Environment Rating Scales:
Implementation of Language, Literacy, and Books Practices

Why these practices are important for children's development

Language, communication, and literacy are vital life skills. There is also a correlation between reading and brain development from birth to age five. The more positive experiences infants, toddlers, and preschoolers have with books, language, and literacy, the greater their learning and school success will be.

Key Implementation Practices

- Communicate with children by both encouraging children to communicate with others and responding to their efforts to communicate.
- Expand on what children are saying and ask questions about what they are doing. For example, ask "what" and "how" questions, such as, "What will happen if you add blue to the yellow?" and "How do you know it will turn green?"
- Relate what you are saying to the child's experiences. If you are having applesauce for lunch, you might ask, "How do you think applesauce is made?" For infants and young toddlers, you might say, "This applesauce is made from ripe, juicy apples."
- Help children enjoy language by being playful, singing songs, and having fun with language throughout the day.
- Encourage children's use of books by having many available choices that reflect children's interests and are at their developmental ages. Read to children often, especially books that interest them and that they are choosing during free play and rest times.
- Increase children's vocabulary by reading books with them and relating new words to other words they know. For example, "Yes, that animal is furry like a rabbit. It's called a squirrel, and it lives in trees and likes to eat nuts."
- Speak, read, and write with children in their home languages as often as possible to support their language development.
- Enrich your environment with many types of print: books, displays/posters, names of children, labels with pictures and words, daily schedules with words and pictures, shopping lists, etc.

Additional Resources

- Why read 20 minutes a day? http://readdbq.org/2014/11/19/read-20-minutes-day/
- Meaningful Talk: The Importance of Using Sophisticated Language at Preschool https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/aug2020/meaningful-talk
- Reinforcing Language Skills for our Youngest Readers: https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/reinforcing-language-skills



