

Foundations in Emergent Literacy Instruction

Print Knowledge



The goal of emergent literacy instruction is to teach the building blocks that will, in later grades, provide children the foundation needed to become good readers. Print knowledge is one of the building blocks.

What is Print Knowledge?

Print knowledge includes:

- letter names, ability to recognize and say the names of letters;
- letter sounds, knowing the sound a letter represents; and,
- concepts of print, understanding how print works.

Why is Print Knowledge Important at the Preschool Level?

- Print knowledge is a precursor to skilled reading. Preschool children's print knowledge is linked to later achievement in decoding, spelling, and reading comprehension .
- Print knowledge sets the stage for children to understand the alphabetic principle. The alphabetic principle is connecting written letters with their sounds to read and write.

What are Effective Instructional Practices for Teaching Print Knowledge at the Preschool Level?


Plan to teach all 26 letter names and sounds. Preschool children may not learn them all, but frequent exposure is important. Start with high-frequency letters (such as letters in their names, common signs), focus on a few new letters per week, and spiral back to previously taught letters regularly to build letter knowledge. Teach concepts of print such as parts of a book, reading left to right, different print symbols, and that words (not pictures) convey meaning of written words.

- Be **systematic** by having a plan for what to teach and by building on prior learning; be **explicit** by making learning goals obvious, **scaffold** instruction by providing supports, and **differentiate** by matching instruction with each child's needs.
- Keep explicit instruction short, do it often, connect to knowledge-building themes, and make it playful.


Integrate print knowledge instruction throughout the day using these effective practices:

- **Small-Group Explicit Instruction.** In small groups, teach letter names and letter sounds using an instructional routine such as I Do (teacher explains and models the skill or concept) We Do (teacher provides guided practice with scaffolding) You Do (children engage in independent practice and review).


I DO



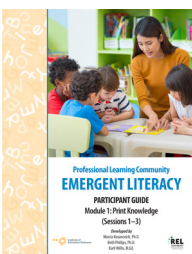
WE DO



YOU DO


- **Reinforce Learning Through Practice and Play.** Plan whole- or small-group activities to reinforce concepts taught during explicit instruction and prior learning. Use the classroom as an instructional tool by incorporating letter shapes, letter manipulatives, and writing materials into learning centers; plan letter-learning games; use daily routines to reinforce concepts; and, take advantage of teachable moments.
- **Use Print Referencing During Read-Alouds.** Focus children's attention on print by explicitly commenting on, asking questions about, pointing to, and tracking text that is being read aloud.

Learn More



This infographic is part of a suite of materials designed to support early education leaders and providers to build understanding and implement evidence-based instruction in early language and literacy in preschool settings called, *Professional Learning*

Community: Emergent Literacy. Explore these materials [here](#).