

CELL

Literacy-Rich Environments Questions and Answers

What does a literacy-rich environment look like?

A literacy-rich environment is the context in which children engage in interest-based everyday literacy activities with responsive adults. Literacy-rich environments are inviting, interesting, and comfortable. They are organized and provide a variety of materials that are easily accessible to children. A literacy-rich environment usually has comfortable places for children to sit while they engage in activities with the provided materials. A home, classroom, library, store, and numerous other locations can become literacy-rich environments that provide opportunities for children to engage in literacy activities. Often, learning centers or areas are created to provide children with opportunities for literacy learning. At home, learning areas might include playrooms, bedrooms, and pantries, and in classrooms, learning centers might include art centers, reading centers, and music centers.

What kinds of materials would be in a literacy-rich environment?

Reading, print, and writing materials can be found in a literacy-rich environment. Examples of reading materials include books, magazines, flyers, mail, recipes, and coupons. Examples of print materials include calendars, menus, job charts, daily schedules, alphabet toys, labels, and signs. Examples of writing materials include pencils, markers, crayons, sponge shapes, letter stamps, paper, and easels. There might also be electronic materials such as books on tape, DVDs, and computers.

How could you use the same types of materials in different activities or learning centers?

Materials can and should be used across different activities to help children develop their ability to use them across varying contexts. For example, nursery rhyme books could be used for shared book reading and rhyming in bed in the evening and also used in a music learning center to create songs and corresponding rhythms with instruments. Alphabet toys can be played with in the bath tub at home as well as used in a more formal classroom setting to reinforce letter-sound correspondence. Dry erase boards and markers could be used in the kitchen to create "To Do" lists as well as in a reading center to practice writing-like behavior.