Literacy in the Early Years.

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A PROJECT APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DESIGN
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The Early Years Framework for Australia (EYLF) recognises a child’s ability to communicate is crucial to belonging, being and becoming. This term we will be engaging in practices that contribute to the EYLF learning outcome: **CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS**

**LITERACY** is an important aspect of COMMUNICATION:

- Literacy is the capacity, confidence and disposition to use language in all its forms. It incorporates a range of modes of communication including **music**, **movement**, **dance**, **storytelling**, **visual arts**, **media** and **drama**, as well as **talking**, **listening**, **viewing**, **reading** and **writing**. Contemporary texts include electronic and print based media.

- **Experiences** in the early childhood setting build on a range of experiences with language, literacy and numeracy that children have within their families and communities.

- **Positive** attitudes and competencies in literacy are essential for children’s successful learning. (EYLF)
Developing these educator practices and supporting children as individuals and in groups requires having Learner Outcome goals as a focus.

Learning Outcomes are designed to capture the integrated and complex learning and development of all children. A learner outcome is a skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in early childhood settings, in collaboration with children and families.

5 of the sub-outcomes we are focusing for children to become effective communicators include:

1. Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes
2. Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts.
3. Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of texts.
4. Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work.
5. Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking.

Details of all learner outcome indicators are posted on the curriculum board or you can research the EYLF at:
http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Programs/EarlyChildhoodEducation
Our inquiry question is therefore:
How do we build children’s literacy capabilities by developing positive attitudes and competencies as literacy users?

Find out what children already know?
- How can we tell stories?
- Why do we talk?
- What is reading?
- What is writing?
- Do you like to dance/sing/play music/act/hear stories/draw/paint/make things?

What do parents and carers think?
- What does Literacy mean to you?
- What do YOU as parents believe are the most important aspects of literacy?
- How do you engage your child in literacy experiences at home?

What principles and practices do staff value around engaging children in literacy experiences?

**PRINCIPLES**
- Secure, respectful & reciprocal relationships
- Partnerships with families
- High expectations & equity
- Respect for Diversity
- Ongoing learning & reflective practice

**PRACTICE**
- Holistic approaches
- Responding to children through literacy.
- Learning through Play
- Intentional Teaching
- Learning Environments
- Cultural Competencies
- Assessment for learning
Curriculum: in the early childhood setting curriculum means ‘all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development’. [adapted from Te Whariki]

Language and vocabulary explored:
Words we will use: Communicating, speaking, listening, drawing, reading, writing, words, letters, numbers, symbols, sounds, music, moving, dance, acting, rhyme, syllable, beats, language, tongue twister, books, imagination, names of languages and their written forms eg Chinese characters, Japanese. Information, ideas, culture, texts, signs.

Play experiences & Intentional teaching.
Every activity, experience and physical learning area provides educators with opportunities to promote literacy scaffolding including group/individual arts & dramatic play, visual media, storytables/ tabletops, ICT, sensory play, the garden, imaginative play and construction experiences.

Intentional teaching – small and large group times

Outdoor & Indoor Physical Skills Program – strengthening gross and fine motor skills in children to develop eye-hand coordination leading to better pencil control and strength.

Assessment:
Staff record children’s involvement in experiences and extend their play with a literacy focus.
Use assessment tool – ‘Indicators of Successful Literacy’ on a selected cohort of children for baseline data.
Preschool Screening Tool
What activities will support the progress of children’s involvement in positive literacy-based experiences in order to enhance effective communication learning outcomes.

### Preschool Play Setting

**Some Examples:**
- Road Safety Rangers (KPPS) Group A (week 2)
- A variety of media in many learning areas to encourage drawing/ writing/ visual arts eg smartboard whiteboards/sketchbooks/ chalk/ posca/ pencils/ painting activities/ charcoal/ ink/ crayons/ textas/ craypas/ clay.
- Dramatic Play settings – dramatizing familiar stories with props & stages/ office play/ road works/ libraries/ home settings/ extending children’s ideas into dramatic play.
- Scribing – staff write words/symbols/ phrases/ signs all added to children’s play.
- Letter/ number/ symbol literacy neighbourhood walks with sketchbooks.
- Variety of Music/ dance play areas to explore children’s musical cultural backgrounds. Eg chinese/ indian/ japanese/ middle eastern/ greek/ italian
- Multicultural texts/ print/ symbols
- Storytelling – told/ read/ dramatised/ puppets/ shadow puppetry/ listening story post.
- Children create stories – paint/ draw/ stamps/ collage
- Songs/ chants/ games that are language rich.
- Fine motor activities encouraging strength and control for writing and drawing.
- Games with symbols & text – Duplo letters/ matching games/ card games/ playdough letters/ KIDSPIX ICT games.

### Intentional Teaching

**Large Groups - 9:30am**
- Key teachers will be exploring the principles of **Phonological awareness** (the conscious awareness of the sounds of language)

These include:
- Recognising and producing rhymes
- Segmenting words into syllables/ parts
- Identifying differences in sounds – environmental and instrumental
- Working with words – finding/ counting/ long and short words
- Identifying first sounds in words and learning tongue twisters such as “Sally sells sea shells on the sea shore.”

Also **Phonemic Awareness:**
- Introduce Letter sounds and the fact that a letter can have many sounds in a word.
- Count the phonemes in a word.
- Explore phonemes through books such as Dog In, Cat out.

Key teachers will be acting out specific stories eg “Shoes for Grandpa” and “Mr Mcgee went to Sea” with props to explore the text and phonological principles in the story eg Rhyme.

At the end of the day we will have chanting songs and games and view photostories of the children’s day at Kindergarten.

**Small Groups 10 am**
- All staff have specific group daily
- Texts and music will be enjoyed and analysed in terms of phonological and phonemic awareness principles. Eg word and letter games/ sound discrimination games.
- Samples of children’s drawing and writing will be collected.
Ideas for Home. Literacy is ‘being able to communicate effectively’

- Please read the Learning Outcomes displayed on the curriculum board or on the Kindy website to appreciate the extent to what “Literacy – in the early years ‘ looks like.
- **Read, read, read** to your child at least once a day – but ALSO enjoy the stories with enthusiasm and drama.
- Act out stories/ invent and tell stories to your children.
- Come and borrow our readers and Numeracy in literacy kits from the room next to the kitchen. (You will need a library bag which we can supply – see staff)
- View the **ECLIPSE** cards displayed on the curriculum felt boards for ideas for playing with your child around literacy. (Early Childhood Literacy includes Parents/ Staff and Education)
- Notice signs and symbols when you are out with your child.
- Provide a work station for your child with stationary such as pens/ paper/ sticky tape/ staplers/ notepads/ sticky notes and decorate with signs and symbols.
- Let children ‘pretend’ to scribe your shopping list and look at catalogues with words and symbols.
- Play games with children having to listen for sounds in the garden, in the car etc to promote their auditory discrimination skills for when they will have to hear the different letter sounds when learning to read.
- Do mazes, draw and write in sand and dirt!
- Dance, play music or make music, draw with your child – let them express themselves in a variety of ways.
WE WILL GATHER DATA ON CHILDREN’S CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND COLLECT MORE DATA AT THE END OF THE TERM TO MEASURE OUR SUCCESS AGAINST THE INQUIRY QUESTION.

THE STAFF TEAM WILL PHOTOGRAPH THE TERM ADVENTURES AND ALIGN THEM WITH LEARNING OUTCOMES ALONG THE WAY.

DISPLAYS OF THESE PHOTOGRAPHS WILL BE ON THE FELT BOARDS OUTSIDE.

ANY IDEAS? LET US KNOW!
Interesting!

“Early childhood literacy and numeracy: Building good practice” is available from the Kindy if you are interested in reading more.