

Language and Literacy

Accomplished early childhood teachers are conversant in the major theories, knowledge bases, and controversies related to the teaching of language and literacy. They create programs that promote the interrelated skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and visually representing. They also have a broad understanding of the continuum in language development and reading development and of the ways the stages of learning shape a model for teaching language and literacy. Teachers promote daily print and oral experiences. They use visual representations such as graphic organizers, graphs, charts, illustrations, photographs, and available technologies to foster critical and creative thinking through the use of language. They draw on their knowledge of the key challenges and typical and atypical processes in the development of literacy skills and capacities.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know how young children acquire a first language and how they acquire a second one, and they address the challenges that English language learners face. Teachers differentiate instruction so that all children can achieve their fullest potential. Teachers design appropriate learning experiences in ways that will challenge and motivate children at a suitable pace. They explain to parents, administrators, and colleagues how their instructional strategies and objectives support children's language development.

Accomplished early childhood teachers recognize the importance of social interaction in developing strong language and literacy skills, and they facilitate

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KNOWING SUBJECT MATTER FOR TEACHING YOUNG CHILDREN

such interaction among young children. Teachers support dramatic play, such as spontaneous pretend play, dramatizing their own and other people's stories, and reenacting literature, as an important way to help children develop literacy skills. Teachers might have children create group morning message charts as well as individual and group stories, and then share them aloud in order to understand better the connection between what is said and what is written. They might also use class poems and songs as a further means to reinforce these connections. Accomplished early childhood teachers might use interactive writing to begin to teach the conventions of written language.