

## EARLY CHILDHOOD LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT: FUNDAMENTAL KNOWLEDGE TO ASSIST DEVELOPING READERS

*by:*

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An excellent early education is essential for each pupil's long-term academic achievement. For younger pupils to be inspired to succeed in their own literacy development, they must comprehend the motivations behind reading and writing. Children learn how to apply their developing knowledge and abilities through active participation in the reading process. Adaptably and in tandem with every area of development. When given the chance to participate in early print activities and meaningful, intentional language use, all children can build a solid foundation for literacy and reading development. Preschoolers who receive quality early literacy training are given developmentally appropriate environments, resources, experiences, and social support, all of which foster the growth of early reading and writing skills and the eventual transition to conventional literacy.

Supporting emergent readers involves cultivating a range of skills that underpin literacy development. These skills fall into several categories:

### Oral Language Development

Strong oral language skills are essential for literacy. They include vocabulary, sentence structure, and the ability to express and understand ideas. Activities such as storytelling, singing, and engaging in meaningful conversations with children help build their linguistic foundation.

## Awareness of Phonology

The capacity to identify and work with sounds in spoken language is known as phonological awareness. Children are prepared to decode written language through the use of skills including rhyming, word segmentation into syllables, and word beginning sound identification. Songs and games that highlight sound patterns are good ways to improve this ability.

## Print Awareness

Print awareness involves understanding the mechanics of reading and writing, such as knowing how to hold a book, recognizing that text is read from left to right, and distinguishing between letters and words. Introducing children to books and pointing out print in everyday contexts – like signs and labels – develops this awareness.

## Alphabet Knowledge

Learning the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds is a critical step toward reading. Activities like letter-matching games, tracing letters, and singing alphabet songs make learning engaging and interactive.

## Understanding What You're Hearing

Reading comprehension is aided by the capacity to hear and comprehend spoken language. Children's listening skills are improved and a love of literature is fostered when stories are read aloud to them, discussed, and open-ended questions about what they hear are asked.

## Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills support the physical act of writing. Activities like drawing, cutting with scissors, and manipulating small objects strengthen hand-eye coordination and prepare children for writing tasks.

Early literacy development is greatly aided by educators and guardians. They can establish a linguistically rich environment by:

### Providing Access to Books and Print Materials

Offering a variety of age-appropriate books encourages exploration and familiarity with text.

### Engaging in Shared Reading

Interactive reading sessions, where children actively participate, promote comprehension and a positive attitude toward reading.

### Modeling Language and Literacy Behaviors

Demonstrating reading, writing, and meaningful conversations sets an example for children to follow.

### Incorporating Play-Based Learning

Play fosters creativity and integrates literacy into enjoyable, hands-on experiences.

Language and literacy development in the early years is a dynamic and crucial process that gives children with the tools they need for academic and social success. In order to foster growing readers in ways that are both interesting and developmentally appropriate, educators and guardians should concentrate on fundamental abilities such as oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.

Putting effort into these early skills opens up a universe of possibilities and creates the foundation for lifelong learning.

*References:*

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Foundational Skills that Support Emergent Readers. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1034914.pdf>