

**Module: Communication and Emergent Literacy:
Early Intervention Issues**

Session 5: Interventions to Facilitate Emergent Literacy

Handout F: Early Literacy Routines

EIVI Training Center. (2005). *Early literacy routines*. Chapel Hill, NC: Early Intervention Training Center for Infants and Toddlers With Visual Impairments, FPG Child Development Institute, UNC-CH.

Adapted from Roskos, K.A., Tabors, P.O., & Lenhart, L.A. (2004). *Oral language and early literacy in preschool: Talking, reading, and writing*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Parents, caregivers, and early interventionists should provide infants and toddlers with language and listening opportunities. Parents should talk to their children frequently about a variety of topics. As soon as children begin to vocalize, they should be encouraged to “converse” about their experiences.

Children’s oral language is promoted through conversation as well as through other verbally stimulating activities that can be integrated into everyday experiences. Caregivers should practice following daily routines that develop language skills in infants and toddlers.

With infants and young toddlers (birth to 1 year)

Infants and young toddlers learn language by listening to their caregivers’ speak. Caregivers should

- imitate infants’ cooing and babbling, so they learn that these first attempts at communication elicit responses;
- talk about what they and their children are doing during daily care, such as at meal times, while diapering, and at bedtime; and
- read to children every day.

With toddlers and young preschoolers (1 to 3 years)

Toddlers increase their vocabulary through exposure to new words. Caregivers should

- listen attentively to toddlers and respond to them;
- introduce new vocabulary words during everyday interactions—caregivers should not “talk down” to toddlers and should try to keep “baby talk” to a minimum; and

- provide props for imaginative play—dress-up clothes, puppets, objects in nature (e.g., shells, feathers, interesting rocks), crayons and paper, etc.

Perhaps the most important strategy that parents can use to encourage a love of learning in children is to share books with them. Caregivers should

- read several books aloud daily;
- take time during reading to stop and discuss the book—caregivers of children with severe visual impairments may ask questions about the storyline or story objects rather than the pictures;
- read with expression and emotion—use different voices for different characters;
- talk with children about their favorite parts of the book; and
- reread favorite books.

Toddlers learn about the sound qualities of language by playing with the sounds of words. Caregivers should

- recite nursery rhymes frequently (e.g., “Humpty Dumpty,” “Little Miss Muffet”) and encourage children to learn them;
- recite nursery rhymes that include body motions (e.g., “The Itsy-Bitsy Spider”);
- encourage toddlers to make up their own rhymes and word plays (e.g., plays on children’s names, as in “Jolly Jumping Jumbly Jack”); and
- share rhyming books (e.g., *The Cat in the Hat*, *Sheep in a Jeep*).

Usually, toddlers start to know about print or braille letters by learning their own name and a few other common, simple words. Caregivers should

- provide a print/braille-rich environment at home and at school;
- provide braillewriter, crayons, pencils, markers, chalk, paper, and other writing utensils;
- encourage toddlers to draw, scribble, and write;
- model writing themselves and explain what it is they are doing;
- provide magnetic letters with braille, blocks with print/braille, and other “toys” with print/braille letters, as well as alphabet games and puzzles;
- frequently point out the letters and words in the everyday environment at home and elsewhere;
- add braille labels to common sources of environmental print such as food containers; and
- point out braille and print in other environments.

Reference

Roskos, K.A., Tabors, P.O., & Lenhart, L.A. (2004). *Oral language and early literacy in preschool: Talking, reading, and writing*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.