

## Early Literacy Explorations, Part I

The left side of the chart presents some examples of various early literacy practices in which children can engage. The right side of the chart shows how these practices found in many preschool classrooms relate to children’s eventual reading and writing.

What Children Might Do	How it Relates to Reading
Make a pattern with objects such as buttons, beads, small colored cubes.	By putting things in a certain order, children gain an understanding of sequence. This will help them discover that the letters in words must go in a certain order.
Listen to a story, then talk with their families, teachers, or tutors and each other about the plot, characters, what might happen next, and what they liked about the book.	Children enjoy read-aloud sessions. They learn that books can introduce people, places, and ideas and describe familiar experiences. Listening and talking help children build their vocabularies. They have fun while learning basic literacy concepts such as: print is spoken words written down, print carries meaning, and text in many alphabetic languages is read from left to right, from the top to the bottom of a page, and from the front to the back of a book.
Play a matching game such as concentration or picture bingo.	Seeing that some things are exactly the same leads children to the understanding that the letters in words must be written in the same order every time to carry meaning.
Move to music while following directions such as, “Put your hands up, down, in front, in back, to the left, to the right. Now wiggle all over.”	Children gain an understanding of concepts such as up/down, front/back, left/right and add these words to their vocabularies. Understanding these concepts leads to knowledge of how words are read and written on a page, as well as an understanding of positional terms.

## Early Literacy Explorations, Part II

What Children Might Do	How it Relates to Reading
Recite rhyming poems introduced by a parent, teacher or tutor and make up new rhymes on their own.	Children develop one of the most important basic phonological awareness skills by learning about rhyming words.
Make signs for the “grocery store.”	Children practice using print to provide information—in this case the price of different foods in meaningful contexts.
Retell a favorite story to another child or a stuffed animal.	Children gain confidence in their ability to learn to read. They practice telling the story in the order it was read to them—from the beginning to the middle to the end.
Use invented spelling to write a grocery list at the same time as a parent is writing his or her own list.	Children use writing to share information with others. By watching an adult write, they are introduced to the conventions of writing. Using invented spelling encourages the development of phonemic awareness.
Sign their names (with a scribble, a drawing, some of the letters, or “correctly”) on an attendance chart, painting or letter.	Children are learning that their names represent themselves and other words represent objects, emotions, actions, and so on. They see that writing serves a purpose—to let their teacher know they have arrived, to show others their art work, or to tell someone who sent a letter.

**Adapted from:**

Koralek, D. & Collins R. (1997). *On the road to reading: A guide for community partners*. Vienna, VA: The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center.

Torgensen, J.K. & Mathes, P. (2001). What every teacher should know about phonological awareness. In the CORE Reading Research Anthology – The why of reading instruction. Novato, CA: Arena Press.