

## Rhode Island Early Learning Standards



### Strategies that Support Children in the Area of Literacy

#### Early Writing

- As you write with children, draw their attention to symbols, such as periods and question marks. "I better put a period here so others will know to stop when they are reading it." <sup>1</sup>
- Encourage children to record their thoughts in pictures or writing in their personal journals.<sup>2</sup>
- Ask children to sign-in each morning. The most meaningful word to any young child is his or her name. They are naturally motivated to see their name in print and spell their name when they are ready.<sup>3</sup>
- Display the alphabet at eye level and functional print, such as children's names, next to the classroom jobs for the week. Children can begin to recognize the letters in their own names and those of their friends, as well as other important words.<sup>4</sup>
- Ask children to include print in their drawings like the authors in storybooks.<sup>5</sup>
- Display their writing attempts as proudly as you do their pictures. Keep in mind children learn about print by using it. They need encouragement: "You wrote me such an interesting note!"<sup>6</sup>
- Set up play centers that incorporate reading and writing materials. For example, the housekeeping area can include empty food boxes and

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<sup>1</sup> Diane Trister Dodge, Laura Colker & Cate Heroman. *Creative Curriculum for Preschooler*. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, 2002. 176.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Bureau. *The Head Start Leader's Guide to Positive Child Outcomes: Strategies to Support Positive Child Outcomes*. (Washington, D.C September 2003), 54.

<sup>3</sup> *The Head Start Leader's Guide*, 54.

<sup>4</sup> *The Head Start Leader's Guide*, 54.

<sup>5</sup> *The Head Start Leader's Guide*, 54.

<sup>6</sup> *The Head Start Leader's Guide*, 54.

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cans with labels, store coupons, play money, cookbooks, a telephone directory, message pads, and pencils.<sup>7</sup>

- Provide manipulatives in all areas of the classroom to develop children's manual dexterity and eye-hand coordination.<sup>8</sup>

### Early Reading

#### Phonemic and Phonological Awareness

- Engage children in daily experiences that promote phonological awareness. These include but are not limited to: playing rhyming games, singing songs, and chanting nursery rhymes; learning fingerplays; or reading and memorizing poems.<sup>9</sup>
- Put phonological awareness games, activities, and rhyming books in learning centers around the room. Make phonological awareness part of the everyday classroom environment.<sup>10</sup>
- Use phonological awareness activities during transitions and routines. For example, sing the Name Game or say, "Everyone whose name starts with the sound of 'ssss,' get your coat," being sure to emphasize the sound, not the letter name.<sup>11</sup>
- Play games that encourage children to segment the sounds in words. For example, "I'm going to say some words, and I want you to say back just the first little part. Can you say the beginning of shoe?"<sup>12</sup>

#### Book Knowledge and Appreciation

- Read one-on-one to children on laps or snuggled close by in small groups of three to six where children can see and touch the book and develop positive feelings about reading.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ann S. Epstein, *The Intentional Teacher: Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children's Learning* (Washington: NAEYC, 2007) 33.

<sup>8</sup> *The Intentional Teacher*, 37.

<sup>9</sup> *The Head Start Leader's Guide*, 47.

<sup>10</sup> *The Head Start Leader's Guide*, 47.

<sup>11</sup> *The Head Start Leader's Guide*, 47.

<sup>12</sup> *The Intentional Teacher*, 29.

<sup>13</sup> *The Head Start Leader's Guide*, 50.

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- Read to children in small groups, to best support children’s active participation, vocabulary development, and comprehension.<sup>14</sup>
- Read the same book over and over if children request it.<sup>15</sup>
- Actively engage children in reading time—asking questions about the book before reading it (such as where is the cover or title), posing questions that call on them to predict what will happen, noticing cause-effect relationships, chanting with rhyme and patterns.<sup>16</sup>
- Assist children in seeking information in books or using books as resources to help solve problems (“What does the space shuttle really look like so we can build it with blocks?”).<sup>17</sup>
- Encourage your children to join in while you read. Pause to let them fill in a rhyming word or repeating line: “I’ll huff and I’ll puff . . .”<sup>18</sup>
- Ask open-ended questions, such as “What do you think is going to happen next?” or “Why do you think he did that?”<sup>19</sup>

### Print awareness and concepts

- Take children’s dictation, and focus on the sounds in the child’s words rather than the names of letters, saying the sounds in an elongated manner as you write.<sup>20</sup>
- Use children’s attempts at writing to engage them in trying to sound out words and help draw their attention to words they know that begin with the same sound. “How do you spell Mom? Sounds like it starts like Marishka’s name.”<sup>21</sup>

### Alphabet Knowledge

- Use well-written alphabet books that clearly illustrate the sounds of the letters with pictures of objects.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 50.

<sup>15</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 50.

<sup>16</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 50.

<sup>17</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 50.

<sup>18</sup> Reading is Fundamental [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org)

<sup>19</sup> Reading is Fundamental [www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org)

<sup>20</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 52.

<sup>21</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 48.

<sup>22</sup> *The Head Start Leader’s Guide*, 57.

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- Use reading aloud and shared reading to reinforce letter-name knowledge, inviting children to say what letter a new word starts with or having them find the word that starts with S.<sup>23</sup>
- Provide daily opportunities for children to write, which supports their growing interest in and desire to learn the letters. As children write, teachers give them specific help when requested in identifying or forming letters.<sup>24</sup>
- Expose all children to various ways an alphabet can appear in other languages.<sup>25</sup>
- Provide multi-sensory experiences such as writing letters in sand or shaving cream; shaping letters out of play dough or pipe cleaners.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *The Head Start Leader's Guide, 57.*

<sup>24</sup> *The Head Start Leader's Guide, 57.*

<sup>25</sup> *The Head Start Leader's Guide, 57.*

<sup>26</sup> *The Head Start Leader's Guide, 57.*