Read, Talk, Play, Thrive,
A Whole-Child Literacy Institute

EMERGENT WRITING
RESOURCE LIST

15-Minute In-service Suite: Emergent Writing

This 15-minute In-service Suite introduces the writing process and shows how emergent writing develops. It provides a presentation, optional slides, and supporting materials for teachers, home visitors, and family child care providers. Separate slides address home visitors' unique needs, and the activities clearly label the intended audience.
https://headstart.gov/video/emergent-writing

- **Educators:** Use the learning activities and tools for educators to plan writing opportunities across the learning environment. Use observation forms to track children's emerging writing skills and scaffold their development.
- **Home Visitors:** Use the tips sheets to inspire simple, fun writing opportunities families can create at home. Use the *Studying Children's Emerging Writing* form to support parents to identify their child's writing stage. Use this information to discuss next steps.
- **Education Managers:** Incorporate the resource into professional development plans. Pair it with observation tools to support staff in creating print-rich environments and modeling writing behaviors.
- **Coaches:** Use the suite during reflective practice sessions. Encourage educators to identify current strategies and explore new ways to integrate writing into play and routines.

Effective Practice Guide: Writing

This guide offers practical strategies to help children develop emergent writing skills, from early scribbles to forming letters and words. It explains how writing develops and shows examples of how educators can create environments that encourage children to explore writing to communicate and express ideas.
https://headstart.gov/school-readiness/effective-practice-guides/writing

- **Educators:**
  Use the guide to improve classroom practice and early learning environments. Incorporate strategies like adding writing materials to play areas, modeling writing during routines, and creating opportunities for children to experiment with marks and letters.
- **Home Visitors:**
  Share tips and activities with families to encourage writing at home. Suggest simple, everyday practices like making grocery lists together, drawing pictures, or writing names on artwork. Use the guide to help families understand how these experiences support school readiness.
- **Coaches:** Use the guide to model and discuss effective writing practices during observations and reflective sessions.
- **Education Managers:** Incorporate strategies into professional development plans and ensure classrooms have materials that promote writing exploration.

Office of Head Start National Center
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Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning

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Big 5 for All: Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing

This resource explores two essential early literacy skills, alphabet knowledge, and early writing—that lay the foundation for later reading success. It provides research-based information and practical strategies to help children develop these skills in developmentally appropriate ways.

https://headstart.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/pla-alphabet-knowledge-early-writing.pdf

- **Educators:** Use the guide to plan activities that integrate alphabet learning and writing into play areas, circle time, and transitions.
- **Home Visitors:** Share tips with families for simple, fun ways to build these skills at home, like writing grocery lists, labeling drawings, or playing letter games.
- **Coaches and Education Managers:** Incorporate the resource into professional development and reflective practice sessions to strengthen learning environments and family engagement.

Home Visitors Online Handbook: Emergent Literacy

This resource from the Head Start Home Visitors Online Handbook explains how emergent literacy develops from birth through age five and offers practical strategies for supporting families in building strong language and literacy foundations.

https://headstart.gov/school-readiness/home-visitors-online-handbook/emergent-literacy

How Home Visitors Can Use It

- Understand the research behind emergent literacy and why it starts at birth.
- Learn the developmental progression of skills from infancy through preschool.
- Discover strategies to share with families, such as reading together, talking during routines, and encouraging scribbling and drawing.
- See and read examples of these practices in home-based settings.

On-demand Webinar

A Framework for Understanding Early Writing Development

https://headstart.gov/video/framework-understanding-early-writing-development

In this webinar, review a framework for teachers to evaluate and understand the writing that young children produce. Listen as presenters discuss the importance of early writing, how it develops, and how teachers can help children take their writing to the next level.

Additional Resourcees

A Scribble Is Never Just a Scribble: Art, Story, and Process | NAEYC https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/winter2023/art-story-and-process

Learning to Write and Draw | ZERO TO THREE https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/distillation/learning-to-write-and-draw/