

Good Practice Guidelines: Early Writing

2.01

“Early dramatic play helps children to explore roles and themes, beginnings, endings, transitions, all of which are vital to the writing process”

T Bruce, Early Childhood Education, Hodder & Stoughton Educational 1987

The Unique Child

- Adults regularly monitor the progress of individual children so that planning takes account of their interests and needs
- Children are encouraged to make independent decisions and mark-make/write as part of their play activities, displays, etc

Positive Relationships

- Adults join in the children’s play and respond to children’s writing
- Adults openly respond as a reader to the children’s early attempts at writing

Enabling Environments

- The indoor and outdoor environment is rich in adult and child’s print
- Signs, notices and books are high profile across all areas
- Opportunities are made for the children to discuss the print in the environment for specific purposes
- Children’s independent writing is displayed across all areas
- The indoor and outdoor writing areas are well resourced, easily accessible and attractive
- Magnetic letters and computer software are available for children who find handwriting a challenge
- The children have their own notice board to display their writing, notes, letters etc
- Adults value linguistic diversity and foster the development of home language skills and provide plenty of opportunities for talk
- Children’s writing is regularly valued and celebrated

Learning and Development

- Play is the key way for children to explore and develop writing skills
- All children are included in planned writing activities, accounting for different learning styles and interests
- There are clear purposes for writing which are real and of interest e.g. through role play
- Children have many opportunities to experiment with writing themselves e.g. mark making, personal writing, symbols, script
- The children have opportunities to tell, retell and refine texts
- Writing is modelled by adults for a variety of purposes e.g. notes, registers, making lists, IWBs
- Adults regularly read to and with children, demonstrating how written language looks and sounds
- Phonics are taught systematically and regularly (see Letters and sounds guidance)
- Shared writing to teach skills of text composition is planned weekly
- Activities support the continued development of the children’s gross and fine motor skills



Leaders and managers

- The teaching of writing is regularly monitored and evaluated
- Termly analysis is completed to identify any differences in attainment between groups
- The importance of a quality literacy rich learning environment is kept high profile

A few tips...

Incentives for mark making/writing:

- Labels for displays, role play area etc
- Lists, price tags in the role play shop
- Letters, envelopes, postcards
- Diaries, appointment cards
- Message pads by the telephones
- Menus
- Interactive Whiteboards/computers/touch-screens – SMART Notebook and open-ended drawing programs, with related objects and interests beside for stimulus
- Plenty of clip boards with attached paper and pencil displayed across a variety of areas indoors and outdoors
- The children's own notice board where they can independently display their writing when and how often they like

Designated writing table (indoors and outdoors):

This area should be attractive, easily accessible, well labelled and very well resourced with a variety of writing tools, types and sizes of paper plus incentives to write e.g. treasure box, post box, notice board, scrap book, post-its etc

Further information

We have provided shortcuts to these documents on the EYFS page of our Publications section at www.childrenscentres.org.uk

EYFS DCSF 2007

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs/>

Letters and Sounds DCSF 2007

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/local/clld/las.html>

http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/local/clld/resources/letters_and_sounds/00282_2007BKT_EN.pdf

PNS Communication, Language and Literacy Development DCSF 2007

http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/clld_pd_resource/

For further information visit www.childrenscentres.org.uk
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