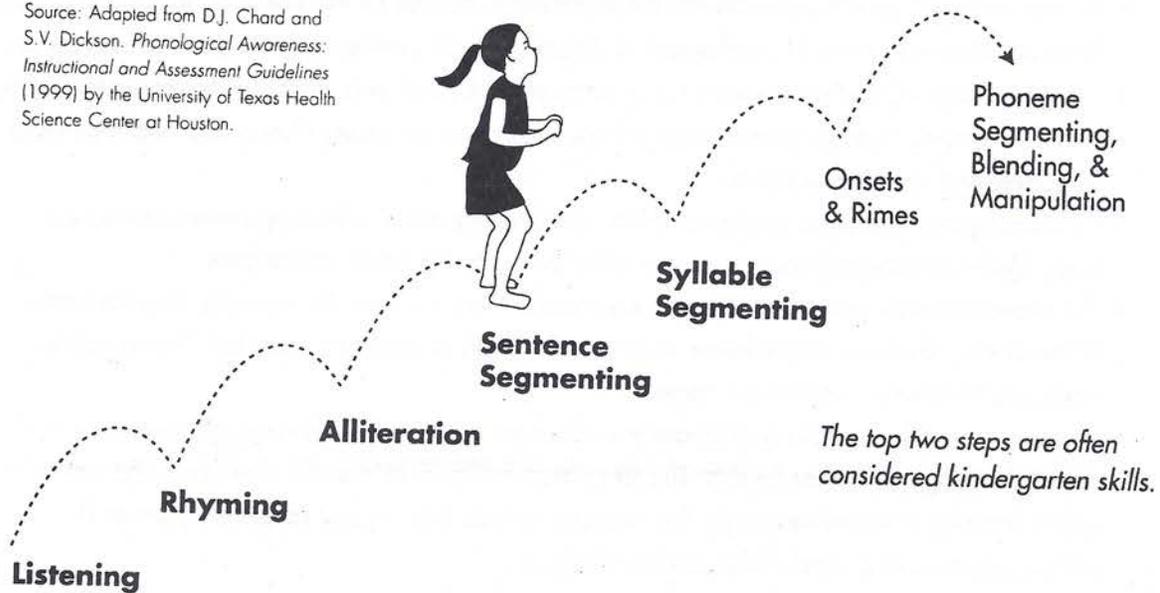


## HEARING SOUNDS Along the Phonological Awareness Continuum

Source: Adapted from D.J. Chard and S.V. Dickson. *Phonological Awareness: Instructional and Assessment Guidelines* (1999) by the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.



**Figure 1.**

The continuum is like a stairway that children move along as they progress from a limited to far deeper understanding of how the sounds of words work. The steps are progressive for most, but not all, children. Some children hop ahead to master complex skills, only to have to return to grasp some seemingly easier ones. Activities for learning the continuum include:

- listening games that focus children's attention on words
- rhyming, which focuses attention on sounds at the end of words
- alliteration, which focuses attention on the sounds at the beginning of words
- exercises to compare and contrast sounds at the beginning and end of words reinforcing what has been learned with rhyming and alliteration
- counting the numbers of words in sentences (sentence segmenting)
- counting and clapping the syllables in words and blending them back together into words (syllable segmenting and blending)
- dividing one-syllable words by their initial consonant sound and all their other sounds (onset-rime)
- deleting and substituting sounds in words
- blending together individual sounds (phoneme blending)
- breaking down words into individual phonemes (phoneme segmentation)
- replacing individual sounds in a word. For example, take "mitt," change the /i/ sound to the /a/ sound, and you have "mat" (phoneme manipulation).

## STRATEGIES

**To promote phonological awareness**

- Be intentional and plan experiences that focus children's attention on the sounds in words and speech. These activities need to be fun and playful to ensure children's participation, motivation, and interest.
- Engage children in daily experiences that promote phonological awareness. These include but are not limited to: playing rhyming games, singing songs, and chanting nursery rhymes; learning fingerplays; or reading and memorizing poems.
- Put phonological awareness games, activities, and rhyming books in learning centers around the room. Make phonological awareness part of the everyday classroom environment.
- Use phonological awareness activities during transitions and routines. For example, sing the Name Game or say, "Everyone whose name starts with the sound of 'ssss,' get your coat," being sure to emphasize the sound, not the letter name.
- Whenever possible, phonological awareness should be taught to English language learners in their primary language as well as English. This foundation facilitates the transfer of reading and writing skills to learning a second language. For example, include rhyming and alliteration patterns in children's primary languages. Enlist parents to help you.
- Engage children in a variety of listening activities including listening to stories on tape, taking "listening walks" in the building or outdoors, or matching the actual sounds of objects to their pictures.
- Emphasize rhyming activities by
  - ~ letting children fill in a rhyme when reading, reciting poetry, or chanting
  - ~ making up nonsense rhymes with their names and other words
  - ~ reading books with strong rhyming patterns such as Dr. Seuss
  - ~ incorporating rhymes from the children's home languages and cultures
- Use alliteration activities such as
  - ~ singing songs like Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes and substitute the first sounds of words: Bed, Boulders, Bees, and Boes
  - ~ making a class book where each child's picture is matched with a picture that begins with the same sound as his or her first name.
- Play matching games where children match words or pictures that have the same beginning or ending sounds (e.g., ball and bear; cat and bat) to build awareness of alliteration and rhyming.
- Focus on syllable segmenting by
  - ~ playing a game in which you say two words or syllables and ask children to put them together. Ask, "What word can you make with 'chalk' 'board'?" or "What word do you hear when I say 'pen' 'cil'?" If possible, use similar strategies in children's home languages.
  - ~ using rhythm instruments with children to play with words and syllables in songs. Leave the instruments out for children to practice their skills.
  - ~ playing a guessing game in which you clap out the number of syllables in a word and the children have to find the object or picture match. This activity can be tied into a curriculum study. For example, if the class is studying farm animals, one clap might match with a toy cow; two claps with a toy rooster and so on.
- Use a variety of teaching resource materials to build your repertoire of appropriate activities along the phonological awareness continuum.

*★Indicator: Associates sounds with written words.*

In the Child Outcomes Framework, phonological awareness is a legislatively mandated Domain Element and the specific Indicator—associates sounds with written words—is also mandated. As children become more aware of the sounds of spoken language and have more experience with print, they will begin to make connections between written words and sounds (for example, connecting the beginning letters in their names with the corresponding sounds). This Indicator is not really phonological awareness, because phonological awareness is strictly an auditory process. Associating sounds with written words is beginning phonics.

**STRATEGIES**

**To help children associate sounds with written words**

- Whenever possible, introduce letter-sound recognition and associations in the home language of English language learners.
- Take children's dictation, and focus on the sounds in the child's words rather than the names of letters, saying the sounds in an elongated manner as you write.
- Use children's attempts at writing to engage them in trying to sound out words and help draw their attention to words they know that begin with the same sound. "How do you spell Mom? Sounds like it starts like Marishka's name."
- Stretch out the sounds occasionally as they are read: "Whose name starts like MWWWom?" (with the teacher stretching out the /m/ sound and pointing to the written word).
- Provide magnetic alphabet letters or other kinds of letters for children to manipulate and explore. Be available to scaffold their learning ("You made CAT. What happens if we replace the C with an M?").
- Provide high quality computer programs that highlight words and sounds when a child clicks as the story is being read.
- Play a game of onset/rime pairings. One child has a card with the onset, the other a card with the rime (m-at). They form a pair. Then give another child a different onset (c-at) and have them form a new pair.

**★DOMAIN ELEMENT: BOOK KNOWLEDGE & APPRECIATION**

Children who are motivated to read show interest in books and reading, connect reading events to real life, and experience both the pleasure and power of reading. All children can come to appreciate books and find that reading is enjoyable. But they also learn that literacy has a purpose and can help people do things, by helping them find out about things outside their immediate environment or communicate with people far away.

Interactive book reading in small group settings is one of the most effective strategies for promoting book knowledge as well as other outcomes identified in the Literacy Domain (Dickinson & Smith 1993; Karweit & Wasik 1996; Morrow 1988; Whitehurst et al. 1994). Small groups provide opportunities for adult-child interaction when the teacher can clarify a child's misunderstanding, extend a child's idea, or ask a probing question. Such exchanges promote vocabulary development and syntactical awareness. They deepen children's conceptual comprehension; they build self-confidence. The effective teaching strategies listed here are based on these well-substantiated research findings.

Books are important tools for learning that require special knowledge and handling. Children need to learn how to hold the book and turn the pages from front to back. Children also learn the elements of the book and where to look for them. Where is the cover? How do we know the name of the book and who wrote it (the author)? Who drew the pictures (the illustrator)? Where do I start reading? What are letters? What are words? Where do I go next (left to right and top to bottom)? Children also become familiar with these elements when they work to create their own books.

To gain the most benefit from books, children need hands-on experience with them and adult guidance (Neuman & Roskos 1993). The books must be accessible and in children's hands, not on top of a piano or in a box that the teacher controls. But books are expensive and valuable, so teachers are often hesitant to let young, impulsive children handle them. Young children, especially those who have had little experience with books, will need teachers to demonstrate careful handling of books.

Most preschool programs provide children with storybooks, but all preschools should have libraries with many different kinds of texts, including non-fiction and poetry (Neuman 1997). While most children love stories, some prefer information books that relate to their own interests, whether about bears, trucks, dinosaurs, or space travel. Non-fiction books are more likely to motivate these children to engage in literacy experiences.

Reading to children is one of the best ways to help children become familiar with different kinds of books and texts. By reading and re-reading stories, teachers help children follow the elements of narrative. Then children may retell the story to demonstrate their understanding of events and plot or act out the story in dramatic play or in a teacher-guided story dramatization. Dramatic play also serves the function of engaging children in creating narratives and "scripts," which, in turn, support their understanding of story elements.

Developing young children's appreciation for books and their motivation to read are fundamental goals during the early years. For nearly every child, the process of learning to read becomes difficult at some point along the way, whether in first grade where decoding becomes the focus of instruction, in second grade where conventional spelling is demanded, or in third grade where comprehension takes center stage. Young children who

are motivated to learn to read are more likely to persist when they encounter challenges. Another reason that motivation and appreciation for books are important is that the more a child reads, the better reader she becomes (Snow, Burns, & Griffin 1998). Children who like reading are almost always better readers.

Developing positive approaches to learning is critical to learning to read (see Domain 7). Children's curiosity will take them to books to find the answers. Their persistence will help them concentrate and work through difficult reading tasks. Furthermore, their reasoning abilities will support their comprehension of the text.

**STRATEGIES****To enhance book knowledge and appreciation**

- Read one-on-one to children on laps or snuggled close by in small groups of three to six where children can see and touch the book and develop positive feelings about reading.
- Read to children in small groups, to best support children's active participation, vocabulary development, and comprehension.
- Read the same book over and over if children request it.
- Actively engage children in reading time—asking questions about the book before reading it (such as where is the cover or title), posing questions that call on them to predict what will happen, noticing cause-effect relationships, chanting with rhyme and patterns.
- Assist children in seeking information in books or using books as resources to help solve problems ("What does the space shuttle really look like so we can build it with blocks?").
- Make sure literacy experiences are fun, meaningful, and interesting.
- Teach children how to properly care for and handle books, protect the spine, turn pages slowly so they do not tear, and when necessary participate in repairing books as needed. Model respect and careful handling of books.
- Engage children in retelling stories or acting them out in dramatic play. With the children's help, write down the stories they make up as they play and retell them later.
- Have children make their own books, either individually or as a collaborative group project.
- Provide an inviting, cozy, comfortable library area, stocked with at least five books per child, two to three per child on display at one time (Neuman 1997).
- Display books attractively on open shelves, with covers facing front, accessible for children to make their selections.
- Make sure that books in the classroom reflect children's culture, home language, and identity.
- Plan times during the day when children select their own books to look at alone or with a friend.
- Read to children several times a day, every day, expressively and enthusiastically. Read favorite books repeatedly when requested.
- Use books as resources to support children's play (how to build a dog house or draw a dinosaur).
- Talk with children about their favorite books and authors. Encourage children to write or e-mail them. Use the Internet to get more information about authors' lives and work.
- Provide ways for children to take books home or to receive books to keep.

- Put books in various areas of the classroom such as in the block and puzzle areas.
- Integrate books across the curriculum, including literature related to the creative arts and math.
- Support parents in telling stories, reading to children, and talking about books at home.
- Provide parents with the opportunity to get library cards. Encourage them to take their child to the library to check out books and to attend "story hours."
- Create story boxes for the dramatic play area filled with appropriate props to facilitate children acting out the story.
- Guide the children in a story dramatization where all the children take on the role of the main character and experience the same sequence of events (see Domain 5).

### ★ DOMAIN ELEMENT: PRINT AWARENESS & CONCEPTS

Print awareness is beginning knowledge about written language that includes different concepts and abilities such as—

- understanding that print performs a variety of functions and purposes;
- recognizing print in the environment (signs, labels);
- knowing that print, not pictures, carries the message in the story;
- distinguishing separate words, understanding the concept of *word*, that specific clusters of letters on the page with spaces between them represent the words said by the reader;
- realizing that print represents speech or thoughts written down and that it is permanent; and
- realizing that print in English is read left to right, top to bottom.

The skills listed above are all important elements of reading and writing development (Clay 1985). They constitute developmentally appropriate outcomes in literacy learning. In fact, another strong predictor of later reading success is the ability to write one's name at the beginning of kindergarten, a skill that encompasses many of the elements of print awareness (Riley 1996). Developing print awareness is challenging and achievable for pre-school children, if they have good teaching and planned learning experiences.

Children's play is one of the most effective contexts for learning concepts of print as well as other important literacy skills (Morrow 1990; Neuman & Roskos 1992, 1993; Vukelich 1994). Play is highly motivating for young children. Enriching play settings and experiences with environmental print and literacy tools plus having staff who support such play are effective ways to help children accomplish many literacy outcomes.

There are different forms (types) and functions (purposes) of print. The different forms or genres of writing that young children may encounter include stories (narratives), non-fiction or information books, poems, lists, signs, directions or recipes, letters and invitations. Different types of text have different characteristics. A narrative is a story with a beginning, middle, and end; characters; dialogue; and plot (usually a problem to solve or a dilemma to be resolved). Non-fiction books provide information. They are especially useful when we want to answer a question or figure out why something happened or how something works. They help us find out what we want to know about places, people, and events far away in time and space.

Other forms of writing such as lists, letters, directions, or recipes all have specific and distinct functions and forms. For instance, letters start with "Dear," while lists may have one word on each line. Knowing about types of text helps children make sense of reading and writing experiences even in preschool, but this knowledge becomes even more important in the later grades.

Some of the various functions or purposes of print include: communication, expression, explanation, direction, and information. Different forms of writing can be used for various functions. For instance, a letter can communicate or give directions. A poem can express personal feelings, explain why something happened, make us laugh, or teach us something.

Children need to learn to use print in the environment in a purposeful, functional way. For this reason, labels should be used as needed for a real purpose such as reminders of handwashing steps, today's menu, or materials children choose to use. However, when labels appear on every possible object, children tend to ignore them and the labels become almost like wallpaper, not useful in promoting print awareness.

**STRATEGIES****To support print awareness**

- Maximize the use of meaningful print around the room, such as menus, order pads, and pads for bills in the "restaurant"; charts, prescription pads, and cards for the "doctor's office" or "hospital"; builder's plans, construction and street signs, and books for the block area; magazines, shopping lists, and stationery in the "house"; cookbooks and recipe cards for the "kitchen"; directions, timetables, and maps in the "bus station," "train station," or "car."
- Engage children in making their own signs or labels using pictures, letter-like symbols, letters, and their own "kid-writing."
- Read aloud to small or large groups of children using Big Books, to allow for children to see print and pictures. These often come with smaller versions for children to hold in their hands.
- Track print while reading to children from Big Books or language experience charts, pointing to specific words and demonstrating left to right, right/left sweep, and top to bottom motion of print.
- Help the child take the next step beyond what he is currently capable of doing. In other words, provide scaffolding. For example, if a child has been writing his name with only a J for several weeks, the teacher may ask "What comes after J, Jamal?" and show him the next letter if he doesn't know it. Or say "point to the words as I read them" to reinforce a child's knowledge of left-to-right motion.
- Engage children in writing or exploring with many different kinds of print for different purposes, such as signs, lists, stories, letters, or directions.
- Support parents in print-related activities at home.
- Use high quality, developmentally appropriate computer software to introduce and reinforce concepts of print.

*★Indicator: Recognizes a word as a unit of print, or awareness that letters are grouped to form words, and that words are separated by spaces.*

Recognizing a *word* as a unit of print is a fairly difficult, abstract concept for young children. Because children do not automatically hear and distinguish the individual words in the spoken speech stream, they need adults to help them learn to distinguish words in written language. Teachers need to help children become aware that letters are grouped to form words and that words are separated by spaces in print.

## STRATEGIES

### To help children recognize a word as a unit of print

- Point to individual words when reading to children, especially in Big Books or on language experience charts.
- Talk with children to assess their understanding of the concept of "word." Ask them which is the first word in a sentence or which word starts like their name.
- Provide lots of opportunities for children to write. As they write their own messages for their purposes, they will focus on the individual words they want to use.
- Scaffold children's writing by drawing lines for the number of words they want to write. ("You want to write, I love you. OK, that's three words, \_ \_ \_.")
- Expose children to varying structures of print that reflect the diverse languages within the classroom.

### DOMAIN ELEMENT: EARLY WRITING

Encouraging young children to write is one of the best ways to help them learn to read (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp 2000). Engaging children in their own writing promotes print awareness as well as the many other early literacy skills described in the Child Outcomes Framework. Toddlers should have access to paper, crayons, and other materials for drawing and writing. They will explore making shapes and imitating features of adult writing. Engaging children in early writing is an essential hands-on learning experience to help them learn about print and written words that they will eventually read and spell.

As young children experiment with writing, teachers have many opportunities to convey basic information about print. For example, it is written from left to right, it uses special symbols called letters, and letters have specific names and sounds. The more frequently they write, the more children learn about print and how it works.

Their first writing attempts resemble scribbles. Gradually their scribbles become more deliberate and controlled. Soon, they incorporate letter-like shapes or symbols, circles and lines, in their drawings. Eventually, alphabetic letters and invented spelling will replace their marks. Temporary invented spelling, also called developmental or phonetic spelling, results from their initial attempts to associate sounds with letters, as when a child writes "bk" for "bike". This process of trying to figure out how to write words is an important step on the way to learning conventional spelling (Snow, Burns, & Griffin

1998). Observing and talking with children as they produce these spellings enables teachers to monitor children's understanding of letter-sound relationships.

There should be materials and opportunities for children to engage in writing throughout the classroom, such as making grocery lists in the housekeeping area or writing prescriptions while playing in the doctor's office. Children's "writing", which may be drawing, scribbling, "driting" (a combination of drawing and writing), some letter-like forms, and even some letters, is incorporated into play and projects.

Early writing is not only about learning to form letters; it is about using print for real reasons. When children see adults writing, children want to write themselves. They learn that writing is useful and feel grown-up doing it, and we want to reinforce their sense of competence. When writing focuses on forming letters properly, it is likely to be less meaningful and more frustrating.

Instead of giving children letters to trace, young children need to see adults write. They will quickly pick up a pencil or a marker and begin to follow. Besides using writing for many purposes in the Head Start program, teachers can encourage parents to write grocery lists together with their children, or notes to friends or relatives. Children learn that different text forms are used for different functions of print—for example, a list versus a letter—and they learn new vocabulary. Encourage their efforts by making sure they see writing as a useful way to share information and have fun.

Other curriculum experiences should expose children to various types of writing. A cooking project requires them to attend to a recipe. Science experiments require data collection. A party requires a list of things to buy on a field trip to the store. Children's desire to protect a block structure motivates them to write a sign.


**STRATEGIES**

### To support children's early writing

- Encourage children to record their thoughts in pictures or writing in their personal journals.
- Ask children to sign-in each morning. The most meaningful word to any young child is his or her name. They are naturally motivated to see their name in print and spell their name when they are ready.
- Display the alphabet at eye level and functional print, such as children's names, next to the classroom jobs for the week. Children can begin to recognize the letters in their own names and those of their friends, as well as other important words.
- Ask children to include print in their drawings like the authors in storybooks.
- Display their writing attempts as proudly as you do their pictures. Keep in mind children learn about print by using it. They need encouragement: "You wrote me such an interesting note!"
- Watch their scribbles change to letter-like symbols and eventually recognizable forms of print as they progress through predictable developmental stages reflecting their knowledge about writing as well as their developing fine motor skills.
- Provide opportunities to write daily and make writing materials available in each activity or interest area in the classroom. Have a clipboard with pens and pencils attached in many different areas in

the classroom for both children and adults to use. In the block area, provide markers and paper for children to make signs to label constructions, create street signs, and the like.

- Help children write and draw recipe cards related to a cooking activity.
- Enrich outdoor play by including sidewalk painting with water, writing with sidewalk chalk, and making a mural or sign to hang on the fence.
- Stock a writing center with all kinds of writing tools and paper for children to experiment with.
- Take dictations from children—their own stories or messages or large language experience charts—and let children take turns pointing to words as they read. They gain in many ways from seeing you write out their own words and reading the sentences back to them.
- Give children opportunities to demonstrate what they know about types of text and what they have learned in a given area by either dictating or “kid-writing” letters, lists, signs, and other kinds of writing.
- Support early writing experiences for English language learners in their home language whenever possible.
- Ask children to retell or act out a story and see what elements they include.
- Give children journals in which to draw and write on their own.

### DOMAIN ELEMENT: ALPHABET KNOWLEDGE

The ability to read and write depends on mastering the alphabetic principle—the understanding that there is a systematic relationship between letters and sounds and that all spoken sounds and words can be represented by a limited set of agreed-upon symbols called letters (Adams 1990). In preschool, children will not fully grasp the alphabetic principle, but they should be well on their way to knowing letter names and recognizing most of the letters, especially those that are meaningful to them such as the letters in their name, friends’ names, or special words, like Mom.

Most of all, teachers need to keep alphabet learning fun and meaningful because many children tend to be naturally motivated to learn these skills if adults clearly value them and connect them to what children already know. Trying to teach letters in isolation or without any connection to words and sounds that children know leads to frustration or mere memorization which does not predict later reading success (Adams 1990).

This Domain Element of the Child Outcomes Framework includes two legislatively mandated Indicators:

*★Indicator: Identifies at least 10 letters of the alphabet, especially those in their own name.*

*★Indicator: Knows that letters of the alphabet are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named.*

Being able to recognize letters quickly and accurately is a necessary prerequisite for later decoding of unfamiliar print. Knowing the alphabet at kindergarten entry is a strong pre-

dictor of success in reading during first grade (Riley 1996; Snow, Burns, & Griffin 1998). One reason knowing letters is valuable is because for 18 of the 26 letters in the English alphabet, saying the letter name is close to the sound of the phoneme itself and the sound it makes in words (for example, the name of B is closely related to the phoneme /b/). So knowing letter names helps children begin to understand the letter-sound relationships.

Preschoolers are not expected to write letters properly on the line or to correctly associate written letters with all possible sound combinations. But children who have had good teaching and many of the literacy experiences described here should be able to identify at least 10 letters, especially those in their names. Under these conditions, many children will be able to identify substantially more than 10 letters by the time they enter kindergarten. Teachers can examine children's writing samples for evidence of children's letter learning and observe their use of letters in classroom activities. While letters should be taught in a meaningful context, at times teaching teams will want to assess children's knowledge of letter names out of context ("What letter is this?") to get a full picture of what they know and are able to do. Keep in mind that English language learners may recognize and identify letters of the alphabet in their home language as well as in English.

Adults can assess children's knowledge of letters in the context of their everyday activities by observing children's play and examining their drawing/writing samples for evidence of letter learning. For example, while children are playing doctor, they may give each other eye tests, naming letters they see; or children at the block corner may demonstrate their understanding of letters through making signs around their "construction." Younger children, while finger painting, might exclaim, "Ooooh, I made a curvy line" or "Look, I did a straight line," indicating that they see and understand the differences between types of lines they will later find in the letters of the alphabet.

Children most readily approach letter learning by first focusing on the letters in their own names. If children frequently hear their name spoken and see it in writing, at some point between about 18 months and age 3, they will identify the first letter of their name as their own. Often a child is even affronted if someone else claims the letter too. Toddlers love to sing the alphabet song, play with alphabet blocks, and look at alphabet books. Although very young children do not yet grasp the alphabetic principle, they are developing awareness of letters and finding out that the alphabet is something special that adults value.

These experiences continue during preschool, with teachers beginning to teach the alphabet in many ways in meaningful contexts. Children learn letters at different rates. Some letters are more easily learned, while others are more difficult. The issue for teachers is to keep track of children's progress in learning letters and use many strategies to support learning letters, while not underestimating children's competence in developing alphabet knowledge.

## STRATEGIES

**To teach the alphabet**

- Display the alphabet in the classroom at children's eye level. Place letters where children see them, touch and manipulate them (for instance, magnetic or sandpaper letters), and use them where they work and play.
- Create a sign-in sheet for children, grouping names by initial letters in first name. At first, children may just make a scribble or a mark, but gradually they will begin to write the letters in their names. Grouping the names by initial letter reinforces the concept of the alphabet.
- Use letter name knowledge during transitions. "Everyone whose name starts with B, wash your hands."
- With small groups of children, play games like Lotto or Concentration that require them to look closely at letters and begin to say letter names.
- Provide alphabet puzzles, computer software, and toys that reinforce letter knowledge.
- Provide the writing center with alphabet samples readily available for children to copy if they choose to or refer to as they try to write their names or other messages.
- Expose children to both upper and lower case letters as well as different fonts of the same letter. Children need to learn the "essence" of the letter symbol rather than only one representation of it. Use puzzles with matching pieces for upper and lower case letters.
- Support children's attempts at writing letters, realizing that forming upper case letters is easier at first.
- Use well-written alphabet books that clearly illustrate the sounds of the letters with pictures of objects.
- Use reading aloud and shared reading to reinforce letter-name knowledge, inviting children to say what letter a new word starts with or having them find the word that starts with S.
- Provide daily opportunities for children to write, which supports their growing interest in and desire to learn the letters. As children write, teachers give them specific help when requested in identifying or forming letters.
- Sing the alphabet song and other songs that play with letters and sounds.
- Expose all children to various ways an alphabet can appear in other languages.
- Provide multi-sensory experiences such as writing letters in sand or shaving cream; shaping letters out of play dough or pipe cleaners.
- Encourage children to make letter shapes with their bodies, "Stand like an L, roll up like an O."
- Use pieces of string to make letter shapes on table tops or rope to make them on the floor.
- Reinforce children's written names by using them in meaningful ways such as
  - ~ setting up a job chart; an absent/present chart; labeling cubbies.
  - ~ selecting a child who will be star for the week. Create a poster or a book about the child's family and interests. Write the child's name over and over.
- Make a puzzle out of each child's name. Cut out the letters in such a way that they can only be put together in the one, correct order.
- Make a word wall if you have space. Write each letter in upper and lower case on a card; put them in alphabetical order. On separate cards, write a few familiar words. Place the words under the appropriate letters on the letter wall. The first words to put up are the first names of all the children!

In conclusion, the knowledge and skills described in the Literacy Domain of the Child Outcomes Framework come before and lead up to conventional reading and writing. A large body of research now demonstrates that children who achieve these outcomes before school entrance are more likely to become successful readers and writers (Snow, Burns, & Griffin 1998). Perhaps more important, children who do not display these literacy-related competencies are more likely to have difficulty learning to read. Many of these teaching practices are not new to good early childhood programs. Tried-and-true practices like storybook reading and singing are already part of teachers' repertoires. Other practices may be new or require more emphasis than in the past, such as phonological awareness activities, writing, and teaching letters.

Early literacy experiences are a key part of every good early childhood program, but they should not become the whole curriculum. Literacy lends itself very well to curriculum integration. Literacy experiences should be integrated with other Domains and, likewise, a focus on other Domains should incorporate literacy learning.