

Especially for practitioners working with infants!

Literacy-Rich Word Activities

Literacy-Rich Experiences

Anyplace, anywhere, anytime, a child's neighborhood and community are rich in sights and sounds. These are likely to catch his interest and increase his listening and talking. Using language with young children in neighborhood and community activities will expose them to a world of words. Give the babies with whom you work many chances to visit places that offer early reading, talking, drawing, and writing opportunities.

What is the practice?

This practice uses formal and informal language and literacy learning activities. It can expose and introduce a child to listening to storytellers, reading books, playing word games, and so much more. Taking part in these activities creates opportunities to learn all kinds of pre- and early writing and reading skills.

What does the practice look like?



For several months a mother and her son have been going to a mommy and baby play group. This planned time with other infants and moms is filled with songs, games, and stories. Their best liked activity is a simple version of the song "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." The little boy likes this rhyme game because he enjoys moving back and forth while all the mothers sing. He even sits up by himself and reaches his arms out to his mother. This lets her know he is ready to play!

How do you do the practice?

Here are some ideas about places to go and things to do to involve babies in literacy-rich neighborhood and community activities.

- Start by identifying things the child likes to do. If something is fun for him, chances are he will benefit from being involved in it.
- Look for places to go or things to do that involve activities that match the child's interests. Find places that will provide him with lots of literacy-learning options.
- Formal activities include library story times, storytelling at parents' -morning-out programs and reciting nursery rhymes at parent and child play groups. Look for a beginner's art workshop for wee ones who might enjoy drawing and finger painting. Also take outings to book stores, recreation centers, and similar places.
- Informal activities might include saying nursery rhymes at a friend's house or listening to songs at a music store. When dining out, look at a menu with the child. Going to a bookstore's children's section or talking to the child when at a petting zoo are other informal activities. Almost any everyday activity can provide a chance to talk, listen, and learn.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does the child get excited when involved in the activities?
- Does she try to do part of the activities?
- Does the child vocalize to get someone to keep doing an activity?

Take a look at more fun with words

Walks and Words

Paige is 13 months old. She and her caregiver, Carter, enjoy walking near her house. Carter carries Paige in a baby backpack so she can see all that is going on. On their walks, Carter points out both well-known and novel things. He points to a neighbor's dog and crouches down so Paige can pet him. "There's Skipper!" Carter says. "Do you want to pet him?" Carter describes what Paige is doing. He asks her to "tell him," using gestures or sounds, what she wants to do next. Paige sees a neighbor walking toward them. She starts to get excited and makes sounds as the person gets closer. Paige starts a "conversation" that includes many chances to listen and "talk" with her neighbor and Carter. These outdoor walks are filled with lots of talking, listening, and communicating. Paige loves all the attention!



Fine Times To "Talk"

At 7 months old Wyatt enjoys going out with his caregiver, Lori. Two of his favorite things to do are going to a baby exercise class and swimming at a public pool. He likes them a lot because there is so much to see, do, and hear. He is "all ears and eyes." The baby exercise class includes lots of nursery rhymes, fingerplays, and singing that Wyatt enjoys so much. The infant swimming class includes music and lots of "dancing" while in the water! While involved in these outings, Lori describes and explains what they are doing. She encourages Wyatt to use gestures and sounds to tell her "what he thinks" about all of the activities. These adult-child play times have become a way for Lori and Wyatt to "talk" to each other while having fun.