

Researchers have studied how children learn to read, write and understand written language. They have identified what concepts children need to become competent and confident readers and writers. Seven components of literacy should be a part of a pre-school child's curriculum.

The seven components are:

- Increased vocabulary and language
- Phonological Awareness
- Knowledge of Print
- Letters and Words
- Comprehension
- Understanding books and other texts
- Literacy a source of enjoyment



Do you want your child to be a good reader? One of the most important things you can do with your child is read. Research has shown that a successful Kindergarten student needs to have over 5,000 books read to him before entering school. Read—Read—Read to your child.

When you and your child...	This helps your child...
Read Books Together	<i>Learn new vocabulary Understand what is read Express ideas and feelings</i>
Talk about what happened during the day and make up a story together	<i>Recall events Use language to express ideas and describe events Learn that parents feel school is important</i>
Recite nursery rhymes, chants and songs and then have fun changing the words that rhyme	<i>Hear the sounds in words Have fun playing with words</i>
Notice street and store signs and talk about what they say and mean	<i>Learn about print and what it means Learn that reading is important in the real world</i>
Find letters from your child's name	<i>Recognize and name some letters</i>



I know what literacy is.

How do I know my child is developing literacy skills?

When your child's vocabulary is increasing, your child is...

- Pointing to a truck he is playing with and says, "That's a Frontloader."
- Sharing a story like "I'm going fishing with my dad tomorrow and we're going to bring fishing poles and a big net and catch 100 fish."
- Describing a scary dream as a "nightmare" after she has heard the story *There's a Nightmare in My Closet*.



When your child's phonemic awareness is increasing, your child is...

- Saying rhymes, poems and rhyming songs
- Making up nonsense words or silly names
- Clapping along with each word or syllable of a song or rhyme
- Noticing that several words or names begin with the same sound



When your child's print knowledge is increasing, your child is...

- Pointing to canned goods at the grocery store and says, "This is peaches."
- Making a card for a family member writing words from left to right and top to bottom.
- Reading a book to a group of stuffed animals, pointing at the words and turning the pages from front to back



When your child's understanding of letters and words is increasing, your child is...

- Using magnetic letters or other alphabet materials to form his name
- Attempting to write a letter for a family member.
- Saying, "That is a 'M'" pointing the arches outside of McDonalds.

When your child's comprehension skills are increasing, your child is...

- Retelling the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* using finger puppets
- Explaining, "The kids stuffed the turkeys in their shirts 'cause they didn't want them to be eaten," after hearing the story, *Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving*
- Talking about his own experience after hearing the *Carrot Seed* Story

When your child's concepts of books and text is increasing, your child is...

- Retelling the story of *Three Little Pigs*: "The second pig built his house of wood, but the wolf huffed and puffed and blew it down. So, the third pig made his house of bricks.
- Placing a sign that read "Do not Move" on a design made with pattern blocks
- Referring to a book about castles while building one with blocks.



When your child's enjoyment or literacy experiences is increasing, your child is...

- Asking for a favorite book to be read
- Listening to a story and asking questions
- Using books to get answers to their questions

Monthly Extension Activities and Other Points of Information

At the first family engagement event, we gave you items that will help your child learn throughout the early childhood years.

This sheet provides literacy activities for those materials.

Cookie Sheet Extenders

(cookie sheets were given at the first family engagement activity. If you were unable to attend, let us know so that we can provide you with the information)

- When you use the play dough at home, your **cookie sheet may be used as a "placemat"** for the play dough. The cookie sheet will provide the boundaries as where the play dough can be. This helps keeping the play dough in one area and helps with clean up.

Use the cookie sheet with the magnetic letters. Here is a list of pre-literacy activities that will grow with your child:

- Mix all the letters up. Help your child put them in A-B-C order by sticking them to the cookie sheet.
- **Use the magnetic letters to spell your child's name and other important words to him or her like Mom, Dad, a pet's name, Grandma, Grandpa and a special friend's name.**
- Make word cards so that your child can spell simple words like dog, cat, hat, mat, or stop, hop, cop. These can be rhyming words or simple three letter words.
- As your child recognizes his/her letters, ask your child to find the letter by the sound and then put in A-B-C order.



Five Little Pumpkin Book with fingerplay sheet

Enjoy the traditional fingerplay. Your child will be able to "rote" read (read from memory) this fun fingerplay. Use the fingerplay sheet to make either finger puppets or add magnets to the back of each pumpkin to create a story board and **re-tell the fingerplay on your child's cookie sheet.** Foam pumpkin shapes may also be available at a craft store. Other fall shapes could be used to create fall story boards.



Reading Right from the Start... A great resource



This pamphlet shares resources and tips to encourage reading skills from Birth to Age 5. However, preschool information begins on page 28. The pamphlet shares everyday activities you may complete with your child that encourages literacy skills. On p. 16 and p. 32, examples of chants and nursery rhymes are available. Examples of ideas to make reading more interesting are available on p. 34. The importance of writing is discussed on p. 35.

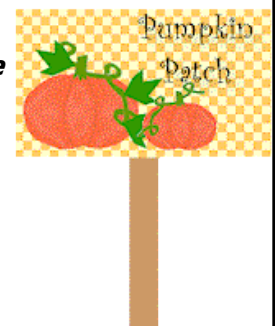
A book list finishes the pamphlet on p. 48. This is an excellent resource that ties in with the Creative Curriculum we use with your child everyday at school.

What to do with the dry erase board?

(Dry Erase Boards were given at the first family engagement activity. If you were unable to attend, let us know so that we can provide you with the information)

Use the dry erase board with the magnet letter activities and encourage your child to copy the words he/she make.

After your child tries to write the words, encourage him/her to draw a simple picture to illustrate the word.



The story of the Amaryllis: How active engaged experiences support the whole child

As children and teachers studied the characteristics of the amaryllis, the school made a paradigm shift to include more hands-on learning experiences.

Meeting Illinois Early Learning Standards:

Science Standards:

Using Senses to explore and observe natural phenomena
Collecting and describing and recording information

Math Standard:

Describing qualitative change using measurement
Making prediction about what will happen next
Using concrete objects, pictures and graphs to represent data

Social/Emotional Development:

Exhibits eagerness and curiosity as a learner
Exhibit persistence and creativity in seeking solutions to problems



Madison and Abbie demonstrated to Kellen the different shapes needed to draw the amaryllis.



Jordan demonstrates measuring techniques used to monitor the plants weekly growth. As the plants grew, friends needed to work together to measure the weekly growth.



Ms. Williams' class amaryllis was the first to bloom. The bulb is also sending another shoot with a bud. The beautiful blossoms is worth the wait!

Let It Snow Direction Sheet

January Take Home Pack



Make your own Snowflake

Please return your completed snowflake within two weeks of receiving the project sheet.

1. Fold the enclosed coffee filter in half, then in half again and then one more time so that you have made a triangle.
2. Cut out shapes from the edges. The more shapes you cut the better.
3. Open up your snowflake when you are finished cutting. You should have a lovely pattern. If you would like, you can decorate your snowflake with glue and glitter or glue it onto a piece of color construction paper.

Snowmen Finger Puppets:

1. Help your child cut out the snowmen finger puppets on the attached page titled *Snowmen Finger Puppets*.
2. Color the snowmen.
3. Fold the strips behind the snowmen and glue or tape the strips together to form a puppet.
4. Wear a puppet on each finger while reciting the snowmen rhymes and songs. (*Songs and rhymes are on the attached sheets titled "Snow Songs and Fingerplays"*)



Recipe for Homemade Instant Hot Cocoa

(Note: Enjoying a cup of cocoa made from a mix will also be beneficial to your child)

Ingredients:

2 3/4 cups instant nonfat dry milk powder
1/2 cup nondairy coffee creamer
1 cup miniature marshmallows

1 1/2 cups Nestles Quik
1/2 cup powdered sugar

How to make Instant Cocoa Mix

1. Combine ingredients in a large bowl, and mix well.
2. Store cocoa mix in an airtight container
3. To serve, place 1/3 cup mix in a cup. Add hot 6 to 8 oz hot water



Roll-a-Snowman Game

You will need a dice, a drawing tool and a sheet of paper. Roll the dice and draw the corresponding piece of the snowman until you have completed the snowman.



Winter Bingo Game

Supplies: Five Bingo Game Boards and counter pieces or marking chips to play the game

Directions:

Cut one of the Bingo game sheets apart so that the cards may be used for calling cards. Draw the cards to play bingo using the other full sheets. Use buttons, dry beans, counters or other small pieces as marking chips on the bingo card.

Snow Book and Highlighter

Read the copied book about **SNOW** with your child several times. As your child becomes more familiar with the text, encourage him to read the book by himself. Use the highlighter with your child to highlight the word "snow" on each page.



J
A
N
U
A
R
Y

T
A
K
E

H
O
M
E

A
C
T
I
V
I
T
Y

A Bag Full of January Learning to Complete at Home...

The purpose of each kit is to extend the parent/child interactions that have been held at school and to encourage your child's development at home.

January activities are focused on the theme of "Snow". Activities will develop your child's skills in reading, math, science and writing. Most of the materials are supplied; some of the materials you will need to get. We are also including a "snow" themed book for you to keep to build your child's library at home. Complete as many activities as you like. We will be asking for your feedback through a parent survey in May. Have Fun with the Snow inside during January!



Available Activities:

Make your own Snowflake
(Art)

Snowmen Finger Puppets
(Literacy)

Homemade Hot Cocoa Mix
(Math, Literacy)

Snowflake Songs and Rhymes
(Literacy)

Roll-A-Snowman
(Math)

Snowman BINGO
(Math)

Snow Book with Highlighter

When you and your child...	This helps your child...
Pretend with a puppet	<i>Learn to make believe and talk about a story (literacy)</i>
Play board and card games. Read the directions out loud.	<i>Learn about rules. Don't feel you have to follow them exactly. (social skills)</i>
Recite nursery rhymes, chants and songs and then have fun changing the words that rhyme.	<i>Hear the sounds in words Have fun playing with words (literacy)</i>
Read the recipe. Have your child get the food, measure, stir and pour.	<i>Learn that reading helps you to know what to do. (literacy, math)</i>
Make a shopping list. Say, "Let's think about what we need and write it."	<i>Write for a purpose and learn new words. (literacy)</i>
Gather paper, scissors and glue for a project	<i>Learn to plan and carry out a task (study habits, independence)</i>
Scribble on paper using some letters and tell what the scribble says	<i>Learn to use writing as a way to communicate (literacy)</i>



Some of my Best Friends are Flakes!

