

Literacy Learning In Play: Things To Consider



Knowing Our Students

Thinking about ...

- What do they already know? (i.e., initial sounds, segmenting sounds in words, recognizes none, all, some, or most letters of the alphabet (and the sounds they make), vocabulary skills, oral language skills, etc.)
- What are they learning? (e.g., orally segmenting the sounds in words, orally blending the sounds in words, letter-names, letter-sounds, connections to print, etc.)
- How might you incorporate this learning into your expectations in play? (i.e., Will your focus be more oral or more writing/reading? Will you look to have students segment all of the sounds they hear in words or just focus on initial sounds? Will you write students back, and what will you expect them to be able to read? How will their fine motor skills impact on the choices you provide for them?)

Access to Materials

Are these items available near to the different play spaces?

- Post-it notes
- Big pieces of paper
- Vertical surfaces for writing, painting, and drawing
- Covered tables (for writing/drawing)
- Markers, Pencils, and/or pens
- Alphabet Charts (e.g., miniature ones at different play spaces or on the back of clipboards)
- Tape (coloured tape and/or masking tape)
- Whiteboards, chalkboards, chalk, and/or markers
- Magnetic letters and/or letter tiles

Number of Materials

What do you have available?

How might the materials available – or not available – impact on student choices and literacy learning?

Example – What would happen if you had playdough out without additional tools? What if you just added scissors?

How Might We Add More Literacy Learning To Play Experiences?

- Note writing.
- Adding signs.
- Adding books, documentation, or labelled pictures that connect with the learning spaces.
- Labelling items (even if just with initial sounds).
- Covering tables for more mark making, writing, and drawing.
- Introducing new vocabulary and using it regularly with kids.
- Orally playing with sounds and words while immersing yourself in play.

The Educator Role In Play

- Playing alongside students to help initiate this talking, reading, writing, and/or mark making.
- Writing students back notes to help extend the learning and add a reading component.
- Introducing new vocabulary during play, and then repeating these words regularly to help students use these words in their conversations.

