



Facilitator’s Guide

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- Stream from http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators_pd/**
- “Building a Community of Readers and Writers” (Overview)
 - “Teach through Books and Conversation”
 - “Create Opportunities to Build on Reading”
 - “Integrate Reading and Writing Throughout the Day”

Introduction

This professional development training module is designed to help you lead educators in using best practices to build an active and vibrant community of readers and writers. It is one of several modules developed for early childhood educators by the Department of Early Education and Care of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

This training meets the guidelines for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) as outlined by the Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children (MassAEYC).

For more information about this professional development training module, visit http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators_pd/.

About this Guide

This Facilitator's Guide provides instructions and narrative for delivering a video-based training for early childhood educators. You'll find an agenda, learning goals, preparation suggestions, talking points, activities, and handouts. You'll also find general tips and resources to help you facilitate the training. Use these materials with the accompanying videos to lead family child care and center- and school-based educators in an engaging, content-rich training.

Note: To access the videos referenced in this guide, go to http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators_pd/. Select "Building a Community of Readers and Writers." Be sure you have access to the videos prior to and while leading this training.

Learning Goals

After participating in this training, educators will be able to:

- Summarize the best practices for supporting young children's development of reading and writing skills.
- Demonstrate how to use books, other print materials, and conversation to teach reading and writing skills.
- Plan how to create opportunities for children to build on knowledge gained from reading across the curriculum.
- Identify how to integrate reading and writing in different ways throughout the learning day.
- Apply new knowledge to current practices.

Agenda

Introduction	15 minutes
Building a Community of Readers and Writers (overview)	5 minutes
Teach Through Books and Conversation	15–20 minutes
Create Opportunities to Build on Reading	15–20 minutes
BREAK (optional)	5–10 minutes
Integrate Reading and Writing Throughout the Day	15–20 minutes
Try It	15–20 minutes
Wrap Up	5–10 minutes
Total Time	90–120 minutes

Preparation

Before leading this training, you should:

- Watch the videos and get to know the best practices.
- Read through the training module. Become familiar with the talking points so that you can share them in a natural, conversational way.
- Obtain and test the technology you need to share the videos with participants and make sure you have a reliable Internet connection during the training.
- Gather any props or materials needed for the Try It activity.
- Rehearse and fine-tune your presentation to “make it your own.” Time yourself to make sure you are within the allotted time.
- Create a handout packet with copies of the following for each participant:
 - Self-Assessment
 - Learning Log
 - Try It
 - Best Practices
 - Standards
 - Training Evaluation
- Consider working with a partner the first time you lead this training. You can learn from and support each other when preparing, practicing, and facilitating. After the training, you can reflect on participants' evaluations together.

Facilitation Tips

Whether you're a new or experienced facilitator, these tips can help your training run smoothly.

- Arrive early to prepare the training room for optimal learning.
 - Place handout packets where participants check in.
 - Have pens or pencils and paper on every table.
 - Check your technology setup to make sure the videos play without problems.
- Create a space that is inviting and comfortable.
 - Play soft music as people arrive.
 - Greet participants with a smile and a handshake. A personal introduction helps set the stage for collaboration and learning.
- Invite partner or small group discussion.
 - Before the training begins, invite educators to identify a partner. People learn best when they have a chance to talk about what they are learning or thinking.
 - Allow a few minutes for partners to introduce themselves to each other.
 - During the training, provide opportunities for partner interaction.
- Keep participants engaged.
 - Follow the “ten-two rule” as you present the training: Speak for no longer than ten minutes at a time and then provide participants at least two minutes of interaction or activity.
 - Avoid simply reading the talking points that have been provided. Become familiar with each point so that you can keep the training engaging, fluid, and conversational.

Icebreaker Ideas

When working with a group of educators who may or may not know each other, it's a good idea to provide a few moments to “break the ice.” This allows people to relax, laugh, move, and get to know each other (and you!). Below are just a few ideas you can use to begin a training session.

That's Me!

Read a statement aloud to the group. Ask participants to stand up, raise a hand in the air, and shout *That's me!* if the statement applies to them. It's fun to see which statements apply to all participants and which do not apply to any. Statements might include:

- *I teach at a family child care.*
- *I have worked with children for five years or more.*
- *I was born in Massachusetts.*
- *I write down the funny things that kids say.*
- *I laugh out loud at least once a day.*
- *I check Pinterest at least once a week.*
- *I have no idea what Pinterest is.*
- *I believe that there is no problem that good chocolate can't solve.*

You can come up with your own statements or invite a few participants to come up with statements. When they say their statement aloud, others (including you) can reply, *That's me!*

Weave a Web

Holding onto a ball of yarn, share your name and an interesting fact about yourself with participants. Keep the end piece as you toss the ball of yarn to a participant. Ask the participant to share his or her name and a personal fact, and hold onto the yarn as they toss the ball to another participant. Continue until everyone has had a turn and the “web” is complete.

Two Truths and a Lie

Ask participants to jot down two truths and one lie about themselves or their work with children. For example:

- *I speak Japanese.*
- *I am related to Davy Crockett.*
- *I have three sets of twins in my program this year.*

Form participants into small groups of three or four people. Have each person in the group read their statements aloud and ask the rest of the group to guess which statement is not true.

Four Corners

Post a word from a set of four related words in each corner of the room, such as:

- *lion, bear, eagle, deer*
- *desert, beach, mountain, city*
- *sushi, salad, enchilada, pizza*
- *hybrid, convertible, truck, Mustang*

Ask participants, *Are you a hybrid, convertible, truck or Mustang?* Direct participants to move to the corner of the room with which they most identify. Ask participants, now in small groups in their corners, to share with one another why they chose that corner and how it represents their interests, so that they can discover common attributes they may share. Have each small group pick one person to share the group’s common attributes with the larger group. Repeat the process with another set of four words as many times as you like.

People Bingo

Photocopy and distribute the “bingo card” below. Invite participants to find people who match a fact listed on the card and have them sign off on that fact. Each person can sign off on only one fact. Explain that when a participant has obtained five signatures in a row (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally), he or she should shout *Bingo!* and introduce the people who signed his or her card to the rest of the group.

People Bingo				
Has traveled outside the U.S.	Likes pineapple on pizza	Has lived in MA for more than 10 years	Knows how to juggle	Has never been on a plane
Can speak a foreign language	Has 3 or more brothers	Likes to camp	Has been scuba diving	Reads the Sunday paper
Likes to scrapbook	Has a summer birthday	FREE SPACE	Likes to garden	Can say the alphabet backwards
Likes math	Does crossword puzzles	Owens a cat	Has been to Alaska	Likes to run
Likes thunderstorms	Has watched a meteor shower	Is afraid of snakes	Knows how to sew	Can play basketball

Training

Introduction

(15 minutes)

Welcome Participants to the Training

- Introduce yourself and share your background and experience.
- Announce the length of the training (1½–2 hours) and note other logistics, such as break times, restroom location, and so on.
- Review the agenda and explain the structure of the training.
 - Participants will watch an overview video and then three short videos that explore best practices in creating a learning environment.
 - After each video, participants will briefly discuss the main points and reflect on what they have learned.
 - Participants will also have the opportunity to share and reflect on their own practices.
- Share the learning goals and objectives. Participants will:
 - Examine best practices in supporting young children's development of reading and writing skills.
 - Explore how to use books, other print materials, and conversation to teach reading and writing skills.
 - Discover how to create opportunities for children to build on knowledge gained from reading across the curriculum.
 - Identify how to integrate reading and writing in different ways throughout the learning day.
 - Apply new knowledge to current practices.
- Introduce the Learning Log.
 - The Learning Log includes questions to help participants identify best practices and distill the important points made in each video. The *viewing questions* reinforce ideas from the videos. The *reflection questions* help educators draw connections to their own experiences.
 - The Learning Log can also be used to jot down notes, questions, and ideas.

- Consider doing an icebreaker activity to get participants “warmed up” and ready to learn and interact. (See Icebreaker Ideas for suggestions.)
- Ask each participant to identify a partner to work with during the training and encourage them to share ideas. (You can offer small group discussions if you prefer.)

Complete the Self-Assessment

Educators grow and hone their skills by continually identifying their own strengths and training needs and reflecting on their own practices.

- Invite participants to complete the first half of the Self-Assessment to help them discover the skills they already possess and to identify those they would like to work on.
- Explain that toward the end of the training, participants will complete the second half of the Self-Assessment to measure their growth and learning.

Building a Community of Readers and Writers (5 minutes)

Introduce the Topic

Reading and writing are lifelong skills, necessary for success in school and beyond. Through reading and writing we learn about the world, connect with others, and contribute opinions and ideas. Adults play an important role in developing children’s skills in reading and writing and ultimately, in fostering their contributions to society. Educators can best develop these skills in young children by teaching through books and conversation, creating opportunities for children to build on what they have read by making connections across the curriculum, and integrating reading and writing into daily activities and routines.

Introduce and View the Video

Introduce the overview video featuring Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Associate Professor of Education at Wheelock College. Use this brief video to set the stage for a discussion of best practices in building a community of readers and writers.



“Building a Community of Readers and Writers” (approx. 2 min)

Teach Through Books and Conversation

(15–20 minutes)

Introduce the Best Practice

As Professor Villegas-Reimers says, learning how to read and write is key to our society. But children do not become literate automatically, they must be taught. Early childhood educators can teach children about the world and help them develop the skills they need for a solid foundation in reading and writing by engaging them with print and conversation. When adults open the world of print to children, it strengthens language skills, promotes important vocabulary growth, develops comprehension, and teaches print awareness.

- **Teach with books** that entertain, amuse, inform, and challenge young readers with new ideas, interesting vocabulary, or a new twist on an old idea.
- **Use books to expand children's understanding** of the world and topics that already interest them, as well as to introduce them to topics they are not yet familiar with.
- **Prompt children to be active readers** by asking them to contribute ideas, comments, and questions; learn new vocabulary; and demonstrate comprehension. Engage children with questions and model active reading before, during, and after reading.
- **Encourage conversation** that elicits what children know or want to find out.
- **Offer the space and the opportunity for children to read alone** or with others. Provide a quiet, comfortable space for readers to take time out to explore and enjoy a book on their own or with peers.

Introduce and View the Video

Tell participants they will watch a video to see some examples of how educators engage children through books and conversations.

Ask participants to look for effective strategies used by the educators in the video. Use these questions to guide their viewing:

- *How do the educators use books as teaching tools?*
- *How do the educators keep children engaged while reading?*



"Teach Through Books and Conversation"

(approx. 2 min)

Partner/Small Group Share

After viewing the video, get participants thinking, talking, and learning together.

- Invite participants to share with each other, in pairs or small groups, what they noticed as they watched. Challenge them to use the language stem *I noticed...* rather than *I liked...*
- Suggest that participants jot down notes, ideas, or questions in their Learning Log.

Review

Share and expand on key points covered in the video. Use the following questions and talking points in your discussion. Ask participants to offer examples from the video as well as to draw upon their own experiences.

How do books help facilitate children's development as readers and writers?

- Through books, children can:
 - Develop print awareness.
 - Be exposed to new vocabulary.
 - Engage in conversation.
 - Be introduced to new ideas.
 - Make predictions.

How can educators facilitate conversation around books?

- Ask questions that prompt critical thinking before, during, and after reading to model active reading:
 - Find out what children already know. (*Where do we see water? What fruit or vegetable has seeds? What kind of flower is this?*)
 - Prompt children to share their own experiences. (*What do you wear on a snowy day?*)
 - Encourage children to tell something they want to find out. (*What would you like to know about how things grow?*)
 - Check comprehension. (*Why were Peter's socks wet?*)
 - Ask children to make predictions. (*What do you think will happen next?*)
 - Confirm children's predictions. (*Were we right? Did the snowman melt?*)
 - Help children understand new vocabulary. (*What does gigantic mean?*)
 - Form opinions. (*Did you like the giant? Why or why not?*)

- Connect learning to a new idea. (*Plants need food, water, and sunlight to grow. What do people need?*)
- Encourage children to read and discuss books with a friend or group of friends.

How can reading expand children's interests and broaden their understanding of curriculum-related topics?

- Children can read about:
 - Things they already know about or are already interested in
 - Places and events outside of their own experiences (e.g., dinosaurs, skyscrapers, rain forests, etc.)
 - Curriculum-related topics (e.g., plants, water, transportation)

How can the conversations before, during, and after reading help educators make the reading experience richer and deeper?

- Build on interests to expand the reading experience. Educators should notice when children are intrigued or excited by experiences they have or things they read, and provide more books about those topics.

View Again (optional)

Emphasize the key messages by showing the video a second time, if possible. Seeing the video again will give participants an opportunity to notice things they may have missed and to expand their learning.

Reflect

Help participants make the connection between what they have learned and what they do in their own programs. Ask them to answer the *reflection questions* in the Learning Log.

Create Opportunities to Build on Reading

(15–20 minutes)

Introduce the Best Practice

When children use the knowledge they have gained from reading or talking with others, they are more likely to understand and remember what they have learned. Educators can create opportunities across the curriculum for children to apply and build on what they've learned from books and conversations.

- **Select books with intention.** Choose books that reinforce key ideas in the curriculum, deepen children's understandings, or act as a springboard for curriculum-related activities throughout the day.

- **Utilize learning centers to extend and broaden the book experience.** Give children hands-on experiences and reinforce what they have learned through reading. For example, a book about seeds can be followed by a planting activity or an Art Center activity in which children draw representations of seeds or make seed art; a book about a famous artist or musician could be followed by an activity in which children listen to music.
- **Use writing to support reading.** When children write about (or dictate) what they’ve read, they make a personal connection to the content. For example, ask children to write about or draw a favorite book character, or to write about what happens next in the story.
- **Ask children to make reading choices.** When children make choices during reading, their decision-making abilities are reinforced. Ask children to choose the book they would like to read later that day. While reading a book about the desert, ask children whether they would like to live near the desert or the seashore and have them explain their answer.

Introduce and View the Video

Tell participants that in this video, they will see educators tie books to their weekly learning themes in different ways.

Ask participants to look for effective strategies used by the educators in the video. Use these questions to guide their viewing:

- *How do the educators carry the theme of a book across the curriculum?*
- *How is writing is used to support reading?*



“Create Opportunities to Build on Reading” (approx. 4 min)

Partner/Small Group Share

After viewing the video, get participants thinking, talking, and learning together.

- Invite participants to share with each other, in pairs or small groups, what they noticed as they watched. Challenge them to use the language stem *I noticed...* rather than *I liked....*
- Suggest that participants jot down notes, ideas, or questions in their Learning Log.

Review

Share and expand on key points covered in the video. Use the following questions and talking points in your discussion. Ask participants to offer examples from the video as well as to draw upon their own experiences.

How can educators create opportunities for children to use the knowledge they have learned from reading?

- Share books that reinforce key ideas in the curriculum, deepen children's knowledge and understanding, or can be a springboard for curriculum-related activities throughout the day.
- Use learning centers to extend and broaden the book experience. Offer activities across the curriculum that connect to themes in the book to give children hands-on experiences and reinforce what they have just learned through reading. For example, a book about water can be followed by ice painting, water table activities, or outdoor exploration of puddles or snow. A book about seeds can be followed by a planting activity.
- Create centers that reinforce vocabulary and concepts in books. Use labels, signs, and other environmental print.
- Have children write about what they have read. Writing reinforces reading. It encourages the reader to think about and react to the subject. Writing in response to reading can expand a child's understanding of the themes and ideas in the book.
- Offer decision-making opportunities after reading a book that further connects the reader with the subject. By deciding, for example, that they like snowy days better than rainy days, children place themselves in the experience.

How can educators use writing to support reading?

- Include writing in all areas of the learning environment. For example, children can make lists, wear name tags, write weather reports, compose notes to classmates, record things they see on a walk or field trip, describe a favorite activity, or write thank-you notes.
- Use activities to make vital connections between reading and writing. For example, children can:
 - Trace letters using sensory materials such as sandpaper, shaving cream, or finger paint.
 - Use a variety of media for writing, such as dry-erase boards, chalkboards, paints, magnetic boards, alphabet letters, crayons, or blank books.
 - Draw pictures or create artwork to respond to a story.
 - Use computer programs and age-appropriate software to help them write or draw stories of their own.
 - Record stories or words to be read aloud to the group.
 - Group-write a new ending to a familiar story.

View Again (optional)

Emphasize the key messages by showing the video a second time, if possible. Seeing the video again will give participants an opportunity to notice things they may have missed and to expand their learning.

Reflect

Help participants make the connection between what they have learned and what they do in their own programs. Ask them to answer the *reflection questions* in the Learning Log.

Break (optional)**(5–10 minutes)****Integrate Reading and Writing Throughout the Day****(15–20 minutes)****Introduce the Best Practice**

When developing children's reading and writing skills, educators can design their environment and curriculum to include constant interaction with print and print materials. Whether through formal or informal lessons, reading and writing should be integrated throughout every day.

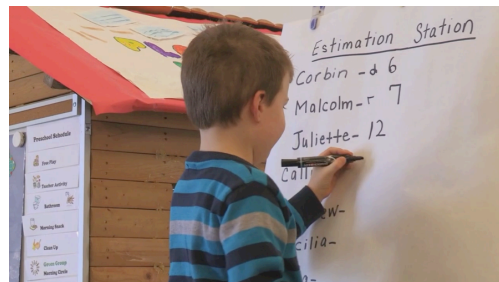
- **Flood the environment with print.** Wherever they look, children should see print and be prompted to connect words to things, people, and actions (e.g., labels, name tags and signs).
- **Utilize learning centers** to engage children with reading and writing across the curriculum. (e.g., prompt children to use their knowledge of environmental print by creating a "Post Office" or a "Restaurant" in the Pretend and Play Center).
- **Incorporate reading and writing into daily routines**, such as calendar activities and assigning daily responsibilities to children using name cards).
- **Make the ABC Center a regular routine.** In the center, children can learn letter recognition, alphabetical order, letter matching, and eventually, initial letter-sound correspondences.
- **Incorporate a "Question of the Day."** This practice empowers children to consider an idea, express an opinion, and record their thoughts. For example, *Would you rather eat broccoli or peas? Why? Or, How many fruits and vegetables can you name that have seeds in them?*

Introduce and View the Video

Tell participants that in this video, they will see educators integrate reading and writing into almost all activities of the day.

Ask participants to look for effective strategies used by the educators in the video. Use these questions to guide their viewing:

- *How do the educators incorporate reading and writing throughout the day?*
- *What is the role of learning centers and daily routines in creating opportunities for reading and writing?*



"Reading and Writing Throughout the Day" (approx. 3 min)

Partner/Small Group Share

After viewing the video, get participants thinking, talking, and learning together.

- Invite participants to share with each other, in pairs or small groups, what they noticed as they watched. Challenge them to use the language stem *I noticed...* rather than *I liked....*
- Suggest that participants jot down notes, ideas, or questions in their Learning Log.

Review

Share and expand on key points covered in the video. Use the following questions and talking points in your discussion. Ask participants to offer examples from the video as well as to draw upon their own experiences.

How can reading and writing be integrated throughout the day, every day?

- Flood the environment with print. A literacy-rich environment invites constant interaction with print and print materials. Wherever they look, children should see print.
 - Use name tags whenever possible. They are a powerful tool to teach letter recognition, beginning sounds, and the important idea that print carries meaning.
 - Have printed material, such as books, magazines, and signs easily accessible and at eye level.
 - Name objects and areas in the learning environment (e.g., smocks, puzzles, quiet area, clocks, etc.).
 - Describe instructions or directions. (e.g., “Wash Your Hands” and “Line Up Here”).
 - Categorize items with labels in bins, on shelves, and so forth (e.g., “Books About Dogs,” “Extra Mittens,” and “Lost and Found”).

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- Hang signs in play areas (e.g., “Doctor’s Office,” “Post Office,” “Restaurant,” and “Movie Theater”).
- Plan materials and activities at learning centers to include reading and writing. For example, have children:
 - Write numbers at the Science and Math Center (such as estimations).
 - Draw a picture and write or dictate a caption in response to a story at the Writing Center.
 - Record what happens on each day after planting grass seed at the Science and Math Center.
 - Write the name and author of a book they like at the Library Center.
- Integrate reading and writing into daily routines. For example, children can:
 - Dictate and write a message of the day during meeting time.
 - Interact with words and numbers during calendar routines.
 - Sign in each day on chart paper.
 - Read the posted classroom rules.
- Make the ABC Center a daily routine. Tasks can include having children write their names, match upper- and lowercase letters, or put letters in alphabetical order.
- Incorporate a “Question of the Day.” Use a question to encourage children to consider an idea, express an opinion, and record their thoughts. *How many fruits and vegetables can you name that have seeds in them? Which is cuter—a puppy or a kitten? Why?*
- Work with names and name tags. You can assign daily responsibilities to each student using name tags and help children sound out, write, and spell their own names.
- Play letter games such as a memory game where children have to match the same letters, or a lower-case letter with its upper-case format.

View Again (optional)

Emphasize the key messages by showing the video a second time, if possible. Seeing the video again will give participants an opportunity to notice things they may have missed and to expand their learning.

Reflect

Help participants make the connection between what they have learned and what they do in their own program. Ask them to answer the reflection questions in the Learning Log.

Try It

(15–20 minutes)

The Try It activity helps educators plan how to apply new ideas to their own early childhood program. Ask participants to work with a partner and direct their attention to the Try It handout in their packets.

The Reading Connection

- Provide each pair with a read-aloud book.
- Have partners read aloud the book together and think about how they will use what they have learned to support children's development as readers and writers.
- Ask partners to list five or six questions to ask children before, during, and after reading—to find out what children already know, check their comprehension, and demonstrate what they have learned.
- Then, have partners list key vocabulary they will define or ask children to define.
- Next, have pairs think of ways to incorporate related reading and writing activities throughout the day—into learning centers, daily routines, and environmental print.
- Finally, ask pairs to think about how they will encourage children to read on their own, with a buddy, or with a group of friends.

Wrap Up

(5–10 minutes)

- Invite participants to complete the second half of the “Self-Assessment” and then measure their growth and learning.
- Ask participants to look over their notes from the training and jot down three things that they want to remember from today in their Learning Log.
- Invite partners or small groups to meet and share their three “keepers.” Then ask a few participants to share their “keepers” with the larger group.
- Thank participants for attending.
- Encourage them to fill out and return the Training Evaluation.

Glossary

active reading: strategies readers need to help them understand the text and remain engaged

environmental print: print found in the everyday world, such as store and traffic signs, logos, menus, calendars, price tags, and so on

print awareness: the understanding that print is organized in a particular way (e.g., it is made up of letters, words, and spaces between words; it is read from left to right, and top to bottom; it carries a message)



Self-Assessment

Name: _____

Date: _____

Before the training: Place a ✓ in the box that best represents your current comfort level.

After the training: Place a ✓ in the box that best represents your new comfort level.

1 = Very uncomfortable 2 = Uncomfortable 3 = Neutral 4 = Comfortable 5 = Very comfortable

	Before					After				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
General										
I am comfortable with my ability to . . .										
Engage children in active reading and writing activities (e.g., children listening together, responding aloud, and sharing their ideas and opinions).										
Create a literacy-rich learning environment that nourishes a love of reading and writing.										
Teach Through Books and Conversation										
I am comfortable with my ability to . . .										
Share books with children around a theme, curriculum focus, or topic.										
Ask questions that engage children as active readers before, during, and after read alouds.										
Provide time, place, and opportunities for children to explore books on their own or with peers.										
Create Opportunities to Build on Reading										
I am comfortable with my ability to . . .										
Create and use learning centers and to connect to themes in books.										
Use writing to support reading.										
Offer decision-making choices so children can use the knowledge they have gained.										
Integrate Reading and Writing Throughout the Day										
I am comfortable with my ability to . . .										
Find ways to incorporate reading and writing at learning centers.										
Find ways to incorporate reading and writing in daily routines and activities.										
Provide play settings that prompt children to use environmental print.										
Provide alphabet/letter work that encourages children to learn letter recognition.										



Learning Log

Teach Through Books and Conversation

View

In the video:

- *How do the educators use books as teaching tools?*

- *How do the educators keep children engaged while reading?*

Reflect

In your program:

- *How do you develop children's reading and writing skills?*

- *What did you learn that you will put into practice in your own learning environment?*

Notes

Create Opportunities to Build on Reading

View

In the video:

- *How do the educators carry the theme of a book across the curriculum?*

- *How is writing used to support reading?*

Reflect

In your program:

- *What strategies do you use to encourage children to use what they have learned from books and conversation?*

- *What did you learn that you will put into practice in your own learning environment?*

Notes

Integrate Reading and Writing Throughout the Day

View

In the video:

- *How do the educators incorporate reading and writing throughout the day?*

- *What is the role of learning centers and daily routines in creating opportunities for reading and writing?*

Reflect

In your program:

- *What strategies do you use to integrate reading and writing throughout the day?*

- *What did you learn that you will put into practice in your own learning environment?*

Notes



Try It

The Reading Connection

Design reading and writing activities based on a read-aloud book.

Read a short read-aloud book.

1. What questions will you ask children before, during, and after reading to keep them engaged and active? List five or six questions.

2. What vocabulary will you define or ask children to define?

3. How will you incorporate related reading and writing activities throughout the day—into learning centers, daily routines, and environmental print?

4. How will you encourage children to read on their own or with a buddy?



Best Practices

Reading and writing are lifelong skills, necessary for success in school and beyond. Through reading and writing we learn about the world, connect with others, and contribute opinions and ideas. Adults play an important role in developing children's skills in reading and writing and ultimately, in fostering their contributions to society. Educators can best develop these skills in young children by teaching through books and conversation, creating opportunities for children to build on what they have read by making connections across the curriculum, and integrating reading and writing into daily activities and routines.

Teach Through Books and Conversation

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- **Prompt children to be active readers** by asking them to contribute ideas, comments, and questions; learn new vocabulary; and demonstrate comprehension. Engage children with questions and model active reading before, during, and after reading.
- **Encourage conversation** that elicits what children know or want to find out.
- **Offer the space and the opportunity for children to read alone** or with others. Provide a quiet, comfortable space for readers to take time out to explore and enjoy a book on their own or with peers.

How do books help facilitate children's development as readers and writers?

- Through books, children can:
 - Develop print awareness.
 - Be exposed to new vocabulary.

Best Practices (CONTINUED)

- Engage in conversation.
- Be introduced to new ideas.
- Make predictions.

How can educators facilitate conversation around books?

- Ask questions that prompt critical thinking before, during, and after reading to model active reading:
 - Find out what children already know. (*Where do we see water? What fruit or vegetable has seeds? What kind of flower is this?*)
 - Prompt children to share their own experiences. (*What do you wear on a snowy day?*)
 - Encourage children to tell something they want to find out. (*What would you like to know about how things grow?*)
 - Check comprehension. (*Why were Peter's socks wet?*)
 - Ask children to make predictions. (*What do you think will happen next?*)
 - Confirm children's predictions. (*Were we right? Did the snowman melt?*)
 - Help children understand new vocabulary. (*What does gigantic mean?*)
 - Form opinions. (*Did you like the giant? Why or why not?*)
 - Connect learning to a new idea. (*Plants need food, water, and sunlight to grow. What do people need?*)
- Encourage children to read and discuss books with a friend or group of friends.

How can reading expand children's interests and broaden their understanding of curriculum-related topics?

- Children can read about:
 - Things they already know about or are already interested in.
 - Places and events outside of their own experiences (e.g., dinosaurs, skyscrapers, rain forests, etc.)
 - Curriculum-related topics (e.g., plants, water, transportation)

How can the conversations before, during, and after reading help educators make the reading experience richer and deeper?

- Build on interests to expand the reading experience. Educators should notice when children are intrigued or excited by experiences they have or things they read, and provide more books about those topics.

Create Opportunities to Build on Reading

When children use the knowledge they have gained from reading or talking with others, they are more likely to understand and remember what they have learned. Educators can create opportunities across the curriculum for children to apply and build on what they've learned from books and conversations.

- **Select books with intention.** Choose books that reinforce key ideas in the curriculum, deepen children's understandings, or act as a springboard for curriculum-related activities throughout the day.
- **Utilize learning centers to extend and broaden the book experience.** Give children hands-on experiences and reinforce what they have learned through reading. For example, a book about seeds can be followed by a planting activity or an Art Center activity in which children draw representations of seeds or make seed art; a book about a famous artist or musician could be followed by an activity in which children listen to music.
- **Use writing to support reading.** When children write about (or dictate) what they've read, they make a personal connection to the content. For example, ask children to write about or draw a favorite book character, or to write about what happens next in the story.
- **Ask children to make reading choices.** When children make choices during reading, their decision-making abilities are reinforced. Ask children to choose the book they would like to read later that day. While reading a book about the desert, ask children whether they would like to live near the desert or the seashore and have them explain their answer.

How can educators create opportunities for children to use the knowledge they have learned from reading?

- Share books that reinforce key ideas in the curriculum, deepen children's knowledge and understanding, or can be a springboard for curriculum-related activities throughout the day.
- Use learning centers to extend and broaden the book experience. Offer activities across the curriculum that connect to themes in the book to give children hands-on experiences and reinforce what they have just learned through reading. For example, a book about

Best Practices (CONTINUED)

water can be followed by ice painting, water table activities, or outdoor exploration of puddles or snow. A book about seeds can be followed by a planting activity.

- Create centers that reinforce vocabulary and concepts in books. Use labels, signs, and other environmental print.
- Have children write about what they have read. Writing reinforces reading. It encourages the reader to think about and react to the subject. Writing in response to reading can expand a child's understanding of the themes and ideas in the book.
- Offer decision-making opportunities after reading a book that further connects the reader with the subject. By deciding, for example, that they like snowy days better than rainy days, children place themselves in the experience.

How can educators use writing to support reading?

- Include writing in all areas of the learning environment. For example, children can make lists, wear name tags, write weather reports, compose notes to classmates, record things they see on a walk or field trip, describe a favorite activity, or write thank-you notes.
- Use activities to make vital connections between reading and writing. For example, children can:
 - Trace letters using sensory materials such as sandpaper, shaving cream, or finger paint.
 - Use a variety of media for writing, such as dry-erase boards, chalkboards, paints, magnetic boards, alphabet letters, crayons, or blank books.
 - Draw pictures or create artwork to respond to a story.
 - Use computer programs and age-appropriate software to help them write or draw stories of their own.
 - Record stories or words to be read aloud to the group.
 - Group-write a new ending to a familiar story.

Integrate Reading and Writing Throughout the Day

When developing children's reading and writing skills, educators can design their environment and curriculum to include constant interaction with print and print materials. Whether through formal or informal lessons, reading and writing should be integrated throughout every day.

Best Practices (CONTINUED)

- **Flood the environment with print.** Wherever they look, children should see print and be prompted to connect words to things, people, and actions (e.g., labels, name tags and signs).
- **Utilize learning centers** to engage children with reading and writing across the curriculum. (e.g., prompt children to use their knowledge of environmental print by creating a “Post Office” or a “Restaurant” in the Pretend and Play Center).
- **Incorporate reading and writing into daily routines**, such as calendar activities and assigning daily responsibilities to children using name cards).
- **Make the ABC Center a regular routine.** In the center, children can learn letter recognition, alphabetical order, letter matching, and eventually, initial letter-sound correspondences.
- **Incorporate a “Question of the Day.”** This practice empowers children to consider an idea, express an opinion, and record their thoughts. For example, *Would you rather eat broccoli or peas? Why?* Or, *How many fruits and vegetables can you name that have seeds in them?*

How can reading and writing be integrated throughout the day, every day?

- Flood the environment with print. A literacy-rich environment invites constant interaction with print and print materials. Wherever they look, children should see print.
 - Use name tags whenever possible. They are a powerful tool to teach letter recognition, beginning sounds, and the important idea that print carries meaning.
 - Have printed material, such as books, magazines, and signs easily accessible and at eye level.
 - Name objects and areas in the learning environment (e.g., smocks, puzzles, quiet area, clocks, etc.).
 - Describe instructions or directions. (e.g., “Wash Your Hands” and “Line Up Here”).
 - Categorize items with labels in bins, on shelves, and so forth (e.g., “Books About Dogs,” “Extra Mittens,” and “Lost and Found”).
 - Hang signs in play areas (e.g., “Doctor’s Office,” “Post Office,” “Restaurant,” and “Movie Theater”).
- Plan materials and activities at learning centers to include reading and writing. For example, have children:
 - Write numbers at the Science and Math Center (such as estimations).

Best Practices (CONTINUED)

- Draw a picture and write or dictate a caption in response to a story at the Writing Center.
- Record what happens on each day after planting grass seed at the Science and Math Center.
- Write the name and author of a book they like at the Library Center.
- Integrate reading and writing into daily routines. For example, children can:
 - Dictate and write a message of the day during meeting time.
 - Interact with words and numbers during calendar routines.
 - Sign in each day on chart paper.
 - Read the posted classroom rules.
- Make the ABC Center a daily routine. Tasks can include having children write their names, match upper- and lowercase letters, or put letters in alphabetical order.
- Incorporate a “Question of the Day.” Use a question to encourage children to consider an idea, express an opinion, and record their thoughts. *How many fruits and vegetables can you name that have seeds in them? Which is cuter—a puppy or a kitten? Why?*
- Work with names and name tags. You can assign daily responsibilities to each student using name tags and help children sound out, write, and spell their own names.
- Play letter games such as a memory game where children have to match the same letters, or a lower-case letter with its upper-case format.

Glossary

active reading: strategies readers need to help them understand the text and remain engaged

environmental print: print found in the everyday world, such as store and traffic signs, logos, menus, calendars, price tags, and so on

print awareness: the understanding that print is organized in a particular way (e.g., it is made up of letters, words, and spaces between words; it is read from left to right, and top to bottom; it carries a message)

View the self-paced video workshop at <http://resourcesforearlylearning.org/educators>.



Standards

This professional development training module is aligned to Massachusetts standards and guidelines.

Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Center and School Based:

- **Curriculum and Learning 1A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity: Level 2**
Materials reflect the language and culture of the children in the classroom, their communities, and represent the diversity of society; Program uses screening tools, progress reports, formative assessments, and information gathered through observation to set goals for individual children across all developmental domains; Staff demonstrate language and literacy skills either in English or the child's language that provide a model for children.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 2**
All staff receive orientation and ongoing formal professional development and supervision in how to support positive relationships and interactions through positive, warm and nurturing interactions.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 3**
Staff engage children in meaningful conversations, use open-ended questions and provide opportunities throughout the day to scaffold their development of more complex receptive and expressive language, support children's use of language to share ideas, problem solve and have positive peer interactions.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 4**
Staff utilizes teaching strategies that ensure a positive classroom environment, engage children in learning and promote critical thinking skills.

Family Child Care:

- **Curriculum and Learning 1A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity: Level 2**
Materials reflect the language and culture of the children in the family child care home, their communities, and represent the diversity of society.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1A: Curriculum, Assessment, and Diversity: Level 3**
Either directly or through a network or system, Educator uses screening tools, progress

Standards (continued)

reports, formative assessments, and information gathered through observation to set goals for individual children across developmental domains.

- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 2** Educator has participated in formal professional development on how to support positive relationships and interactions with children through positive, warm and nurturing interactions.
- **Curriculum and Learning 1B: Teacher-Child Relationships and Interactions: Level 4** Educators engage children in meaningful conversations, as age and developmentally appropriate, use open-ended questions and provide opportunities throughout the day to scaffold their language to support the development of more complex receptive and expressive language, support children's use of language to share ideas, problem solve and have positive peer interactions; Educators utilize teaching strategies that ensure a positive learning environment, engage children in learning and promote critical thinking skills.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice:

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning B.2** Teachers continually gather information about children in a variety of ways and monitor each child's learning and development to make plans to help children progress.
- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning E.4** Teachers provide experiences, materials, and interactions to enable children to engage in play that allows them to stretch their boundaries to the fullest in their imagination, language, interaction, and self-regulation as well as to practice their newly acquired skills.
- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning F.2** To stimulate children's thinking and extend their learning, teachers pose problems, ask questions, and make comments and suggestions.
- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning F.3** To extend the range of children's interests and the scope of their thought, teachers present novel experiences and introduce stimulating ideas, problems, experiences, or hypotheses.
- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning F.6** To enhance children's conceptual understanding, teachers use various strategies, including intensive interview and conversation, that encourage children to reflect on and "revisit" their experiences.

Standards (continued)

- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning G.1** Teachers recognize and respond to the reality that in any group, children’s skills will vary and they will need different levels of support. Teachers also know that any one child’s level of skill and need for support will vary over time.
- **(2) Teaching to enhance development and learning G.2** Scaffolding can take a variety of forms; for example, giving the child a hint, adding a cue, modeling the skill, or adapting the materials and activities. It can be provided in a variety of contexts, not only in planned learning experiences but also in play, daily routines, and outdoor activities.
- **(3) Planning curriculum to achieve important goals A.1** Teachers consider what children should know, understand, and be able to do across the domains of physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development and across the disciplines, including language, literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education, and health.
- **(3) Planning curriculum to achieve important goals D.1** Teachers plan curriculum experiences that integrate children’s learning within and across the domains (physical, social, emotional, cognitive) and the disciplines (including language, literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, physical education, and health).
- **(4) Assessing children’s development and learning C** There is a system in place to collect, make sense of, and use the assessment information to guide what goes on in the classroom (formative assessment). Teachers use this information in planning curriculum and learning experiences and in moment-to-moment interactions with children—that is, teachers continually engage in assessment for the purpose of improving teaching and learning.

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy

Speaking and Listening Standards for Pre-Kindergarteners:

- **Comprehension and Collaboration MA.1** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners during daily routines and play.
- **Comprehension and Collaboration MA.1.a** Observe and use appropriate ways of interacting in a group (e.g., taking turns in talking, listening to peers, waiting to speak until another person is finished talking, asking questions and waiting for an answer, gaining the floor in appropriate ways).
- **Comprehension and Collaboration MA.1.b** Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.

Standards (continued)

- **Comprehension and Collaboration MA.2** Recall information for short periods of time and retell, act out, or represent information from a text read aloud, a recording, or a video (e.g., watch a video about birds and their habitats and make drawings or constructions of birds and their nests).
- **Comprehension and Collaboration MA.3** Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.
- **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas MA.4** Describe personal experiences; tell real or imagined stories.
- **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas MA.5** Create representations of experiences or stories (e.g., drawings, constructions with blocks or other materials, clay models) and explain them to others.
- **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas MA.6** Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

Reading Standards: Foundational Skills for Pre-Kindergarteners:

- **Print Concepts MA.1** With guidance and support, demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of printed and written text: books, words, letters, and the alphabet.
- **Print Concepts MA.1.a** Handle books respectfully and appropriately, holding them right-side-up and turning pages one at a time from front to back.
- **Print Concepts MA.1.d** Recognize and name some uppercase letters of the alphabet and the lowercase letters in one's own name.



Training Evaluation

Thank you for your participation. Please indicate your impressions of the training below.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The training met my expectations.					
I will be able to apply what I have learned.					
The trainer was knowledgeable.					
The training was organized and easy to follow.					
Participation and interaction was encouraged.					
The handouts were pertinent and useful.					

1. How would you rate this training overall?

Excellent

Good

Average

Poor

2. What was most beneficial to you in this training?

3. What suggestions do you have to improve this training?