

Early Literacy Asides FROM: Saroj Ghoting/www.earlylit.net
The Explain Aside

An effective aside gives a research-based reason for why or how an activity or practice supports an early literacy component or reading skill.

Examples of activities are guessing a rhyming word, clapping out syllables, saying a story's repeated phrase, acting out a story.

The practices are singing, talking, reading, writing and playing.

The early literacy components are phonological awareness, vocabulary, print awareness, letter knowledge, and background knowledge.

The reading skills are decoding (relating letters to sounds and sounding out words) and comprehension (understanding).

[] = optional You may or may not include the names of the components.

Leading with the Early Literacy Component

Phonological Awareness

1. Adults, our early literacy tip of the day today is on hearing the smaller sounds in words [which is called phonological awareness.] Singing, talking, reading, and playing with [choose one: beginning sounds, rhymes, syllables, environmental sounds or animal sounds] are ways to support this pre-reading [or use the term early literacy] skill which will later help your children as they sound out words when they learn to read. I'll point out some of the things we do in storytime to support this skill.

Vocabulary

1. Our early literacy tip of the day today is on vocabulary, which is knowing the meanings of words. Researchers have noted that children who come to school with large vocabularies find it easier to learn to read. Children start to build their vocabulary even from birth. In today's storytime, I'll point out some ways you can expand your child's vocabulary using books.
2. As you sing, talk, read, write and play with your children throughout the day, you can introduce them to new words. The more words they know, the easier it will be for them to understand what they read when they learn to read in school. Today I'll be pointing out some things we are doing here in storytime and some things you can do at home to help your children learn new words in enjoyable ways.

Print Awareness

1. The ways you share books with your children help them to develop the skills to be ready to learn to read. The skill I'll point out in storytime today is print awareness. We want children to understand that print has meaning. Researchers have found that even for four- and five-year olds, 95% per their attention goes to the pictures. We can gently help them focus on the text. I'll point out some ways you can support print awareness with your children.
2. You may already do many things to support your children's print awareness—like writing notes or lists or having your children make cards for friends and relatives. These activities help your children realize that print has meaning. This is a key concept for learning how to read. I'll point out some other activities you can do while reading with your children to support print awareness.

Letter Knowledge

1. [For younger children]: The early literacy skill I'll be highlighting in today's storytime is letter knowledge. Letter knowledge starts with talking about shapes [or with comparing things, like figuring out what's alike and different between two things]. I'll be pointing out some ways you can help your children develop letter knowledge in today's storytime.
2. [For preschool children]: letter knowledge is knowing that the same letter can look different, that letters have names and are related to sounds. I'll be pointing out some ways you can help your children develop letter knowledge in today's storytime.

Background Knowledge

1. The more your children know, the easier it will be for them to understand what they will read. Children are naturally curious. When you talk with them, you can find out what they already know on a topic of interest to them and then build on their curiosity by telling them what you know. Today I'll point out some ways we can encourage their curiosity and add to their knowledge as we share books together.
2. One of the best ways you can help your child become a good reader later is to help them enjoy reading and sharing books together now. For many children learning to read can be difficult. Researchers have noted that children who enjoy books are more likely to stick with learning to read, even if it is difficult. That enjoyment of books starts now; and in today's storytime, I'll be pointing out some ways to make booksharing time interactive and enjoyable.

Leading with the Practice

Talk

Today we are going to look at an important early literacy practice: talking. The ways we talk with our children can help children develop different pre-reading skills. Today in storytime I'll be pointing out ways you can talk with your children by [choices include, but are not limited to these--choose one]:

- encouraging your children to retell stories which will help them understand story structure and how stories work as well as help them understand what they read when they learn to read.
- adding information to what they know which will later help them understand what they read
- explaining words or adding new words to the ones they know to add to their vocabulary which will later help them understand what they read
- pointing out and talking about print which will help them understand that print has meaning, one of the skills they need to learn to read.

Sing

In today's storytime I'll be talking about the importance of singing to language development. Even if you feel you can't sing well, don't let that stop you! Singing slows down language and there is often a different note for each syllable. Both of these help children hear the smaller sounds in words. This will later help them sound out words as they learn to read.

Read

Today we are going to emphasize the most central early literacy practice: reading. When children see you reading, they are more likely to become readers themselves. There are many ways we can share books with children and I'll be pointing out one way you can support different pre-reading skills, such as [choices include but are not limited to these—choose one]:

- building your child's vocabulary which will help your children understand what they read
- pointing out some shapes/letters as you read with your children to help develop their letter knowledge
- adding your children's knowledge which will help them later understand what they will read
- keeping your children involved as you read together which will help them enjoy reading
- pointing out some ways you can help children learn about how print and books work which will make it easier for them to read later

Write

Today I'll be pointing out some ways that the early literacy practice, writing, supports language development. Writing can be anything from drawing and scribbling to writing captions on made-up stories together. A key concept that children need to learn to read is the connection between the spoken word and the written word, knowing that print has meaning and writing activities help them understand this.

Play

Today we are going to look at a fun early literacy practice: play. Play offers many enjoyable opportunities to develop language. The most critical aspect of play as it relates to language development is that children learn to think symbolically. They learn that one thing, like a block, can represent another thing, like a phone. It is this very kind of thinking that is used in language. A picture of an apple or the written word a-p-p-l-e represents the real apple. Play is not just fun, but it is how children learn and understand new concepts and ideas. Today I'll point out some ways you can support language through play.