



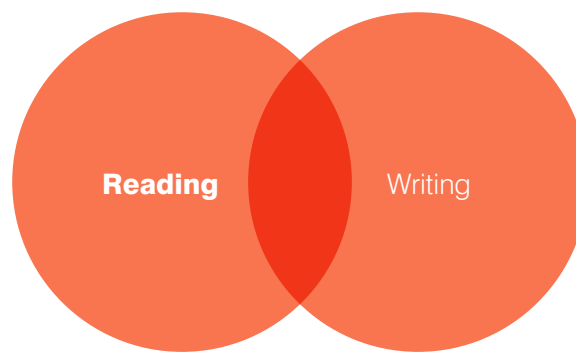
Literacy: Reading

Introduction

Literacy (L) is one of the **four specific areas** of learning in the EYFS framework. It has been separated from the other aspects of Communication and Language (CL) – listening, speaking and understanding – which are all considered to be **prime areas** of learning.

Literacy development involves encouraging children to read and write, both through listening to others reading, observing them writing, and beginning to read and write themselves. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading and writing materials to ignite their interest.

In the EYFS framework, **Literacy** is made up of two aspects:



Prime and specific areas of learning

- The **three prime areas** of the EYFS are Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), Physical Development (PD) AND Communication and Language (CL).
- The **four specific areas** are Literacy (L), Mathematics (M), Understanding the World (UW) and Expressive Arts and Design (EAD).
- The **three prime areas** should be the focus for practitioners working with the youngest children as these form the basis for successful learning and progress in the **four specific areas**.
- As children become older the emphasis will shift towards a more equal focus on **all areas of learning** as children's confidence and abilities increase.

Supporting young children's development in reading

Literacy covers several areas of learning and development which were found within 'Communication, Language and Literacy' in the original EYFS framework; these are now found in Reading and Writing, as well as in aspects of Linking Sounds and Letters and Handwriting.

To help children develop their reading skills, practitioners should make sure they have access to a wide range of reading materials – books, poems, and other written materials – to ignite their interest. They should allow plenty of time for children to browse and share these resources with adults and other children.

Progress in L: Reading

Under 3s

'Practitioners working with the youngest children should focus on the prime areas, but also recognise that the foundations of all areas of learning are laid from birth' – for example literacy, in the very early sharing of books.'
[Tickell Review of the EYFS, 2011]

Early Learning Goal for Reading

'Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.'
[Statement from revised draft EYFS Framework, 2011]

What quality looks like in practice

The three scenarios described below provide a snapshot of practice in a children's centre which provides a wide range of 'drop in' sessions, as well as full daycare for children from six months to five years of age.

Under twos

In the baby room an area is set aside for the practitioners to share stories, rhymes, and books with the children. Black and white pictures and patterns which help support the development of the babies' visual discrimination are displayed at a very low level on the neutral walls. There is a book basket on the carpeted floor area, containing a wide range of cloth and board books showing pictures of familiar people and everyday objects. The adults share these with the children, and encourage them to access the books independently once they are mobile. The practitioners sit on a low, comfortable chair where they can spend time sharing books with individual children and singing rhymes with two or three of the babies.

In order to create links with the children's families and home environments, the babies' key workers have made family books using photographs provided by the children's families and carers. These books are shared with the babies at different times of the day.

In the toddler rooms the easily accessible book boxes contain picture books and simple versions of traditional rhymes and stories. Comfortable cushion seating is available for the children to use when they choose to look at the available books. The practitioners continue to use the family books, as well as other books the setting has made showing photographs of the children engaged in the activities which interest them.

Two- to three-year-olds

The two- to three-year-olds have access to a wider range of picture, story and rhyme books which are freely available for children and staff to access on low shelving. The practitioners show great respect for the books in the room, modelling how to use books for the children to emulate – handling the books carefully, making sure they are stored correctly to avoid folding and tearing, holding the books appropriately, and turning the pages with care while spending time looking at the illustrations which accompany the stories.

Practitioners talk to the children about the books in their room – which ones they like, and don't like, and why. The children talk about books they have at home and often bring them in to share with the other children. The children's centre has a lending library where parents can borrow books to take home to share with their children. This is particularly important for those families who do not own their own books. The centre's library includes books at all levels, which reflect different cultures and customs and are not gender specific. Practitioners and groups of parents take children to visit the local library where they can borrow a large number of books for their setting, allowing them to refresh their book stock on a regular basis.

Four- to five-year-olds

As the children are older the practitioners introduce a wider range of reading materials to develop this aspect of the children's learning and development in literacy. Non-fiction books play a greater role than with the younger children, with books reflecting the children's interests and fascinations.

The environment in the pre-school room contains many examples of environmental print, both indoors and out of doors. All written and visual information is displayed at child height. Resources which are accessible to the children are labelled, both with words and pictures. Rules and boundaries which have been agreed with the children are illustrated – for example, a notice showing how many children are allowed to use the water tray at any time. Information is displayed throughout the centre in different languages which are used by the children and families who attend.

Reading opportunities are maximised in the role play area by the introduction of appropriate signs and notices, recipes and menus for the café, service checklists and car magazines in the garage, or holiday brochures and timetables in the estate agent's shop.

Early phonics work is introduced through games and rhymes which focus on sounds and letters. Children are encouraged to recognise letters and words which are familiar to them, leading to early reading skills in many

children. The alphabet frieze in the pre-school room has been made by the practitioners and the children using images of themselves, their families and friends, or favourite characters, to match the letters of the alphabet. The practitioners make good use of the internet to help the children discover other ways of finding information which they can 'read'. They use other aspects of technology to introduce letter and word recognition, such as mobile phones, computer keyboards, or old typewriters.

The children's families are able to borrow books or story sacks containing books and props to use with their children at home. Each Friday a group of parents meet to produce the props which accompany stories to increase the number of story sacks available.

How to help young children develop their reading skills

Use these reflective questions to think about how you might support young children when developing their reading skills.

Under twos

- Are we sure that all staff have a sound understanding that literacy begins in social relationships, communication and language?
- Do we need to support staff so that they become confident in talking with, and listening to, babies?
- How well do experienced staff model good conversations with young children for others (i.e. less experienced staff and parents) to learn from – such as making eye contact, leaving pauses, and repeating the responses babies and toddlers make?
- Do we provide lots of opportunities for children to recognise, and discriminate between sounds?
- Could we create more attractive, comfortable places for children and adults to share books together?
- How well do practitioners read stories to children to engage their interest in books and stories?
- Could staff increase their repertoire of action and nursery rhymes which they sing with the children?
- Have we considered making family books to act as a link between home and the setting?

Two- to three-year-olds

- Is the book area an interesting place to be for both boys and girls?
- How regularly do we check that all books are in good condition, are stored correctly and address the interests of individual children in the group?
- Do all staff make stories interesting for children, using voices and expressions in different ways, adding drama, excitement or showing different emotions?
- Could we improve our range of picture books which encourage very young children to behave like active readers, working out from the pictures, titles, and maybe words what the story is about and what the characters are like and how they behave?
- How often do we encourage children to share the books which they enjoy 'reading' at home?
- Do we make good use of the local library by taking the children to visit, borrowing books, encouraging parents to join or lending books to parents ourselves?
- Could we improve the way we communicate to parents the message that reading books with children and making sure that they see adults read at home is an essential way to extend their learning and development?
- How could we extend our knowledge of how rhythm, rhyme, and intonation is key to children developing the skills for reading – being able to distinguish between sounds, recognising that sounds have syllables, and knowing that pauses and tone of voice are represented by punctuation?

Four- to five-year-olds

- How carefully do we think about the many different reading opportunities for children there are in both the indoor and outdoor environments of our setting?
- Could we improve the range of books we have available – not only in the reading or book area?
- Do we always ensure that we have a rich variety of good quality fiction and non-fiction books available for the children to use?
- How well do we encourage pre-reading skills and knowledge in a playful way – sound games, rhyming words, alliteration, tongue twisters, using different voices, puppets, and props to go with stories and rhymes?
- Should we make more opportunities to create books with the children to introduce the language of books – title, author, beginning, end, letters and words?
- When we create good quality displays which are of value to the children, do we make sure they are at child height, provide opportunities to hear what children have to say, and include a variety of different styles of print?
- Do we make the most of the opportunities to enhance role play by providing appropriate opportunities to read a range of materials – magazines, comics, brochures, lists, notices and instructions?
- Could we encourage parents to get involved in making the props and puppets to make a lending library of story sacks?

Ideas for parents

Helping your child to develop their reading skills

There are lots of easy ways you can help your child to develop their reading skills. You could use the ideas below as starting points to help you do this.

Under twos

- Spend as much time as possible talking with, and listening to, your baby.
- Have conversations with your child, making eye contact and leaving pauses for your child to reply using baby babble or simple words.
- Introduce your baby to cloth and board books, moving on to picture books and as he grows older.
- Join the local library and take your child to borrow books as often as you can.
- Make yourselves comfortable and be prepared to spend time when you read books to your baby or toddler, especially at nap and bed time.
- Play games with your child where you listen to different sounds, either indoors or when you are out for a walk.
- Sing lots of action songs and nursery rhymes which your child.
- Try making a simple book about your family using photographs and share it with your child.

Two- to three-year-olds

- Buy or borrow books which will interest your child – they may not always be the ones you would choose!
- Help your child to understand how to look after books. If possible have a book shelf or book box for your child.
- Have fun when you read stories to make them interesting for your child, using different voices or being sad, happy or scary.
- When you are sharing a book with your child, talk to them about how books work – help them to use the pictures, titles, and maybe simple words to see what the story is about.
- Make sure that your child sees adults reading at home to show how important reading is.
- When you are unpacking the shopping ask your child what they think is in the tin or packet. You could let them help you select the right things from the shelves in the shop.
- Find out if your local library or early years setting holds story telling sessions for you to attend.
- When you go out for a walk, point out signs and notices and tell your child what they say.

Four- to five-year-olds

- When you are at home or out and about with your child, make the most of any opportunities to read notices, signs or instructions together.
- Introduce your child to a whole range of different books and things to read, including stories and factual books, magazines and comics.
- Encourage your child to 'read' well know stories to you and make sure you listen attentively.
- Play alongside your child with a farm or dolls' house, telling stories about the characters together.
- When you are in the kitchen or busy with DIY, show your child how you rely on recipes and instructions.
- You can help your child develop early reading skills by playing games such as I-Spy and saying rhymes and tongue twisters that use different sounds.
- Make cards and invitations for important family events and encourage your child to read the information back to you.
- Show your child how you read information in letters, emails and text messages in your daily life.
- Help your child to find information on the internet when they are particularly interested in something.