

# Language and Literacy

- Listening and Understanding
- Speaking and Communicating
- Phonological Awareness
- Book Knowledge and Appreciation
- Print Awareness and Concepts
- Early Writing and Alphabet Knowledge

Language and literacy skills develop through talking, listening, playing, reading, writing, and learning the skills that adults use to communicate.

Children develop the basis for all communication in the early childhood years. They use early nonverbal interactions (smiling, facial expressions, gestures, etc.), and then spoken language, sign language or other alternative communication methods to practice the rules of communication in their culture and family.

Between three and five years of age, children begin to understand how oral language is reflected in written symbols (letters), and also learn to create written symbols to communicate their ideas.

Language and literacy are promoted and supported through play, especially pretend play, and also through music, rhyme, and rhythm.

A solid foundation in oral language development in the early years before a child enters school will promote success in reading and writing in the future. Young children who have rich language and literacy experiences are less likely to have difficulties learning to read independently.



## Strategies to support inclusive learning environments:

- ❖ Provide good models of communication, including sign language and other alternative methods
- ❖ Use special or adaptive devices and/or processes to increase level of communication and/or participation
- ❖ Use a favorite toy, activity or person to encourage communication and/or participation

Some general accommodations to support children with special learning or developmental needs can be found on page 9 and in Rule 51.

# Listening and Understanding

## Widely Held Expectations

- Child listens to directions and conversations with understanding
  - Demonstrates understanding of the meaning of stories, songs and poems
- Child follows directions in sequences of actions
  - Follows single and multi-step or complex directions
- Child listens to others and responds to feelings and expressed ideas
  - Responds to simple, direct, conversational sentences, either verbally or by alternative means
- Child demonstrates understanding of native and/or English languages for social interactions and program directions/activities

## Learning in Action: Examples

### The Child

- Follows directions from the adult such as "Please go and wash your hands, then sit down at the table"
- Retells main events of stories, and repeats familiar songs and poems
- Carries on a conversation with another person, either verbally or by alternative means, that extends a thought or idea
- Listens to audio-taped or read stories and shows understanding through body language, pointing to pictures

### The Adult

- Builds upon children's comprehension skills by listening, responding and asking questions
- Greets children daily by name and with a short conversation
- Pairs non-English speaking children with bilingual peers/adults
- Engages children in stories, songs and poems

### THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Stories, songs, words, games and daily schedules in English and the languages of the non-English speaking children
- Ways to assist children in the understanding of new vocabulary

### Related Standards

Nebraska K-12  
State Standards  
Reading/Writing

1.1.5

1.2.1

1.3.1

Social Studies/  
History

1.8

Mathematics

1.2.1

Nebraska Rule 11  
Regulations

004.05A4

004.05B

004.05C

004.06C

004.06D

004.06E

Head Start  
Outcomes  
Framework

1.1.1

1.1.2

1.1.3

1.1.4

# Speaking and Communicating

## Widely Held Expectations

- Child communicates needs, wants or thoughts through words, gestures, actions, or expressions
  - Uses sentences that include two or more separate ideas
  - Initiates interactions with adults and peers
- Child communicates for a variety of purposes
  - Attempts to solve problems with other children independently by communicating with them
  - Greets adults and peers
- Child uses English or native language to share feelings and express ideas
- Child uses new vocabulary that has been introduced

## Learning in Action: Examples

### The Child

- Speaks clearly enough, or uses alternative communication methods, to be understood by others
- Asks questions to acquire more information
- Uses "please," "thank you," and "excuse me," although often needs reminders
- Uses language for a variety of purposes (role playing, rhyming, using props, describing feelings, telling jokes, conversing, etc.)

### The Adult

- Uses alternate modes of communication when needed (sign language, gestures, etc.)
- Builds on children's interests to introduce new vocabulary and ideas
- Asks open-ended questions throughout the day (questions that require more than a one-word answer)
- Provides opportunities for children to engage in turn taking and dialogue in conversation

### THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A variety of activity centers that encourage children to interact and communicate with adults and peers
- Props, books, materials and manipulatives for telling and retelling events and stories, etc.

### Related Standards

#### Nebraska K-12 State Standards

##### Reading/Writing

1.1.1

1.1.4

1.1.5

1.2.1

1.3.1

##### Mathematics

1.2.1

#### Nebraska Rule 11

##### Regulations

004.05A4

004.05B

004.05C

004.05D

004.06C

004.06D

004.06E

##### Head Start

##### Outcomes

##### Framework

1.2.1

1.2.2

1.2.3

1.2.4

1.2.5

# Phonological Awareness

## Widely Held Expectations

- Child shows knowledge of phonological awareness (the ability to hear and understand the different sounds of language)
  - Recognizes matching sounds and rhymes in familiar words, games, songs, stories and poems
  - Spontaneously repeats songs, rhymes and chants, and creates nonsense words
- Child progresses in listening and telling differences in phonemes (smallest parts of sound in a spoken word)
  - Identifies words that begin with the same sound
- Child recognizes the connection between spoken and written words
  - Shows growing ability to hear and discriminate separate syllables in words
  - Isolates beginning and ending sounds of printed or spoken words

## Learning in Action: Examples

### The Child

- Listens to two words and determines whether or not they rhyme
- Notices that several words or names begin with the same sound (Marcus, Maria, Matthew, etc.)
- Claps hands for each syllable in words
- Plays with sounds to create new words

### The Adult

- Provides opportunities for children to hear sounds in their native language
- Gives children the opportunity to repeat sounds in their names and other words
- Draws children's attention to the separate sounds of spoken language through playful songs, games and rhymes
- Models appropriate language, communication, reading and writing
- Provides literacy rich environment

### THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Children's music and a place where children may listen to a variety of story and sound tapes
- Many books, pictures and visual examples of written words, as well as those that are non-print based

### Related Standards

#### Nebraska K-12 State Standards Reading/Writing

1.1.1

1.1.2

1.1.5

#### Mathematics

1.1.2

#### Nebraska Rule 11 Regulations

004.05A4

004.05B

004.06C

06D004.06E

#### Head Start Outcomes Framework

2.1.1

2.1.2

2.1.3

2.1.4

2.1.5

# Book Knowledge and Appreciation

## Widely Held Expectations

- Child demonstrates interest in and appreciation of reading-related activities
  - Shows interest when stories are read
  - Relates events in story to own knowledge and experience
- Child increases knowledge about books and how they typically are read
  - Holds book right side up
  - Turns pages front to back
  - Knows specific words related to books such as author and illustrator
- Child learns to sequence and predict a story
  - Picture reads; tells about the story from the pictures on the cover or in the book

## Learning in Action: Examples

### The Child

- Asks people to read stories, signs, notes
- Answers questions about a story that has been read or repeats parts of the story
- Chooses a favorite book
- Pretends to read book titles/simple stories
- Tells stories to others, real and imaginary

### The Adult

- Provides print rich environment and reads to children, both individually and as a group
- Places books and signs/posters in all interest areas on topics that are relevant
- Reads books with rich descriptive vocabulary, exploring and extending children's understanding of the meaning of new words
- Talks about the author and illustrator when introducing a story
- Assists children in relating stories to events in their own lives and in making predictions

**THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES**

- Opportunities to look at books and become familiar with their use
- Many types of children's books, references, pictures and posters

### Related Standards

- Nebraska K-12 State Standards
- Reading/Writing
- 1.1.3
  - 1.1.4
  - 1.1.5
  - 1.2.1
  - 1.3.1
- Science
- 1.1.1
  - 1.1.2
- Mathematics
- 1.6.1

- Nebraska Rule 11 Regulations
- 004.05A4
  - 004.05A5
  - 004.05B
  - 004.05C
  - 004.06C
  - 04.06D
  - 004.06E

- Head Start Outcomes Framework
- 2.2.1
  - 2.2.2
  - 2.2.3
  - 2.2.4

# Print Awareness and Concepts

## Widely Held Expectations

- Child shows an awareness of print as a form of meaningful communication
  - Follows the print on the page, moving eyes from left to right and top to bottom (uses finger under print)
  - Identifies some letters and numbers
  - Recognizes and begins to write own name
  - "Reads" familiar environmental print (logos, posters, signs, etc.)
- Child understands that each spoken word can be written down and read

## Learning in Action: Examples

### The Child

- Asks people to read stories, signs or notes
- Reads several words or a few simple phrases or sentences
- Points to words using a left to right progression when "reading" picture books
- Picks out and labels specific letters from their name when looking at book titles or program labels
- Wants to read stories to others

### The Adult

- Writes children's explanations or labels on projects, artwork, block constructions, etc.
- Encourages children to help read the job chart, program rules and daily schedule
- Encourages children's interest and their attempts to copy or write their own name

**THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES**

- Books and writing tools, from crayons to computers, in each area of play
- Easily accessible writing center filled with a wide variety of materials (books, children's names, signs, children's artwork and stories, labels, alphabet charts, pencils, markers, etc.)

### Related Standards

- Nebraska K-12 State Standards  
Reading/Writing
- 1.1.1
  - 1.1.2
  - 1.1.3
  - 1.1.5
  - 1.1.6
  - 1.1.7
- Social Studies/History
- 1.3
  - 1.9

- Nebraska Rule 11 Regulations
- 004.05A4
  - 004.05B
  - 004.06C
  - 004.06D
  - 004.06E

- Head Start Outcomes Framework
- 2.3.1
  - 2.3.2
  - 2.3.3
  - 2.3.4

# Early Writing and Alphabet Knowledge

## Widely Held Expectations

### Related Standards

Nebraska K-12  
State Standards  
Reading/Writing

1.1.1

1.1.2

1.1.4

1.1.5

1.1.6

1.1.7

1.2.1

Social Studies/  
History  
1.8

- Child shows an interest in early writing
  - Uses scribbles, shapes or pictures to represent specific thoughts, ideas, stories
- Child progresses in the identification of letters
  - Identifies some letters and numbers
  - Uses pretend writing in play as a purposeful activity
- Child recognizes and/or writes own name on artwork or possessions

## Learning in Action: Examples

Nebraska Rule 11  
Regulations

004.05A4

004.05B

004.06C

04.06D

004.06E

Head Start  
Outcomes  
Framework

2.4.1

2.4.2

2.4.3

2.4.4

2.5.1

2.5.2

2.5.3

2.5.4

### The Child

- Uses magnetic letters or other alphabet materials to form own name
- Labels a drawing with several randomly placed, letter-like shapes
- Copies letters from signs and labels posted around the room

### The Adult

- Displays children's names on artwork, cubbies and all personal supplies
- Models the use of writing and drawing in everyday activities
- Promotes literacy related play activities and respects children's attempts at writing
- Provides opportunities for children to express their thoughts and ideas through the developmental stages of scribbles to conventional print
- Displays the alphabet at child's eye level

## THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Writing materials to encourage children's attempts at writing
- Books and writing tools, from crayons to computers, in each area of play

# Resources

*Beginning Literacy with Language: Young Children Learning at Home and School*--David K. Dickinson and Patton O. Tabors

*Building a Foundation for Preschool Literacy: Effective Instruction for Children's Reading and Writing Development*--Carol Vukelich and James Christie

*Children As Storytellers*--Kerry Mallan

*Emerging Literacy: Young Children Learn to Read and Write*--Dorothy S. Stickland and Leslie Mandel Morrow

*Ladders to Literacy: A Preschool Activity Book*--Angela Notari-Syverson, Rollanda E. O'Connor and Patricia F. Vadasy

*Learning To Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practice for Young Children*--Susan B. Newman, Carol Copple, Sue Bredekamp and NAEYC

*Much More than the ABC's: The Early Stages of Reading and Writing*--Judith Schickendanz

*One Child, Two Languages: A Guide for Preschool Educators of Children Learning English As a Second Language*--Patton O. Tabors

*The Read-Aloud Handbook*--Jim Trelease

*Phonemic Awareness in Young Children: A Classroom Curriculum*--Marilyn Jager Adams, Barbara R. Foorman, Ingvar Lundberg and Terri Beeler

*Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*--M. Susan Burns, Catherine E. Snow and Peg Griffin

*What teachers need to know about language*--Lily Wong Fillmore

These books and many other resources may be borrowed by Nebraska residents from the Early Childhood Training Center. A web-based search of these media materials is offered at [www.esu3.org/ectc](http://www.esu3.org/ectc) or telephone contact may be made by calling 1-402-597-4826 or 1-800-89CHILD.

## Books for Children

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?*--Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle

*The Cat in the Hat*--Dr. Seuss

*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*--Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault

*Good Night Moon*--Margaret Wise Brown

*If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*--Laura Joffe Numeroff

*The Little Red Hen*--J. P. Miller

*My First Real Mother Goose Bedtime Book*--Scholastic

*Wee Sing Nursery Rhymes and Lullabies*--Pamela Conn Beall and Susan Hagen Nipp