

Caterpillar Lane Family Child Care

Emergent Literacy Preschool eBinder

Laura Walker

This binder presents four word-study activities and four rich environmental print activities for a preschool classroom, target audience ages 3-6 years. Word study activities are centered around the theme *Food* and rich environmental print activities are centered around the theme *Setting up a Preschool Classroom*. The *Food* themed word studies include *Lego-Shmego*, a phonological awareness and rhyming word sort, *My Grocery List*, a guided pretend writing exercise with scavenger hunt extension, *Ladybug Luggage*, a pretend writing exercise with take-home literacy bag extension activities, and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Fruit Salad*, a phonological word sort and letter-sound fill-in-the-blank activity with props and pattern extensions. *Setting up a Preschool Classroom* activities include the *I Can Read Board*, a prominently displayed board of familiar logos, names and shapes, *Book Nook*, a cozy reading center with several writing props for independent play, *My Class Book*, a book of drawings, words and expressions from each classmate, and *Sight Words in Plain Sight*, a prominent display of rhyming word sets with corresponding pictures.

These word study and environmental print activities are multifaceted and intended to provide an organic, child-directed approach to learning. Each activity aims to address one or more of the six fundamental instructional components of the emergent reader: oral language, concepts, and vocabulary, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, letter-sound knowledge, concepts about print and concept of word in text (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton & Johnston, 2016, p. 100). Instructors are encouraged to participate in multiple readings of the provided text in each activity and then present the corresponding props and exercises for child-directed, guided play whenever possible. A Montessorian practice, *guided play* is at the intersection of free play and direct instruction, presenting children with a learning goal and scaffolded environment while allowing them to maintain a large degree of control over their learning (Hardy, 201; Weisberg,

2013). Empirical evidence supports that guided play in the preschool setting aligns with developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and is more effective than direct instruction alone (Weisberg, 2013).

Word studies begin with a book reading and activities extend from the narrative of the selected book. The goal is to create consistent shared reading experiences in the classroom and to engage the target audience in a fluid transition from reading to written exercises following a whole-to-part model of instruction (Bear et al., 2016, p. 99). Shared reading experiences create opportunities for instructors to model proper book handling, demonstrate concepts about print, and organically engage in interactive read-alouds (Bear et al., 2016, p. 99). Emergent readers benefit from learning about letters and sounds while reading with the teacher as they point to large print text (Bear et al., 2016). Thus, students are provided with linguistic modeling within a supportive social context that encourages reciprocal interaction and discussion. Additional props and extension activities have been included to drive motivation and differentiate instruction.

Teachers can help children navigate the complexities of language and its cultural applications by setting up a classroom rich in environmental print. Children's daily interactions with text in the classroom and at home shape their understanding of its functions and characteristics. Per Tolentino and Lawson (2015), "Literacy learning, therefore, is an authentic and meaningful experience because children's social and cultural knowledge and resources are valued and incorporated into community practices." The rich environmental print activities in this binder are designed to integrate Vygotsky's Social Development Theory and Bandura's Social Learning Theory with direct instruction, guided play, and developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), to setup an inviting preschool environment rich in multimodal forms of print

(Cognitive Development, n.d.; DAP Position Statement, n.d.; Davidson & Davidson, 2003; Edwards, C. 2002).

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### **Word study activity 1: Lego-Shmego**

Lego word sorts, phonological awareness rhyming

#### **Learning Standard:**

EL 2.3b Emergent literacy (Phonological Awareness; The child develops awareness that language can be broken in words, syllables and smaller units of sounds (phenomes)). With modeling and support (child) identifies rhyming words.

#### **Overview/Rationale:**

Beginning in preschool, teachers should look for opportunities to introduce new vocabulary and rhyming words (Bear et al., 2016). Phonological awareness develops gradually from sensitivity to large speech sounds such as rhyming and syllables to the smaller sounds of individual phenomes. Per Bear et. al., (2016), emergent readers should be guided through the three stages of the gradual release model: modeling and explanation, guided practice and independent practice. The first step in learning about rhyming is talking about rhyming words in familiar books, and therefore, this lesson begins with an interactive reading of *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* by Dr. Seuss. Children will be guided through the book by being asked to complete the rhyming word in each sentence given the picture clues on the page. This will help hone their ears in on rhyming sounds and rhythms and will provide practice for the Lego matching activity (Bear et al., 2016).

Second, the class will engage in a guided practice activity where they work in small groups with the teacher to sort match rhyming words with the Legos provided. Sorting and matching is a very effective learning tool for readers of all stages and can used in the earliest stages of emergent literacy (Bear et al., 2016). Students will be provided with modeling and

support for “reading” the words and breaking down words into phonemes to identify sounds that rhyme. The development of phonological awareness in children is complicated by the fact that words are made up of more than one syllable. To simplify this exercise, only three-letter, single syllable words have been included.

In the final stage of this lesson, children will engage in independent practice by matching rhyming words on a pictographic, rhyme sorting worksheet for preschoolers. This activity will allow children in the early and middle emergent stages of literacy to practice identifying rhyming sounds and phonemes. Since letters are not used in this worksheet, children can confidently and independently apply the knowledge they gained in the previous activities. Teacher may provide support and scaffolding as necessary. Work completion should aim to be child-centered and child-directed as appropriate.

### Images:





### Word Study Activity 2: My Grocery List

**Learning Standard: LL 2.1b Language and Literacy** (Emergent literacy; concepts of print, the child knows that print carries messages). Demonstrates and understands that print conveys meaning and that each spoken word can be written and read.

#### Extension Activity Learning Standard:

LL 2.1a Language and Literacy (Emergent Literacy; concepts of print, the child knows that print carries messages). Identifies signs, symbols and labels in the environment.

#### Overview/Rationale:

The *My Grocery List* word study begins with a reading of *Meltdown* by Jill Murphy followed by a guided practice grocery list exercise and an independent practice grocery list

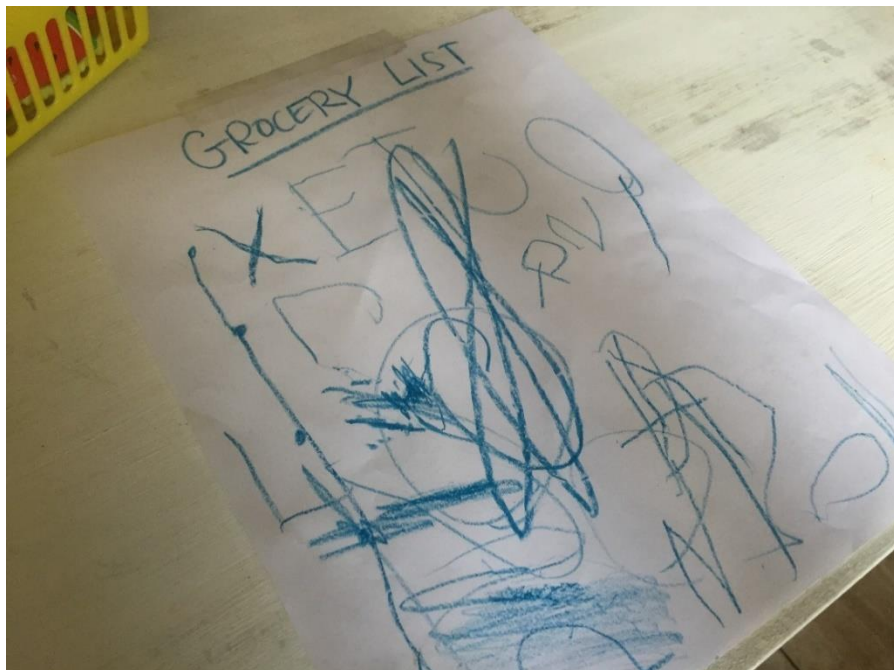
exercise. The guided practice worksheet instructs children to list/draw several fruits and vegetables they may see at a grocery store. These activities focus on phonological awareness, concepts about print and concepts of print in text. Extension activity involves bringing the guided practice worksheet to the grocery store with a guardian and checking off items as they are found in a scavenger-like hunt.

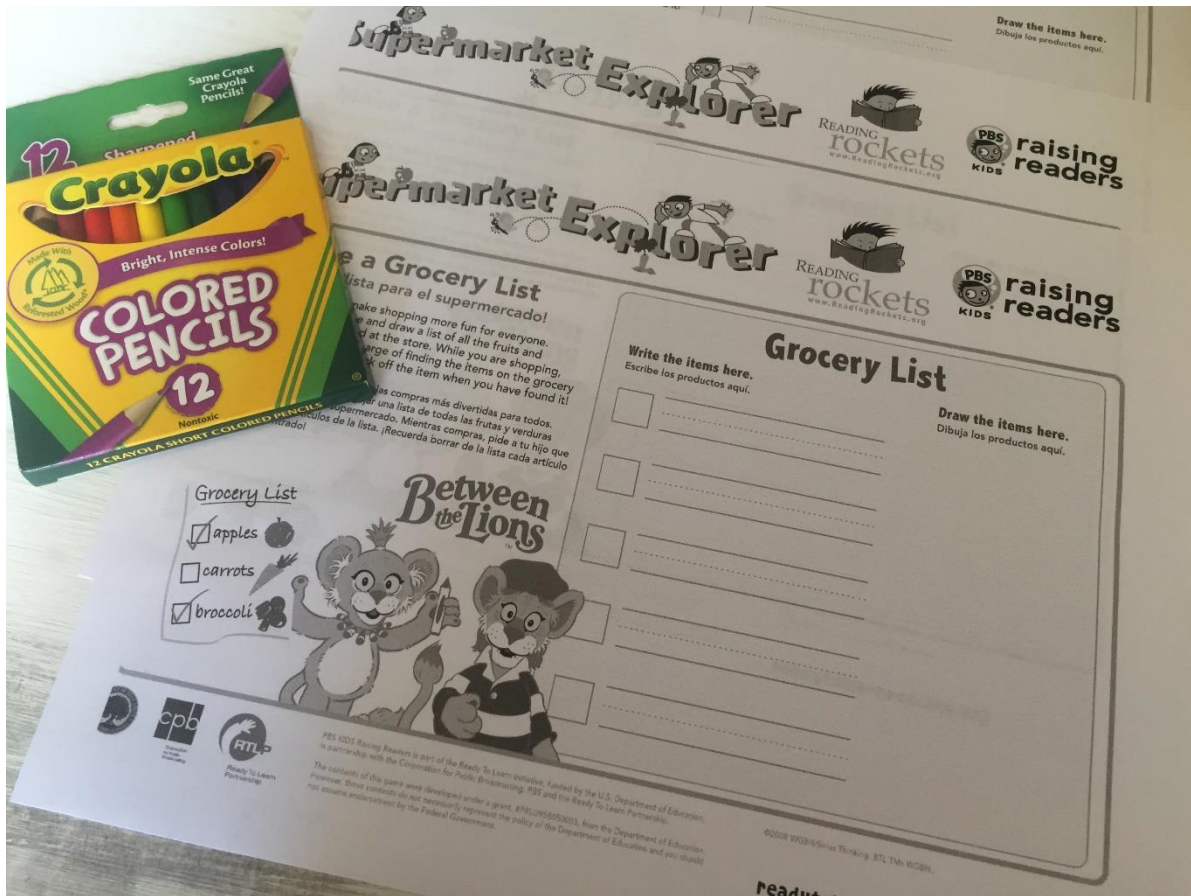
Free writing exercises provide insight into the knowledge of the emergent writer (Bear et al., 2016, p. 99). The normative, linear trajectory of writing development in the emergent stage progresses from random marks, to representational drawing, to drawing distinct from writing, followed by mock linear writing, symbol salad and finally invented spelling or partial phonetic spelling (Bear et al., 2016, p. 95). Allowing children to engage in freewriting for a directed purpose can reveal where they fall on this developmental timeline as well as their understanding of the function of print.

Take-home extension activity promotes family involvement and communication. It offers an opportunity for families to get involved in literacy modeling and support for their children. While roaming the aisles of the grocery store, children are instructed to interact with environmental print with the guidance of their loved ones. Emergent readers are encouraged to look for clues in aisle signs and sections, food labels and logos to find the items they included in their own list. This literary scavenger hunt keeps learning fun and personally relevant.



Images:





### Word Study Activity 3: Lady Bug Luggage (School Lunch)

#### Learning Standard:

LL 3.1e Language and Literacy (Emergent Writing; early writing, writing processes and writing applications, the child uses writing materials to communicate ideas). Intentionally uses scribbles/writing to convey meaning, ideas or to tell a story; e.g., signing artwork, captioning, labeling, creating lists and making notes.

**Overview/Rationale:**

Pretend reading and writing precede real reading and writing, and having opportunities to practice reading and writing skills is crucial for developmental progress in this domain (Bear et al., 2016). Therefore, captivating emergent learners with pretend writing opportunities is an important part of developmental direction and an integral part of this word study. The *Ladybug Luggage* activity begins with a reading of *Schoolies: Making Friends* by Powell, Crimi-Trent, Sido, Radcliffe & Boyd (2013), followed by a school lunch free-writing exercise and dry-erase number spelling activity. This activity focuses on oral language, alphabet knowledge and concepts of print. Optional extension activities include Mrs. Meow's letter tracing homework and coloring book.

Like the *My Grocery List* word study, this free-writing exercise provides the instructor with writing samples that can be used to determine the developmental writing stage of each child. Each of these stages indicates those writing concepts a child understands, those they may use but confuse and those that are absent (Bear et al., 2016, p. 96). For example, a late emergent writer may produce partially phonetic, invented spelling on their grocery list. Through this example, phonemic and letter knowledge will be revealed, and curriculum can be more skillfully matched to the child's abilities.

By categorizing them in the late emergent stage, it may be presumed that the emergent writer most likely possesses the following qualities: consistent directionality, use of letters and some letter-sound matches (Bear et al., 2016, p. 96). Furthermore, they may use but confuse substitutions of letters that sound or feel alike, and salient phonemes. What is most likely absent is complete sound-symbol correspondence, spacing between words and consistent representation of beginning and final sounds in single syllable words. Ascertaining this knowledge of the young

learner helps the instructor to more effectively differentiate and scaffold instruction to guide children to the next level of writing (Bear et al., 2016, pp 99).

**Images:**





#### Word Study Activity 4: The Hungry Caterpillar Fruit Salad

##### Learning Standard:

LL 2.3d Language and Literacy (Emergent Literacy; phonological awareness, the child develops awareness that language can be broken into words, syllables and smaller units of sounds (phenomes). With modeling and support, recognizes spoken words that begin with the same sound.

##### Extension Activity Learning Standard:

LL 2.4d Language and Literacy (Emergent Literacy; the child demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet). Uses letter-sound knowledge identifying the sounds of a few letters and producing the correct sounds for as many as 10 letters, with modeling and support.

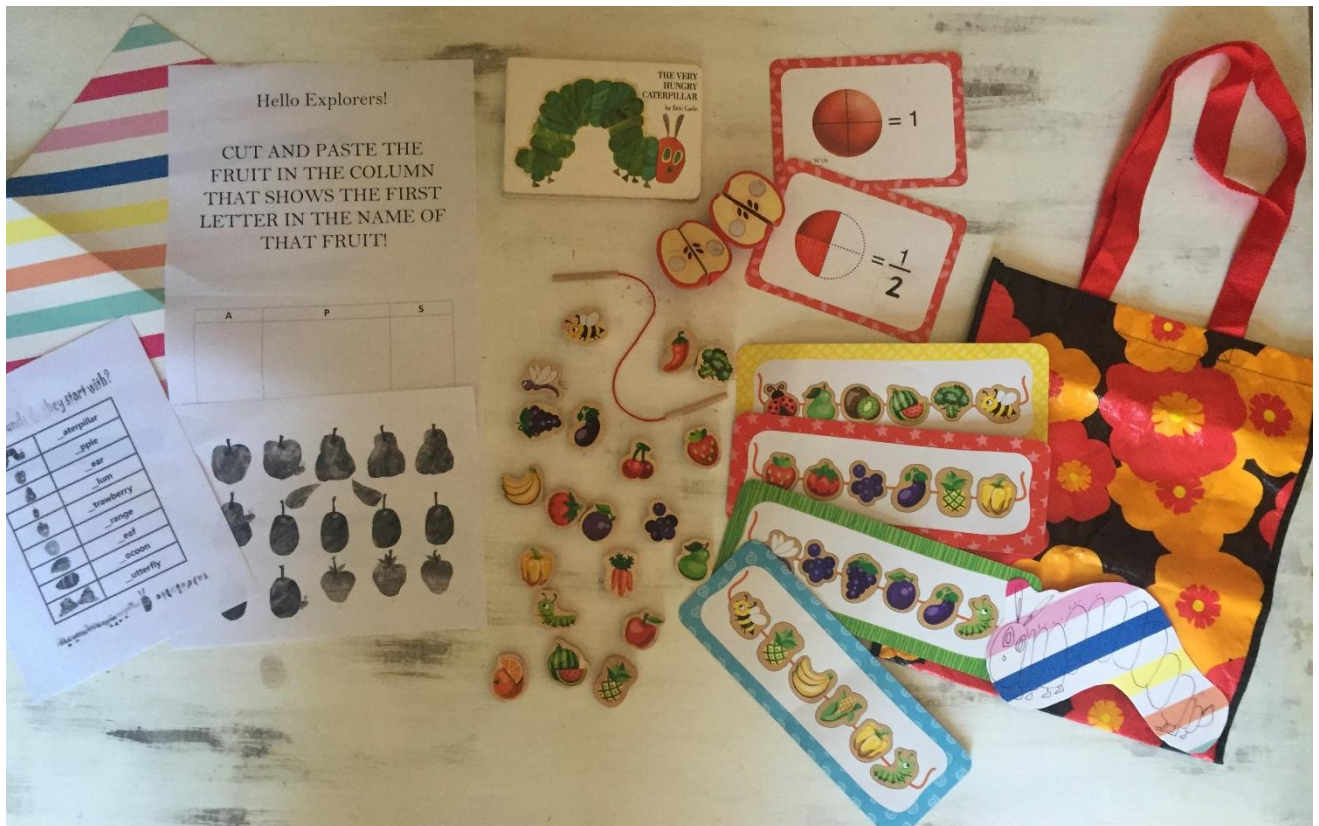
**Overview and Rationale:**

The *Very Hungry Caterpillar Fruit Salad* word study begins with a reading of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, followed by a very hungry phonemic word sort. Optional extension activities include alphabet fill-in-the-blank worksheet, a fruit pattern beading exercise and apple fractions. The primary activity focuses on letter-sound knowledge and phonological awareness. Literary extension activities focus on letter-sound knowledge and alphabet knowledge. *The Hungry Caterpillar Fruit Salad* word sort should be used for guided phonological practice. The very hungry caterpillar phonemic word sort and fill-in-the-blank exercise are paired with several fake food props and extension activities to get young learners excited.

It is critical that emergent readers are motivated to participate in literacy exercises, and this can be accomplished by keeping them fresh and fun (Bear et al., 2016, p. 98). Instructors are encouraged to use props in repeated interactive read-alouds (RIR-A) of the *Very Hungry Caterpillar* book. A RIR-A is a technique used to increase oral language comprehension strategies and vocabularies (Bear et al., 2016; Rao, Newlin-Haus & Kristal Ehrhardt, 2016). This text follows a hungry little caterpillar as he eats through different foods on different days of the week. The hungry caterpillar eats so much junk food on Saturday that he gets a belly ache, learned that leaves are better for his belly and then begins his metamorphosis into a beautiful caterpillar. Through bright beautiful illustrations, the hungry little caterpillar teaches the reader about the weekly calendar, the names of a variety of foods, the importance of a healthy diet and the transformative nature of growing up.

Children learn the processes and complexities of orthography through guided word sorts (Bear et al., 2016, p. 5). Per Bear et al. (2016), guided word sorts should begin with a relevant

book reading, as illustrated in this exercise. Instructors should begin by guiding children through sorts in a teacher-directed fashion, and then follow with an opportunity for child-directed completion. The initial word sort activity asks the reader only to categorize pictures into three labeled letter-sound columns, an effective way to engage the emergent reader (Bear et al., 2016). To differentiate for advanced learners, the extension activity offers a greater level of difficulty, asking the reader to fill in the blank with any letter of the alphabet. Instructors are encouraged to plan a follow-up activity that mirrors the word sorts in this exercise. Follow-up activities provide students with additional time to practice word-sort skills and phonemic isolation.

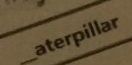
**Images:**

Hello Explorers!

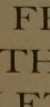








CUT AND PASTE THE FRUIT IN THE COLUMN THAT SHOWS THE FIRST LETTER IN THE NAME OF THAT FRUIT!










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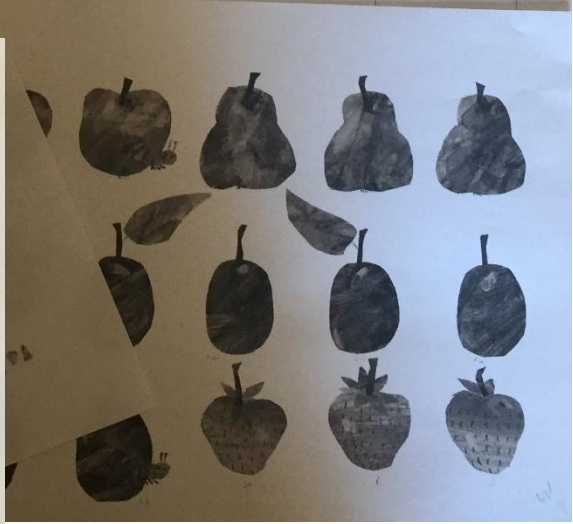
What sounds do they start with?

	_aterpillar
	le

What sounds do they start with?

	_aterpillar
	_pple
	_ear
	_lum
	_trawberry
	_range
	_eaf
	_ocoon
	_utterfly

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## **Print Rich Environment Activity 1: I Can Read Board**

### **Learning Standard:**

LL 2.1e Language and Literacy (Emergent literacy; concepts of print, the child knows that print carries messages). Recognizes own written name and the written names of friends and family.

### **Extension Activity Learning Standard:**

LL 2.4c Language and Literacy (Emergent Literacy; alphabet knowledge, the child demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet). Recognizes as many as 10 letters, especially those in own name family and friends.

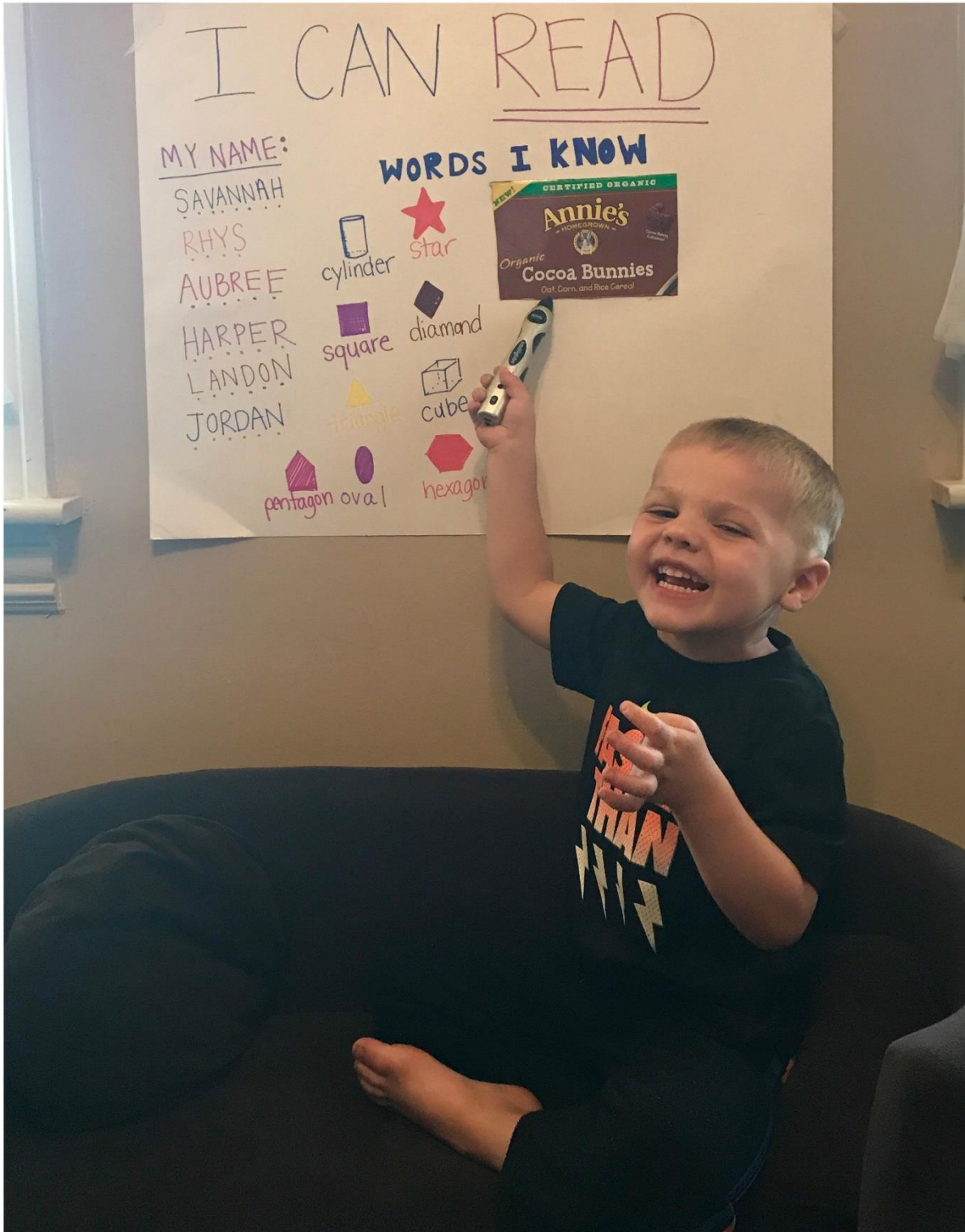
### **Overview/Rationale:**

Children are immersed in an environment rich in print in the United States and other developed nations. Members of these societies are engaged in transmediation daily (Tolentino & Lawson, 2017). Signs, labels and logos decorate our streets, buildings and homes. Impacted by the overt cultural importance of literacy in our society, children osmotically internalize a range of logos, symbols and labels. Frequent exposure to and relevance of different logos and symbols influence what each child recognizes and at what age (Tolentino & Lawson, 2017). According to a sociocultural perspective, children learn from these environmental cues that literacy is valued in our society (Cognitive Development, n.d.; Tolentino & Lawson, 2017). The personal and cultural value of environmental print drives children to assimilate and accommodate these images and names into their knowledge base (Bear et al., 2016; Cognitive Development, n.d.; Davidson & Davidson, 2003).

The *I Can Read Board* provides children with an overt, visible cue of familiar logos, names and symbols they can “read,” recognize or even spell. The first words that preschoolers learn to recognize are usually their own, followed by those of their immediate family and peers (Bear et al., 2016, p. 3). This board contains cutouts of labels from home that each child can “read,” the written first names of the preschool class, and a variety of labeled shapes that may be familiar. It focuses on concepts of print, letter-sound knowledge and alphabet knowledge. By combining known and unknown words with corresponding pictures, children are guided to engage in “reading,” learn letter-sounds, and concepts about print (ECD 525, n.d.). By including images emergent readers believe they can “read” they gain the confidence and drive to engage with this activity (Environmental Print in the Classroom, 2014).

Instructors should allow children to organically interact with the *I Can Read Board* throughout the day. To extend on these experiences, instructors may ask children to find their name on the board and “read” the logos and names they recognize. Children can be asked to find the names of their friends by phonetically determining the first letter in their names and then finding the name that begins with that letter. Children may be asked to point and finger spell their names and the names of their peers. These extension activities provide great opportunities for illustrating directionality, alphabet knowledge and letter-sound correspondence (Bear et al., 2016). Additionally, children may expand their oral vocabularies during reciprocal discussions and their sight word vocabularies through repetitive exposure to and interaction with the board.

Images:



## **Print Rich Environment Activity 2: Book Nook**

### **Learning Standard:**

**LL 2.2 a** Language and Literacy (Emergent Literacy; book handling skills, the child demonstrates how to handle books appropriately and with care). Holds a book right side up with the front cover facing the reader and understands left to right and top to bottom directionality.

### **Overview/Rationale:**

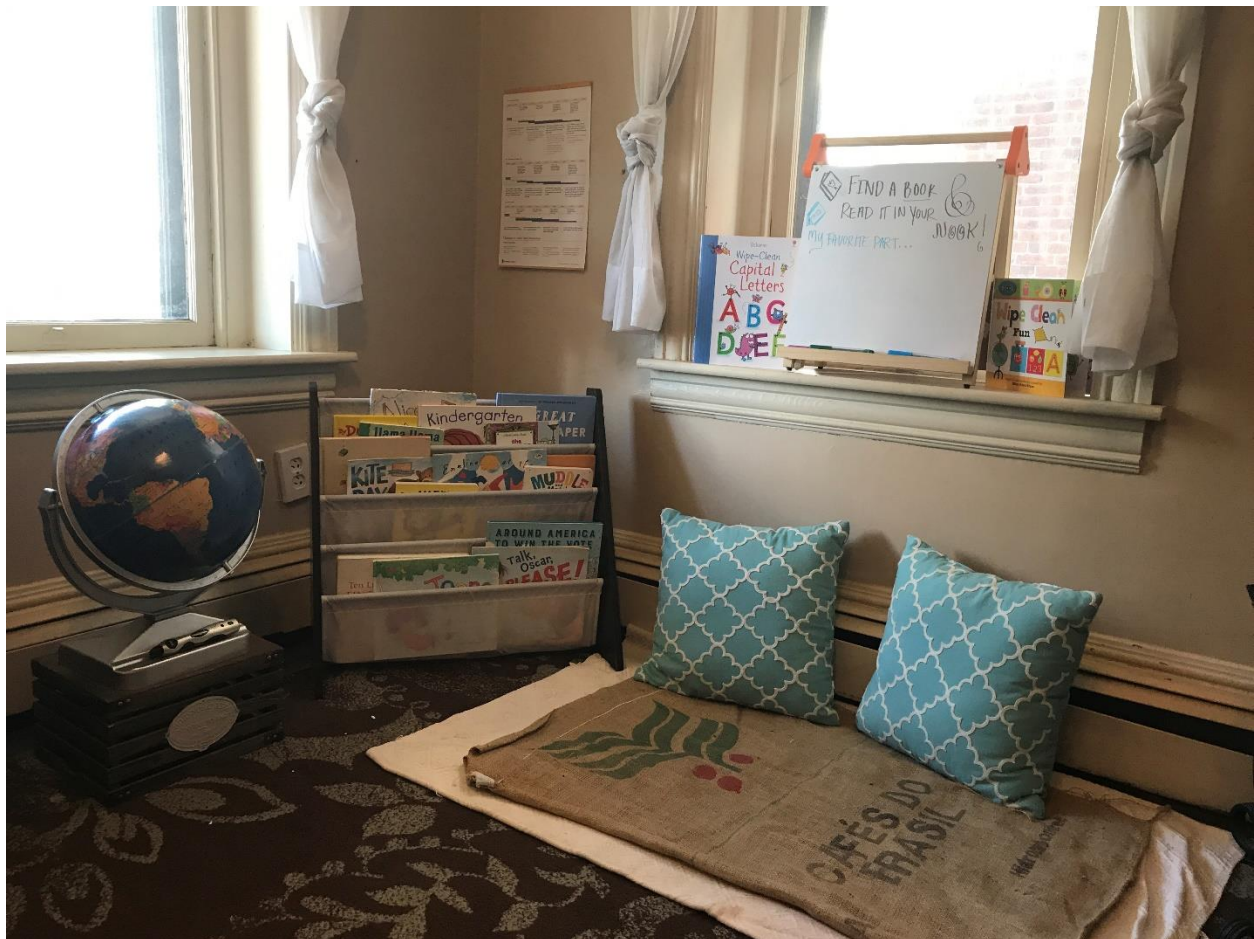
The *Book Nook* provides children with a cozy, inviting environment for self-directed reading and writing experiences. This space provides children with books of varying levels of difficulty that cover a wide range of topics. Books are within reach and easy to access. Comfortable pillows and blankets invite young readers to snuggle up with a good book and get reading. A white board with dry erase markers labeled, “Find a Book and Read it in Your Nook: My Favorite Part...” is readily available enticing children to retell their favorite stories. This center promotes development in oral language, concepts and vocabulary, concepts about print and concepts of print in text.

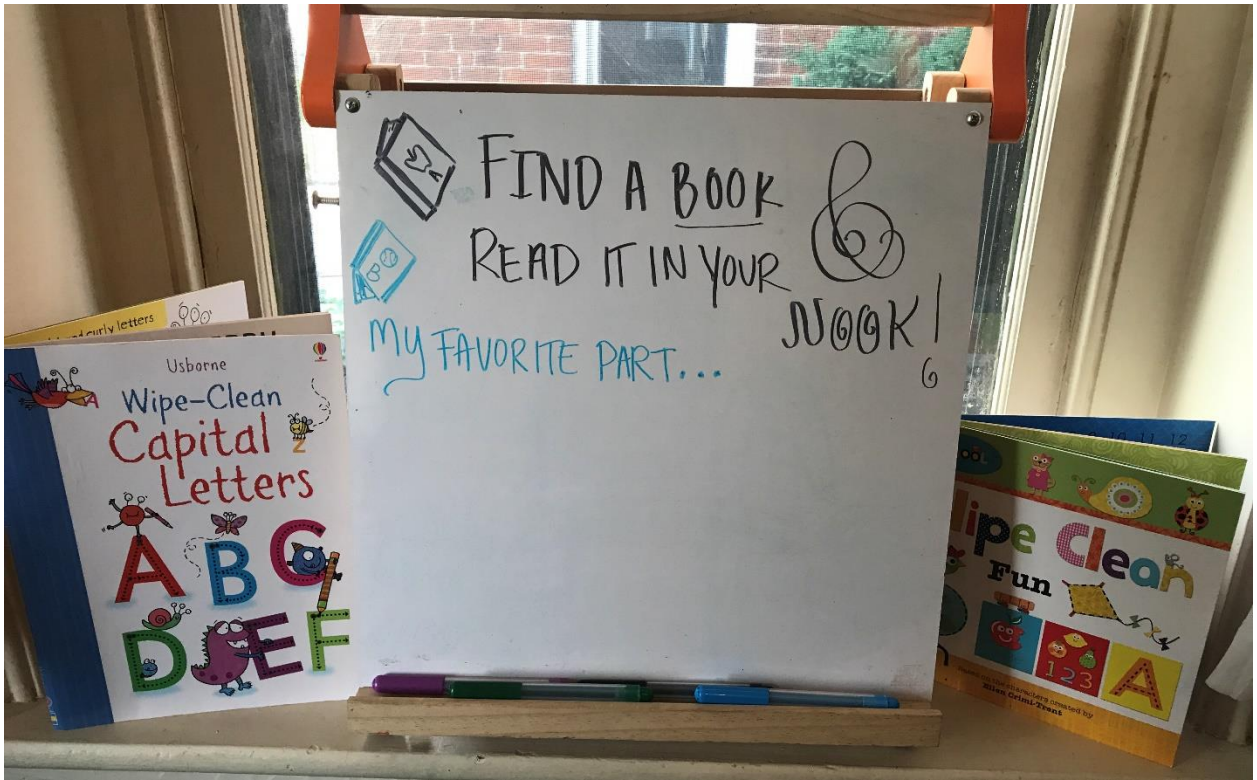
For children to progress from emergent to transitional, and finally advanced readers, it is critical that they be provided with an abundance of opportunities to engage with print. Throughout the day, children should have access to a variety of fiction and nonfiction books, as well as books that represent multiculturalism and diversity (Arizona Early Learning Standards, 2013). The Arizona Early Learning Standards (2013) states, “Through these experiences, children learn to hold books right side up and to turn the pages one at a time to view the illustrations and to gain a sense of the story or content.” The *Book Nook* encourages children to

learn these and other important print concepts through peer modeling and reciprocal engagement (Davidson & Davidson, 2003).

Books related to recent thematic units that incorporate important vocabulary should be included to drive reciprocal conversations about relevant class topics. For example, the featured *Book Nook* includes *Usborne's Look Inside My Body*, by Louie Stowell and Kate Leake (2012), which has pictures of the different organs and anatomical systems with interactive flip-up flaps. This book corresponds with the *My Amazing Body* thematic unit and can help to extend conversations around covered topics even after the class has segued to the current theme, *Food*.

**Images:**





### **Print Rich Environment Activity 3: My Class Book**

#### **Learning Standard:**

LL 3.1b Language and Literacy (Emergent Writing; early writing, writing processes and writing applications, the child uses writing materials to communicate ideas). With modeling and support, uses a combination of drawing, dictating and emergent writing to communicate an idea or opinion about an experience, story or book, and to express knowledge or share information about a topic of interest.

#### **Overview/Rationale:**

The *My Class Book* activity involves several guided and independent pretend writing exercises depicting each student's self-portrait, class portrait, what they learned in school and a free-writing expressive exercise. Each child's individual contribution is weaved together into a single, collaborative class book. A writing stages printout has been included for parents to reference during class visits to better understand their little one's progress.

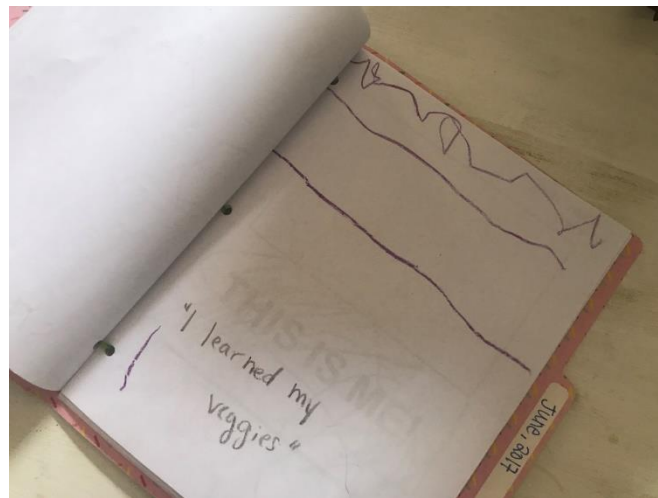
Per the gradual release model, it is crucial that teachers write *for* and *with* children to model the writing process and the functions of print (Bear et al., 2016, p. 98). The class book exercise gives children the opportunity to practice their own writing skills while partnering with an instructor to write down the intended meaning of their print. Pretend writing and invented spelling experiences promote phonological knowledge through meaningful experiences.

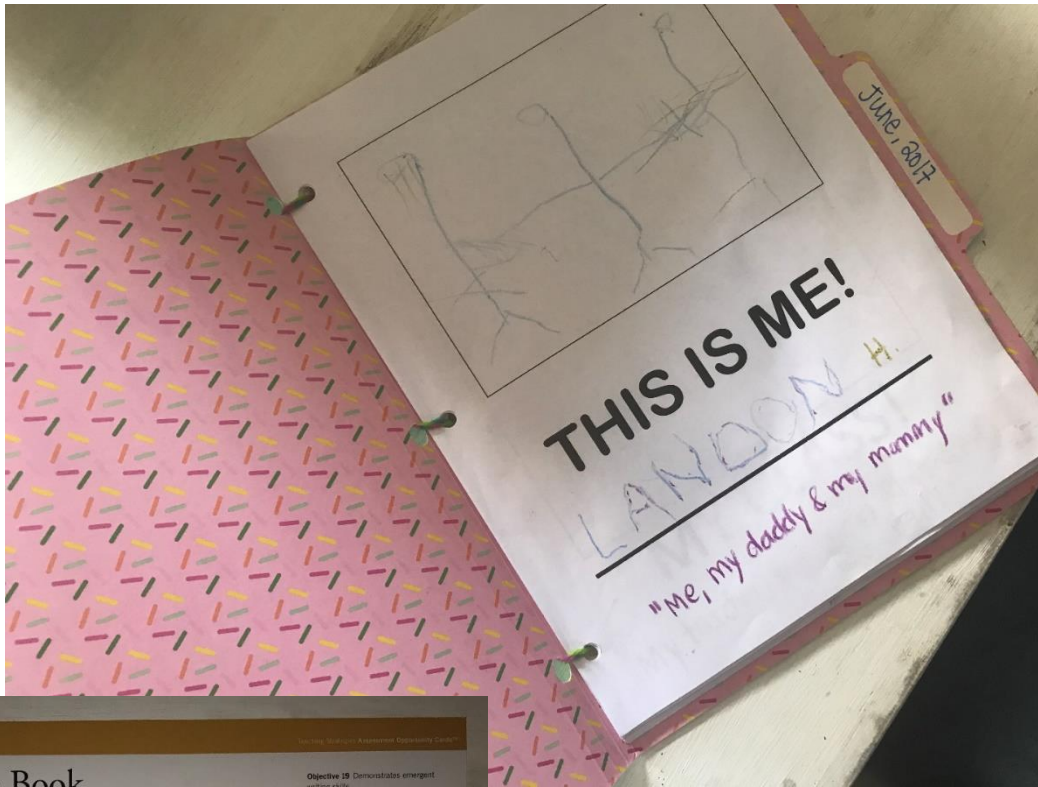
In this activity, instructors can use extra copies of the *My Class Book* printouts and provide examples of written text and pictographs in the provided space. Instructors should begin by modeling how to use letters to represent sounds through interactive writing (Bear et al., 2016). The instructor should encourage student to help brainstorm what they would put in these boxes



and then overtly demonstrate the process of transcribing their thoughts onto the page. After modeling, children should begin with the *This is Me* worksheet by drawing a self-portrait and writing their name in the blank line on the bottom of the page. Beginning with writing their name or a simple sentence is a great way to initiate meaningful pretend writing experiences following modeling and instruction (Bear et al., 2016).

**Images:**





**Our Class Book**

**Purpose**

In this activity, each child contributes a page to a class book that is stored in the Library area and can be read repeatedly by individual children or as a group experience.

**What You Do**

**Materials:** blank pages of 8 1/2" x 11" paper; crayons or markers; stapler or hole punch; yarn or ribbon to assemble the book.

**Objectives for Development & Learning:** pages 99-100  
**Child Assessment Portfolio:** pages 44-45

- At small-group time, tell the children that they will be the authors and illustrators of a book for the Library area.
- Give children a topic to draw and write about. Provide an opportunity for them to discuss their ideas.
- Distribute a piece of paper to each child and offer crayons, markers, pencils, or fine-tip markers in a variety of colors and widths (chubby and regular).
- Ask each child to draw a picture and write about it so other people can read it later. Limit your coaching because this is an activity to assess children's writing.
- Ask each child to read to you what he or she wrote. Write his or her dictation on the page. Ask each child to sign his or her name so others will know who authored each page.
- Assemble the book, share it with the whole class at a later group time, and place it in the Library area.
- You will probably see a range of writing behaviors, from scribbles to invented spelling. Carefully listen to what children say as they write and observe how they write.

**Assessing All Children**

- Accept all marks as signatures.
- Secure a child's paper so it doesn't move as he or she writes.
- Write what a child dictates on his or her page; ask yes/no questions about the dictation.
- Provide a variety of writing tools, start boards, and other supports.
- Have drawing and writing software available with accessible devices for a child to use.
- Provide pictures, photos, and illustrations for a child to use.
- Offer children choices of writing tools so they can select the one that works best for their hands.

**Objective 19** Demonstrates emergent writing skills

a. Writes name  
b. Writes to convey meaning

**Related Objectives:** 1, 8, 9, 11, 16, 18

**Assessing Children's Progress**

Use this information as well as the information from the observation notes you have collected to determine the highest levels the child has demonstrated. Record your ratings on pages 44-45 of the *Child Assessment Portfolio*.

**19a. Writes name**

Not yet	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
	Scribbles or marks	Controlled linear scribbles	Messy letters or letter-like forms	Letter strings	Partially accurate name	Accurate name	
	Carolyn	Lily	Paula	Emma	Vicky	Brooke	

**19b. Writes to convey meaning**

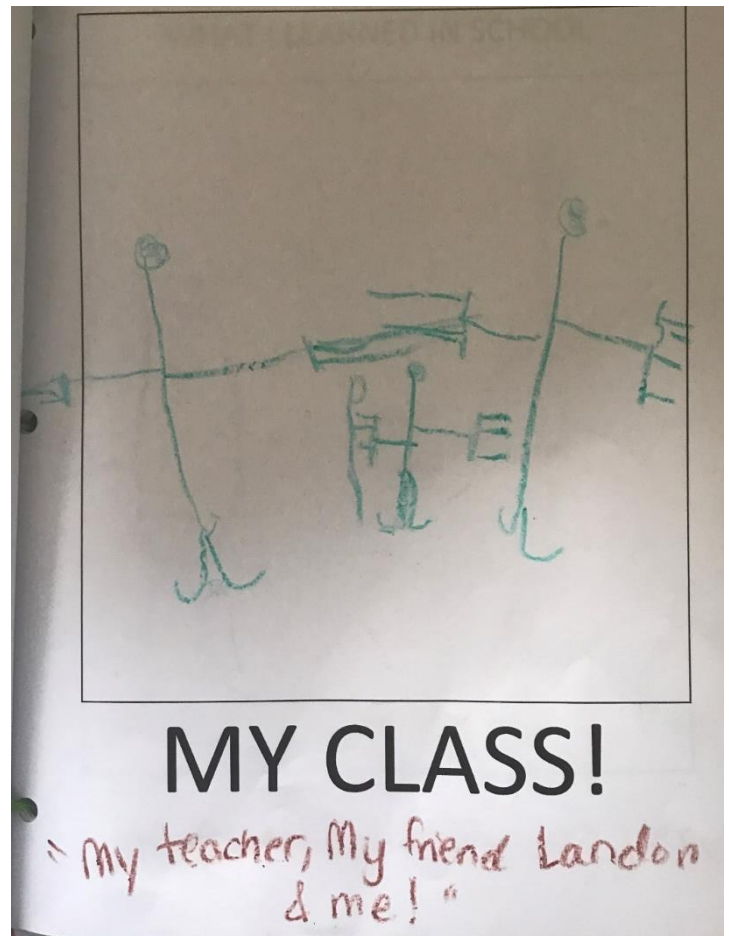
Not yet	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
	Scribbles or marks	Controlled linear scribbles	Messy letters or letter-like forms	Letter strings	Early invented spelling	Late invented spelling	
	Maya said, "Here - Mooooo. Read this."	Charlie said, "That's my phone number. You can call me."	Erica said, "I'm writing my ABCs just like my sister."	Erica said, "Here's a ticket! You're under arrest!"	Meir wrote, "Dude Clay, I love you."	Jenna said, "I need to buy some blackberries and grapes at the store."	

**Questions to Guide Your Observations**

**Related Objectives**

- How did the child hold and manipulate the writing tool? (Objective 7)
- Did the child understand and follow the procedures for creating a class book? (Objective 8)
- What did the child communicate about his or her drawing? (Objective 9)
- Did the child talk about another place or time when describing the picture? (Objective 9)
- What did you notice about the child's speech and grammar while describing his or her page in the class book? (Objective 9)
- Did the child use new vocabulary to describe the picture? (Objective 9)
- How long was the child engaged during the activity? (Objective 11)
- Did the child informally name any letters while writing? (Objective 16)
- Did the child attempt to read what he or she wrote? (Objective 18)

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### **Print Rich Environment Activity 4: Sight Words in Plain Sight**

#### **Learning Standard:**

LL 2.3h Language and Literacy (Emergent Literacy; Phonological awareness, the child develops awareness that language can be broken into words, syllables and smaller units of sounds (phonemes).

#### **Overview/Rationale:**

*Sight Words in Plain Sight* plays to the natural processes of the human brain by presenting a constant and relevant visual stimulus of orthographic patterns (Bear et al., 2016). This environmental print activity involves a prominent display of six sets of rhyming words and orthographic patterns. Rhyming activities are a particularly easy way for children to being to focus on specific sounds in words. In alignment with DAP, words are only 3-4 letters in each word and there are images above each word to provide additional assistance (Bear et al., 2016; Developmentally Appropriate Practice Position Statement, n.d.). This board promotes phonological awareness and understanding of concepts of print in text.

Per Bear et al. (2016) the best way for children to move from a developing to a rudimentary concept of word in text level is by pointing to words as they reread memorized text, drawing their attention to when they fall out of place. Instructors may guide children's interactions with these words by modeling reading strategies, pointing to each letter in a single word as they say their corresponding sounds aloud (Bear et al., 2016). Instructors should then repeat the word clearly and in tempo to illustrate how the sounds are blended together in their final coherent pronunciation. Print referencing strategies positively effect children's measures of concepts of word in print, letter recognition and name writing (Bear et al., 2016). To extend print

referencing activities, children should be instructed to mimic the instructor's example and finger point and track the words on the board. Rhythmic texts are particularly appealing to children in this stage, and therefore, the children will enjoy the natural rhythm the rhyming words in this activity.

The sight words chosen for this activity are separated into six different pages, each falling in a specific phonemic category. For example, each of the words on the "ell" page end in "ell." This evincing organization, accompanied by assisting illustrations, instructs students on rhyming and phonemic patterns. Per Bear et al. (2016, p. 4), humans have a natural interest in comparing and contrasting, and finding patterns in their environment. Patterns structure the processes of assimilation and accommodation, helping children to acquire new information by categorizing according to what they already know (Bear et al., p. 4; Cognitive Development, n.d.). Understanding patterns in orthography and phonics helps with reading comprehension and text fluency.

**Images:**



<b>at</b>		<b>ag</b>		<b>ow</b>	
<b>bat</b>  Swing a <b>bat</b> .	<b>hat</b>  Hold on to your <b>hat</b> !	<b>bag</b>  Pack a <b>bag</b> .	<b>rag</b>  Use a <b>rag</b> .	<b>bow</b>  Take a <b>bow</b> .	<b>how</b>  Find out <b>how</b> .
<b>cat</b>  Pet a <b>cat</b> .	<b>mat</b>  Sweep the <b>mat</b> .	<b>drag</b>  Drag a <b>bag</b> .	<b>tag</b>  Playing <b>tag</b> .	<b>chow</b>  Time for <b>chow</b> !	<b>now</b>  Come out <b>now</b> !
<b>fat</b>  Short and <b>fat</b> .	<b>sat</b>  The cat just <b>sat</b> .	<b>flag</b>  Wave a <b>flag</b> .	<b>wag</b>  Tails that <b>wag</b> .	<b>cow</b>  Milk a <b>cow</b> .	<b>plow</b>  Pull a <b>plow</b> .
<b>ig</b>		<b>ell</b>		<b>et</b>	
<b>big</b>  So <b>big</b> !	<b>pig</b>  A pretty <b>pig</b> !	<b>bell</b>  Ring the <b>bell</b> .	<b>smell</b>  What a <b>smell</b> !	<b>get</b>  Get ready! Get <b>set</b> !	<b>net</b>  Jump the <b>net</b> .
<b>dig</b>  Dig and <b>dig</b> .	<b>twig</b>  Use a <b>twig</b> .	<b>fell</b>  Who <b>fell</b> ?	<b>tell</b>  Show and <b>tell</b> .	<b>jet</b>  Fly a <b>jet</b> .	<b>pet</b>  Feed a <b>pet</b> .
<b>jig</b>  Dance a <b>jig</b> .	<b>wig</b>  What a <b>wig</b> !	<b>shell</b>  Hide in your <b>shell</b> .	<b>well</b>  Go to the <b>well</b> .	<b>let</b>  Let me <b>pet</b> .	<b>wet</b>  Don't get <b>wet</b> !

### **Major Milestones**

Preschool development illustrates the complex nature of the human mind and interpersonal relations. Cognitive development progresses dynamically with physical, language and social/emotional development, illustrating the interdependent nature of these domains. Preschool development is characterized by a new sense of autonomy, self-awareness, inquisition and innovation (Developmental Milestones, 2016). Ecological factors have a profound impact on individual development in all domains and should be carefully considered during individual assessment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; OCDEL, 2014). The mediating effects of ecological variables are discussed.

Physical development milestones for preschoolers are characterized by the ability to manipulate a variety of tools and equipment (Developmental Milestones, 2016). Increased coordination, balance and fine motor control allow preschoolers to successfully use a variety of tools, sports equipment and play equipment that may have challenged and frustrated them in the toddler years (OCDEL, 2014). These developments allow preschoolers to independently complete a large range of tasks supporting autonomy, confidence and a better sense of self-identity. For example, preschoolers are now able to draw detailed pictures, copy some capital and lowercase letters, catch a throw a ball with some accuracy, ride a bike, dress and feed themselves (OCDEL, 2014; Who Are We?, n.d.).

Language development in the preschool years includes notable advancements in book handling, print concepts, phonological awareness, vocabulary acquisition and use, conventions, narrative and writing elements (OCDEL, 2014). Milestones in this domain include proper book handling, again writing some capital and lower case letters, recognition of rhyming words, alliteration and familiar word identification (OCDEL, 2014). The basics elements of reading

comprehension emerge during this period including main ideas, story retelling, main character identification and narrative event sequencing (OCDEL, 2014). These capabilities depend on the convergence of simultaneous physical development and emerging higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.

Advancements in cognitive abilities include deductive reasoning, information recall, selective focus, resiliency, innovation and abstract representation (OCDEL, 2014). Major milestones include following three-step directions, employing a variety of strategies to solve a single problem, moving away from distractions to focus on a task and extending play scenarios over multiple days (Developmental Milestones, 2016; OCDEL, 2014; Who Are We?, n.d.). Social/emotional milestones in the preschool years stem from emerging emotional regulation, empathy, management of interpersonal conflicts, social identity and communication abilities (OCDEL, 2014). Major milestones in this domain include setting goals in pretend play, identifying and expressing personal emotions and negotiating conflicts (Developmental Milestones, 2016; OCDEL, 2014).

Ecological factors like those characterized under the socioeconomic status (SES) umbrella have a profound impact on personal experiences and individual development (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Bronfenbrenner 1979). Access to resources and differences in behavior models are powerful mediators in this relationship (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Preschoolers who come from low SES homes may have inadequate access to health care, inadequate nutrition, fail to get the recommended immunizations and be exposed to higher levels of second hand smoke (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Low SES is correlated with an increased occurrence of respiratory illness, cavities, blood lead levels, iron deficiency and stunting (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Illness and malnutrition can result in depressed mood and cognitive

functioning (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). The dynamic relationships between ecology, physiology, physical and cognitive development exhibited in this example speak to the reciprocal nature of development.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of development and Bandura's social cognitive theory can be harmoniously applied to identify mediators on individual development within an ecological context. Vygotsky theorized that children learn through social interactions and that learning is fundamentally based on experiences with others (Cognitive Development, n.d.; Davidson & Davidson, 1994). Bandura extended this theory by identifying social models as the main source of learning through social interactions (Social Cognitive Theory, n.d.; Davidson & Davidson, 2003). Ecological factors affect the nature of social interactions and the quality of available behavior models, thereby influencing individual development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).



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