In all educational settings, including those in which children’s home language is not English, accomplished early childhood teachers build on the previous linguistic experiences of children. They organize their classrooms in ways that take advantage of children’s prior literacy experiences. They promote and encourage the ongoing development of language and literacy in spoken language in the home and community.

Writing

Accomplished early childhood teachers know how young children develop as writers, and they use this knowledge to teach writing. They know that young children’s writing tends to progress from scribbles, to mock letters and symbols, to developmental spelling with limited control of mechanics, and then to increasing use of conventional spellings of words. They know that for the youngest children, “writing” to express their ideas may involve drawing and dictating as well as actually forming letters and words. Teachers encourage children to communicate using print, and teachers gain insights into children’s thought processes and growing literacy by studying what they write. They understand the challenges that children face when trying to convey their thoughts in writing.

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand the importance of teaching writing in ways that are meaningful and developmentally appropriate. Teachers encourage children to write, or pretend to write, during dramatic play; for example, children might act the parts of servers writing restaurant orders, or they might create road signs for block cities they have built. Accomplished teachers create readily accessible writing areas stocked with materials such as pencils, markers, staplers, and paper that children can use to write and illustrate books and cards.

Accomplished early childhood teachers support children’s development as writers in many ways. They introduce children to the different genres, including narrative, informative, and persuasive texts, and they provide opportunities for children to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. They encourage children to share their opinions, provide information, recount experiences, or correctly explain the steps in a procedure. They understand how to scaffold children’s writing development. For example, they might guide children through the stages of creating an argument, moving them from simply stating an opinion to ultimately creating a counter-argument.

Accomplished early childhood teachers provide developmentally appropriate instruction in the writing process. They teach young children prewriting strategies such as brainstorming; finding a topic that fits a purpose or an audience; researching or otherwise exploring ideas related to the topic; and organizing ideas with outlines, webs, charts, or other graphic organizers. They show children how to write a first draft, reminding them to include details that will catch the reader’s interest and to provide support for main ideas. They teach children to revise their work by reviewing ideas and organization, and model how to edit work for spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar. Finally, they help children publish their work. Accomplished teachers weave technology into every step of the writing process, from researching interesting topics, to checking spelling, to publishing.
Accomplished early childhood teachers demonstrate that good writers are also good researchers. They teach young children how to formulate questions, find answers in a variety of sources, evaluate sources, and restate information in their own words. They explain the meaning of plagiarism and show children how to cite sources appropriately.

**Viewing and Visually Representing**

Accomplished early childhood teachers understand that viewing refers to the act of attending to communication conveyed by visual representations, and that visually representing refers to conveying information or expressing feelings using non-verbal media such as drawings, photographs, graphic designs, or physical performances. Teachers know that viewing and visually representing involve visual language, and they teach children to become attuned to the conventions, style, and vocabulary that visual language comprises. Teachers understand how visual images become part of spoken and written language, thus making visual representations an integral part of language development. Accomplished teachers know that children process visual language differently; for example, children with visual impairments might view drawing, charts, and diagrams tactilely. Accomplished teachers use developmentally and culturally appropriate strategies to teach all children skills related to viewing and visually representing.

**Mathematics**

Accomplished early childhood generalists know the ways in which young children think about mathematics and know mathematics in ways that allow them to support the learning of every child. Teachers know the structures and interconnections of mathematical topics. They are skilled in modeling processes and practices that provide young children with the means of developing and using mathematical ideas, and they routinely structure opportunities for children to engage in practices such as representing and explaining their mathematical thinking. Accomplished teachers know, and are skilled in noticing, how children think about particular concepts, procedures, and practices. They are familiar with children’s common misconceptions about mathematics, and they assist children in clarifying them as they arise. Teachers lay a solid foundation for future learning by nurturing the view that mathematics makes sense and is practical.

Accomplished early childhood teachers know the content of mathematical strands, including number and operations, geometry and spatial sense, measurement, data and probability, and algebra. They have particularly deep understanding of the early concepts, skills, sensibilities and procedures related to each strand, and they know the ways in which these elements connect. Teachers appreciate and emphasize number and number sense in early mathematics. With younger children, this work involves daily routines that involve the use of numbers and development of number sense through collecting objects, counting objects, and associating numbers with collections of objects; saying, reading, and writing numbers; playing simple games that involve numbers; grouping objects and skip counting by 2s, 5s, and 10s; and engaging concretely with number combinations and estimation. When working