

Take a look at more learning opportunities

Words Are Everywhere!

Sela, age 2, looks forward to getting to her home childcare center. When she arrives she puts her coat on a hook labeled with her name and photo. Her teacher greets her warmly and asks how she is doing this morning, allowing Sela time to answer. She goes to the kitchen for breakfast, where the drawers and cups are labeled. After she eats, Sela joins a friend in the book corner under a bright poster that says "Book Nook." They look at a new book their teacher has placed there. Later, she and her classmates use cookie cutters in play dough. When they go outside, Sela and some friends play in the sand and then draw with chalk on the sidewalk. By the time Sela's mom picks her up, the toddler has had a whole day's worth of literacy learning experiences.



Trikes 'n' Words

Charlotte tries every day to give the toddlers in her care a well-rounded literacy experience. Her group enjoys playground time. Charlotte has found lots of opportunities outdoors to engage them in meaningful talk. She draws their attention to print and comments on the symbols and signs they see. When the children are riding tricycles, she places models of common street signs along the sidewalk. Some children in the group love to point out street signs like stop and yield. Charlotte talks with the children about all of the words on the signs. She explains how the signs help people know where they are and where they want to go. She knows the children enjoy these conversations because they often comment on the signs they see. They have started acting out the signs' meanings that Charlotte has explained to them.

Count Me In!

Carlo, a 26-month-old with motor impairments, participates in the same literacy activities as the other children in his inclusive class. His teacher provides easy access to oversized books, larger writing tools, and clips to hold papers steady for easy drawing. There are alphabet and word puzzles with grip-enhanced pieces so Carlo can hold onto them. He joins the other children in songs, fingerplays, and acting out stories with occasional physical assistance from teachers. One of Carlo's favorite things is the voice recorder. It allows him to record his "stories" and then see the result printed out in words. Throughout the day, the teachers talk to Carlo and the other children. They talk about what they are doing, what they are feeling, and what is coming next. This helps them make the connection between words and their meanings.



Take a look at more words all around us

Words, Words, Words

Annie has worked hard to make her classroom a literacy-rich space for her toddlers. Writing and drawing materials are kept out in the open. Annie hangs and often rotates all her toddlers' artistic and writing attempts. When she writes lists or takes attendance, she describes what she is doing to the children nearby. She has labeled the centers and objects in the room in the children's home languages. She knows that even though they cannot read yet, the children understand the meaning of classroom signs. They often point to or refer to them during their daily play and routines.



Environmental Print

Mark wants to engage his toddler class in environmental print. He asked parents to help by bringing in signs of familiar places that interest the children. They brought in pictures of street signs, signs from restaurants, schools, churches, and other familiar sights the children saw regularly. Mark and his co-teacher also took the children on a special neighborhood walk to take photographs of signs. They talked about what the signs meant and then displayed the pictures with the others around the classroom. The children began referring to the signs regularly by pointing them out. They engaged their teachers in conversation about the places and signs.

The Word on Decorating

In Erin's inclusive toddler class, many of the children enjoy decorating the room for special events like birthdays and holidays. Each new season also provides opportunities for decorating. Erin involves all the children in the process by providing adapted brushes, markers, and other art materials. She encourages children to speak messages into a computer program that prints out their words. Some children record greetings to play during parties. Others help select best-liked songs to sing. Erin prints out their dictations and songs and posts them in the room where they are easy to see. The children refer to these signs and posters with pride, noting all the ways they have helped prepare for the party.

