

Taking Stock

of what you do to promote literacy

This inventory is provided to help each of us to take stock, to examine our curriculum and classroom and consider whether we're doing everything we can to help children learn to read and write. Clearly, teaching practices should be varied according to the ages and developmental levels of the learners, and this brief overview could not capture that level of detail. The practices and strategies listed in the Taking Stock inventory are useful throughout the preschool and early grades.

THE POWER AND PLEASURE OF LITERACY

Do you...

- Read daily to children in your class?**
- Engage children in selecting favorite books and participating actively in storytime?**
- Find ways to encourage parents to read to their children at home?**
- Link books and reading experiences with engaging activities that stretch children's learning?**
- Show children the many ways that reading and writing can be used in daily activities?**
- Include literacy props and materials in dramatic play areas?**

THE LITERATE ENVIRONMENT

Do you...

- Put labels, captions, and other print in places where they serve a purpose?**
- Create inviting places for children to read with their friends or on their own?**
- Include a wide variety of books and print materials that affirm children's cultures and linguistic backgrounds?**
- Place books where children can easily reach them?**
- Display books on open shelves to pique children's interest in reading?**
- Rotate and refresh literacy materials in dramatic play areas to keep children's interest and imaginations lively?**

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Do you...

- Respond to what children do and say by building on their ideas and language?
- Include new words in your conversations with children?
- Name objects and actions, giving children a brief explanation where necessary?
- Engage children in language games, rhymes, and riddles?
- Encourage dramatic play and sometimes join in to introduce new possibilities?
- Create opportunities for children to engage in interactive activities in small groups?

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND COMPREHENSION

Do you...

- Give children many opportunities to explore and manipulate objects?
- Read and make available information books and other nonfiction?
- Introduce new vocabulary and concepts before going on special field trips?
- Debrief and discuss with children what they have learned after a field trip or other special activity?
- Ensure that there are abundant opportunities for children to share and assimilate knowledge through play?

Ask children questions and respond to their questions?

Identify and explain new words across the curriculum?

KNOWLEDGE OF PRINT

Do you...

- Show children that we read print moving from left to right and top to bottom?
- Identify the features of a book, such as the author and title?
- Point to words, labels, and letters and read or name them?
- Help children to recognize and write their names?
- Draw attention to uppercase and lowercase letters, punctuation, and other print features?

TYPES OF TEXT

Do you...

- Read and reread stories to give children a chance to become very familiar with them?
- Encourage children to retell or reenact stories in their own words?
- Engage children in dramatic play and acting out favorite stories?
- Find meaningful ways to introduce children to a range of writing forms and genres?
- Help children to write in different ways for different purposes?

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Do you...

- Draw children's attention to the sounds they hear in words?
- Play a variety of games that emphasize rhyming and beginning sounds?
- Read and reread stories that have predictable sound patterns?
- Provide children with time to write on their own each day?
- Sing, rhyme, and clap out the syllables of songs and chants?
- Build word walls of words with similar sound patterns?
- Use daily classroom routines to talk about words and songs?

LETTERS AND WORDS

Do you...

- Read alphabet books and help children identify letters?
- Write and display children's names and other words of particular interest?
- Involve children in writing activities?
- Demonstrate the writing process through shared writing activities?
- Make paper, pencils, and markers easily accessible?
- Encourage children to try to spell words out independently as they write?
- Give specific help in learning letter/sound patterns?
- Help children to learn new words?
- Help children acquire a basic sight vocabulary?