

Writing

Creating an Engaging Interest Center

What Children Are Learning

Conceptual Knowledge

- Writing has a purpose
- Print is meaningful



Example: A red street sign can mean “stop”

Procedural Knowledge

- Mechanics of letter and word writing
- Alphabet and spelling knowledge

a = “aye”

Example: Letters have sounds

Generative Knowledge

- Phrase writing
- Sentences conveying meaning



Example: Experimenting with forms of writing; lists, stories, notes, poems

Developmental Skills Typically Acquired

Scribbling: Infants to Toddlers

- Progressing from random to controlled scribbling
- Moving from fist grip and large shoulder movements to more control overhand muscles
- Making repeated marks on a page

Lines/Patterns: Younger Toddlers

- Understanding that writing consists of lines and curves
- Beginning to draw parts of letters to represent the letters

Pictures: Older Toddlers

- Picturing an image and then drawing it on paper
- Naming unplanned creations
- Planning drawings
- Using more detail, hand control, and colors

Letters: Preschoolers to School-Age

- Experimenting with letters in their own names
- Noticing that some words are long, and others are short
- Stringing letter-like-shapes together to replicate words

Variety: School-Age

- Thinking about the purposes of writing
- Using writing for different purposes
- Understanding what a reader needs to know

Materials and Storage

Writing Utensils

- Chunky and regular-sized pencils, crayons, washable markers, and colored chalk
- Colored pencils

Note: *Appropriately monitor children and include variations based on interest and developmental skills.*

Paper Products

- Different paper shapes and colors
- Envelopes, magazines, and paper bags
- Children’s name cards on a ring or in a book
- Blank “books” of paper stapled together
- Letter stencils and stickers

Other Supplies

- Blunt scissors
- Glue sticks
- Play dough or salt dough
- Letter and number stamps
- Stamp pads
- Photos of children’s families, pets, and interests

Storage



Organize items using baskets or tubs with a picture of each item that belongs inside. Place them within children’s reach.

Contact the OECOSL Child Care Support Line at 1.800.299.1627 for assistance.



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Best Practices

Expose children to print in their environment and call attention to labels and meanings.

Promote the joy of experimenting with writing and differentiate writing experiences based on children's abilities and interests.

Prompt children to use writing in their daily activities and provide writing opportunities.

Support children's attempts at writing letters or letter-like symbols and inventive spelling.

Encourage activities that promote fine motor development skills, such as pinching or using play dough, clothespins, finger puppets, and scissors.

Communicate by telling stories, listening to children's stories, and imitating infants' vocalizations back to them.

Write children's dictated stories, including words in their home languages.



Activities and Project Ideas

In Writing Learning Center

- Introduce children to the writing center (e.g., how to access materials and the proper ways to use, replace, and store them)
- Rotate seasonal themes, as well as themes about children's interests (e.g., create a science "lab" for drawing, labeling, writing, and storytelling about insects)
- Provide laminated restaurant menus along with an order pad (e.g., have children practice taking orders and making food lists)
- Allow children to share their stories with their peers to promote writing motivation

Other Activities and Routines

- Promote shared group writing experiences (e.g., have children write about a shared experience, such as a visit from a firetruck)
- Have children answer a Question of the Day by writing their names under one of two choices; offer more choices for school-age children.
- Develop a sign-in/sign-out routine that allows for differentiation (e.g., identifying name, writing scribbles, first letter, or whole name)
- Use the sign-in/sign-out routine in other learning centers

Family Engagement

Encourage family engagement by telling them about their children's writing activities. Suggest they include:

- Building a climate for storytelling at home by talking about things they see, places they go, and ideas. Encourage children to write about the experiences.
- Modeling writing by sharing short videos of adults helping children write. For example, children might say a word aloud, and the adult asks what sounds they hear, allowing them to sound out the word on their own.
- Displaying writing samples, stories, and family topics of interest at children's eye level and initiating conversations.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **How Do I Write...? Scaffolding Preschoolers' Early Writing Skills**
<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/how-do-i-write-scaffolding-preschoolers-early-writing-skills>
- **Helping Young Children Learn to Write**
<https://childcare.extension.org/helping-young-children-learn-to-write/>

