

Getting Ready to Read and Write in Childcare



Childcare providers often ask, “How can I do more with literacy in my center?” Here are some simple ideas for creating a literacy environment.



What’s included in a childcare literacy environment?

- Pillows or low chairs where children can sit to “read” or look through books
- Picture books on low shelves that are easy for children to reach
- Posters, calendars, or decorations with letters and words to help children see that print has meaning
- Displays of children’s work, including their beginning attempts to write
- Low tables and chairs where children can use drawing and writing supplies
- Small chalkboards, rubber stamps, magnetic letters, letter puzzles, and simple letter and word games



How can playtime help children learn to read and write?

- Play helps children become familiar with print if it includes making signs, lists, or labels.
- Pretend play involves children in making up their own stories. This can help them understand story structure, which will be important as they begin to read.



What does drawing have to do with learning to read and write?

- Using crayons and pencils helps develop motor skills needed to form letters.
- Drawing lets children tell stories before they can write.



What else can I do to help young children get ready for reading and writing?

- Read and tell stories to the children daily.
- Encourage children to act out stories they have heard.
- Make time daily for them to dictate ideas, stories, and letters, or to write their own.
- Sing songs and play rhyming games every day.
- Make time for the children to tell their own stories, and talk about stories they hear.
- Listen to them, and help them listen to each other.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



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