

## **NURSERY LANGUAGE & LITERACY**

Language refers to skills learned in order to communicate with other people. These types of skills can include making sounds, speaking, listening, facial expressions and gestures. Children begin to acquire language before they are born by listening and absorbing sounds in their environment. When they are born, they are exposed to the languages around them and actively learn through observation and mimicking.

Literacy refers to skills learned in order to read and write. Literacy is developed from the beginning of life where children are exposed to written language, letters, stories and books that are in their environment or being used by the people around them. Before children can read and write they need the opportunity to actively engage with letters, books and stories. This can be through singing songs, reading stories together, talking with one another, playing pretend and creating art.

The Preschool Developmental Guide List breaks down language and literacy into seven sections: Listening/Communication Skills, Book Knowledge, Early Reading, Alphabet Awareness, Name Knowledge, Writing, and Phonological Awareness.

### **What are Listening/Communication Skills?**

Listening is one of the most important skills that we have. We listen to obtain information, to understand, and to learn. This allows us to demonstrate that we are paying attention to the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of another person. Communication is the other half of engaging in conversations. It is how we express our needs, feelings and desires. Children are born observers and will watch the adults around them to see what listening and communication looks like. They will copy the actions of the people in their environment. Therefore, it is extremely important to model behaviour we want children to engage in (ex. respect, kindness, empathy).

### **What is Book Knowledge?**

Book Knowledge refers to children developing a love for stories and books. Adults read stories out loud to children (individually or in a group) and encourage them to actively explore all kinds of books (ex. board books, story books, picture books, touch and feel books, fact books). When children are exposed to books, they learn how to use them and discover the stories deep within, encouraging their language, social and emotional growth.

### **What is Early Reading?**

Early Reading is the beginning step of telling stories. This encourages children to hold books, tell a story using pictures, recall a favourite story, and play with sounds of letters and words. Before children can read, they need to be able to explore books and words in a variety of play experiences. When instilling a love of reading, it is important to set up the environment to encourage places to sit and spend time with books.

### **What is Alphabet Awareness?**

Alphabet Awareness is where children are exposed to letters and words in a variety of ways. Letters are all around us. It is important to point out letters, letter sounds and words in our environment for children. We can include letters and words in our environments by placing them strategically around the room and at the height of the children (ex. Labeling shelves, putting books in all play areas, having letter/word games accessible).

### **What is Name Knowledge?**

Name Knowledge refers to children recognizing their own name when they see it. The next step after recognition would be to create their name on their own, using alphabetical materials (ex. magnet letters, sand table, alphabet blocks), and then moving forward to writing their name. Before children write their name, they need the opportunity to explore using letters and draw pictures with various tools (ex. crayons, chalk, markers).

### **What is Writing?**

Writing is something that emerges over time for children through multiple stages of development. Before children can write, they need to be able to explore all the pieces that writing entails (ex. Paper, drawing materials, letters). To encourage the beginning of writing, it is important to have art and fine motor experiences available on a daily basis as that is where children will strengthen their pincer muscles and hand control (ex. Painting, playdough, beading, building with blocks).

### **What is Phonological Awareness?**

Phonological awareness is when we hear and identify the various sounds in spoken words. It is when children practice rhyming, saying and counting syllables, and blending sounds into words. These skills can be encouraged through singing, pretend play, telling and reading stories, and playing word games

### Chart for Listening/Communication Skills

Concept	Examples
Takes turns in conversations	In a sharing circle, use a talking stick or stone for each child to take a turn speaking.
Greet familiar people	Role model greeting other staff in the school.
Effectively communicates needs most of the time	Throughout the day ask children how they are doing and if they need anything. Acknowledge them when they ask for something or talk to you.
Demonstrates active listening skills	Ask children to listen to specific animal sounds then name and say the animal.
Usually understood by others when speaking	Have free play time so children can actively engage with one another. Encourage children to have conversations with one another.  Try to have a personal conversation with each child every day.
Asks about the meaning of unfamiliar words	Have a word day in your classroom. Encourage children to take turns bringing in new words and find the meanings of them, then share with the class.  While reading a story to the class pause and ask them what a word is. (ex. What does rolling mean? Who can show me?) This will model curiosity to the children.
Uses new words	Label materials throughout the classroom using a combination of picture and text.
Uses/overgeneralizes grammar rules	If children have challenges with sentences or certain words, paraphrase what they said and then try restating sentences to role model how they sound.

### Chart for Book Knowledge

Concept	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Shows interest in books</li><li>➤ Holds books correctly and looks through pages</li><li>➤ Requests books to be read</li></ul>	<p>Have a daily storytime and ask children to choose/vote for the story to be read.</p> <p>Collaborate with a teacher in a higher grade level to create a “reading buddies” program. For this program, pair older/ younger children together for shared reading time.</p>

### Chart for Early Reading

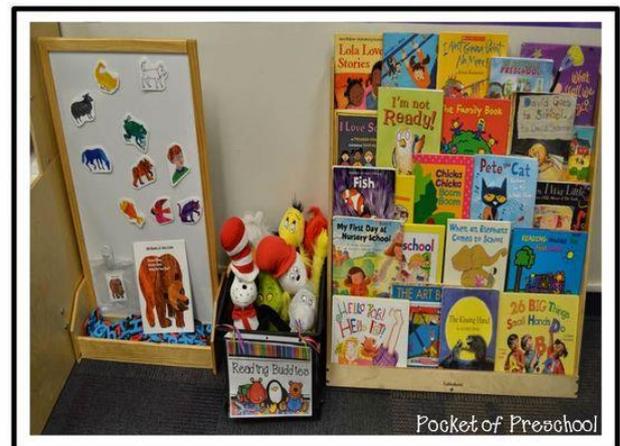
Concept	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ “Reads” a story using pictures</li><li>➤ Points to text while “reading” a story</li><li>➤ Retells story from memory</li><li>➤ Reads familiar words by sight</li><li>➤ Begins sounding out words</li></ul>	<p>Create a reading area that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Comfy seating (pillows, couch, mats)</li><li>- Books on a variety of topics (stories, facts)</li><li>- Books that have been read to the class</li><li>- Familiar words displayed (mom, dad, dog, cat, etc.)</li><li>- Puppets and figurines</li><li>- Flannel board and flannel pieces</li><li>- Put sight words in hopscotch on the floor for practice</li></ul> <p>Keep this area accessible to children for a majority of the day.</p>

### Chart for Alphabet Awareness

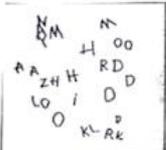
Concept	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Recognizes letters as “letters”</li><li>➤ Points out familiar letters in words</li><li>➤ Connects correct sound to letter spotted in environment</li><li>➤ Recognizes and identifies 10-18 different letters in print over time</li><li>➤ Connects beginning letter to sound in spoken word</li></ul>	<p>Label materials throughout the classroom using a combination of picture and text.</p> <p>Sing songs with specific letters (ex. ABC’s, BINGO, Alphabet Zoo)</p> <p>Put out alphabet books (ex. Chicka chicka boom boom, Eating the alphabet, Dr. Seuss’s ABC)</p> <p>Go on a Letter scavenger hunt, ask children to find certain letters in the room.</p> <p>I Spy Bottles - <a href="https://www.makingtimeformommy.com/2016/09/06/i-spy-abc-bottle-for-alphabet-fun/">https://www.makingtimeformommy.com/2016/09/06/i-spy-abc-bottle-for-alphabet-fun/</a></p>

## Chart for Name Knowledge

Concept	Examples
Recognizes own printed name	Have children sign in each day by finding their name card and placing it in a designated spot.
Forms own name with premade letters (magnets, cards, keyboard, etc.)	Set up an invitation to play with letters and name cards for children to explore. <a href="https://theimaginationtree.com/creating-invitations-to-play/">https://theimaginationtree.com/creating-invitations-to-play/</a>
Writes own name	Set up invitations to play with various writing tools (chalk, pencils, crayons, etc.) and paper, chalkboard, whiteboards, sand etc. Display names for children to copy.



## Chart for Writing

Concept	Examples
<p>Emergent Writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing</li> <li>- Scribble-Writing</li> <li>- Letter-like</li> <li>- Actual Letters (Random)</li> <li>- Strings of Letters (Patterned)</li> <li>- Words</li> </ul>	<p>Create a writing station that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writing tools (chalk, pencils, crayons)</li> <li>- Paper (lined, blank, coloured)</li> <li>- Rulers</li> <li>- Cards with words/ names displayed</li> <li>- Clipboards</li> <li>- Envelopes</li> <li>- Letter stamps and stamp pads</li> </ul> <p><b>The Stages of Emergent Writing</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><b>Drawing :</b> children draw/scribble pictures</p>  </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><b>Random scribbling :</b> children scribble and can say what their marks mean.</p>  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><b>Controlled scribbling:</b> Children scribble in rows across the page left to right and top to bottom and give meaning to lines of their writing.</p>  </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><b>Letter like forms :</b> Children use unconventional letter forms and familiar symbols such as circles but still give meaning to their writing.</p>  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><b>Random letters :</b> Children begin to use random letter shapes to convey meaning.</p>  </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><b>Patterned letters :</b> Children begin to use strings of unrelated letters, sometimes the letters from their name appear.</p>  </div> </div>
<p>Dictates messages</p>	<p>After a child draws a picture, get them to tell you what it is about. When they are talking, write down their description on the picture.</p>

Emergent writing with intended meaning:

- "Writes" left to right, top to bottom
- Uses spaces between "words"
- Uses inventive/preconventional spelling

Look at different forms of writing (ex. books, magazines, newspapers, letters, comics, poetry, songs)

Create a dramatic play area with various props for children to use for pretend. Could rotate different themes in this area (ex. Doctor's office, Grocery Store, Post Office, Restaurant)

### Chart for Phonological Awareness

Concept	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Identifies/Counts individual spoken words</li><li>➤ Identifies two words as rhyming</li><li>➤ Completes second part of rhyming pair</li><li>➤ Blends two syllables into word</li><li>➤ Divides words into syllables</li><li>➤ Identifies beginning sound in spoken word</li><li>➤ Identifies ending sound in spoken word</li></ul>	<p>Have rhyming books in the library area (ex. Hop on Pop, One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish, Llama Llama Red Pajama, Rhyming Dust Bunnies)</p> <p>Rhyme basket game - <a href="https://theimaginationtree.com/rhyming-pairs-basket-literacy-game/">https://theimaginationtree.com/rhyming-pairs-basket-literacy-game/</a></p> <p>Starts with...scavenger hunt - Ask the children to find something in the room that starts with the letter (and pick a random letter).</p> <p>Sing songs with different sounds (ex. Apples and Bananas, Wallaby Wallaby Woo, Herman the Worm).</p>

### Reference

Early Childhood Cayman. "Emergent Writing." Early Childhood Cayman. Last modified November 9, 2012. <http://ecceunit.blogspot.com/2012/11/emergent-writing.html>.