

Especially for practitioners working with infants! 

Literacy-Rich Classroom and Community Activities

 *Literacy-Rich Experiences*

What is the practice?

Many everyday family and community activities are good times to expose infants to literacy-rich learning for the first time. The places infants visit and the people they meet on outings are great sources of literacy learning. This practice guide includes everyday routines and activities for learning communication, language, and the early stages of reading and writing.

What does the practice look like?

This practice is about children being involved in everyday activities that provide opportunities for literacy learning. This practice guide provides ideas for how infants can be part of hearing sounds and words. It explains how to expose infants to familiar pictures and symbols and how to introduce them to reading and writing. This can be something as simple as looking at a cereal box at breakfast. It can also be something more formal, like infant story times at a public library.

How do you do the practice?

There is a list of family and community activities at the end of this page. This list includes things that children in your care might already do on a daily basis. Increase children's involvement in such activities and guide them and assist them while they take part. This is the heart of the practice.

- To start, pinpoint which activities are most likely to be fun and pleasing to the child. The more engaged he is during activities, the more likely he is to learn communication and language skills during them.
- Join in on the activities with the child. Become aware of what he is most likely to do. Listen for the noises he might make. Look for pointing, reaching, excitement, and other behaviors that show his interest and delight in an activity.
- Talk about what the child is doing. Describe the things at which he is looking, touching, and with which he is playing. Use short, descriptive sentences ("You see the kitty. Nice kitty! Her fur feels soft").
- Respond to any attempt on the part of the child to communicate or vocalize. Repeat what he does or says. This tells him that his attempts to communicate with you are working.
- Encourage the child to take the lead and "show you" what he is doing or at what he is looking. Give him many chances to "get your attention." The more chances he is given, the more likely he is to want to "tell you" what he is doing.



How do you know the practice worked?

- Does being involved in an activity get the child to communicate using gestures or sounds?
- Does the child seem to understand or get excited when you use words to describe what he is doing?
- Does he show more interest in starting or continuing an activity?

Take a look at more activities in classroom and community

Rhymes & Singing

Sandra is 7 months old. She has become greatly interested in any kind of parent-child play that involves rhymes and singing. Her home visitor taught her to play Peek-a-Boo. When Sandra hears Baby's Eyes or listens to her mother recite Rock a Bye Baby, she squirms and chuckles with joy. Sandra's home visitor and mother brainstormed about ways to include moments of play with rhyming and singing in their everyday routines. Now Sandra's mother plays Peek-a-Boo while changing Sandra's diaper. She plays I'm Gonna Get You while she feeds Sandra and This Little Piggy while getting Sandra dressed and undressed. She recites These Are Sandra's Fingers while they play together on the floor. These are just a few of the ways Sandra's day is now filled with these language and literacy-learning activities.



Action Plan

Bryan, 12 months old, and his mother spend a lot of time on the go. They visit friends, run errands, shop for food, and take part in local events. One of Bryan's favorite things to do at home is have mom or dad read him stories. Bryan's home visitor suggests some fun ways to support Bryan's interest while out and about. Mom and the home visitor make a list of places Mom and Bryan often go. Then they discuss how Mom can provide Bryan reading and storytelling experiences in these places. They include the local library, bookstore, recreation center, supermarket, a neighbor's house, and a children's theatre. Bryan really looks forward to what he will get to do next!

Exhibit: Examples of Literacy-Rich Classroom and Community Activities

- Scribble with crayons or magic markers.
- Play with blocks or letter magnets.
- Listen to music.
- Play Peek-A-Boo and So-Big.
- Play finger games or clapping games.
- Play rhyming games.

- Play with puppets or stuffed animals.
- Talk on the telephone.
- Pretend to talk back and forth on the phone.
- Visit the library.
- Go food shopping.
- Go on family car and bus rides.

