The Child Day Schools
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The Child

The Administrative Newsletter
of The Child Day Schools

Over 40 Years of Service
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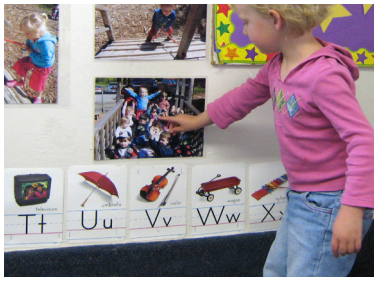
Language And Literacy

In order to provide for the intricate and subtle building blocks of language and literacy development requires that teachers understand how to support these concepts at each developmental stage. Literacy is so important because it is the cornerstone for complex thinking, the ability to learn and process information.

Obviously, the acquisition of ***language*** precedes literacy, starting with the very first coos of a baby. Language progresses from coos to babbling, to words, to sentences and on to reading and writing, or ***literacy***.

After the acquisition of oral language, children begin to recognize shapes and symbols which leads to the cognitive ability of deciphering letters and words. Along the way children are also refining their fine motor skills for printing and writing.



San Ramon- a two year old is able to construct a story about her friends prompted by a photograph.

Through our teacher trainings we identify how developing literacy can be supported by so many aspects of our program, not just the obvious activities like reading stories or working with the alphabet.

Pleasanton- a child creates a story using a flannel board.

Our language rich environments encourage children to connect pictures with the written word. Children also begin to understand the magic of books when we put them in places where they may use them for reference, such as books for building in the block area, or a children's cook book in the kitchen area.

We asked the teachers what they learned through our workshops:

"Reading books to children can be used for effective transitions."

Lafayette- a calming book is read aloud before nap time.

"The way we print (with clean lines and upper and lower case letters) is important for children's recognition of written language."

"Placement of books and writing materials in areas that we didn't think of before, like creating a reading area outside."

Antioch- children spend quiet time outside reading in a converted kiddie pool.

Early Learning Windows

Language And Literacy Cont'd

"Adding Drama and props to books and storytelling really engages children and makes the story memorable. Encouraging children to participate in telling a story, or act it out."

Moraga- Children spend time with their chosen book as a group activity.

"There are many opportunities to help children develop fine motor skills, like working with playdough, stringing beads, and using stencils."

"Making reading personal for children by having them create their own books."

"The learning sequence of language and literacy development is important, and each child moves through it according to their own readiness."

We discussed how we can support literacy through music and movement as children memorize simple songs and finger plays, which become even more exciting when we use props such as flannel boards, puppets and real-live objects. Children make up their own stories with these props, expanding on their ideas and processing information they have learned.

At our trainings, teachers are loaded with new ideas, books, flannel boards, puppets and above all, ***enthusiasm*** for making Language & Literacy exciting and memorable for the children.

Did you know? Every child progresses through the same Developmental Stages of Writing:

Scribbling stage; separated scribbles; left to right scribbles; scribbles resembling writing; scribbles resembling actual letters; attempts at first letters; strings of letters; child copies print; and finally the child writes real words.

Developmentally Appropriate Principles

(From Care to Read ®)

1. Children develop and learn best when they feel valued, physically and emotionally safe, and cared for.

2. Children develop in four closely related domains- physical, social, emotional and cognitive. Development in each domain affects, and is affected by, development in the others.

3. Children follow the same sequence or order for development.

4. Learning windows are times in a child's development when a particular kind of learning is most easily acquired. The area of the brain used to understand language develops before the area used to produce language.

5. Development moves from the simple to the complex. Children build on current abilities, skills and knowledge to gain new ones.

6. Each child's development is supported and influenced by a family, community, and culture.

7. Every child's development is affected by unique characteristics such as temperament, preferred learning styles, and interests.

8. Each child has an individual time clock for development. A child's development may be uneven- he or she may mature earlier in one domain than in another.

9. Children construct understanding of the world through a variety of activities and experiences. They explore, experiment, play, manipulate real items, and listen to and watch other people.

10. Children make progress when they have opportunities to practice new skills and take on challenges just beyond their current levels of development.

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