

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 8 October 2013

Integrated Literacy Strategy Early Years

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| Item number | 7.7 |
| Report number | |
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Executive summary

Integrated Literacy Strategy Early Years

Summary

This report outlines strategies and progress with priorities in Early Years within the Integrated Literacy Strategy Action Plan 2012/13. The Strategy ranges from Early Years literacy to Adult Literacies. It reflects the vision and principles of the Scottish Government's National Literacy Action Plan. It aims to improve educational outcomes for all learners, in particular the most disadvantaged children and young people, through a focus on early literacy skills. Improving outcomes for the lowest attaining children and young people (the lowest achieving 20%) is also priority.

The Strategy provides targeted interventions to meet the needs of learners who require additional opportunities and support to address a range of barriers to success in early literacy. It also includes wider literacy developments for all learners within Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). It is founded on a partnership approach and delivered by a number of interdisciplinary teams from the Education, Children and Families department and other partners such as Edinburgh City Libraries, NHS Lothian, universities, Book Trust Scotland.

In recognition of its leading work in literacy, in 2012 City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) was one of five local authorities invited by the Scottish Government to support improvements in literacy at a national level by becoming a Literacy Hub for other authorities. An inter-authority partnership with Mid, East and West Lothian and Scottish Borders Councils has been established to take this forward. The purpose is to improve literacy outcomes for young people through co-operation and development at strategic and operational levels. This partnership is supported by Scottish Government funding.

Recommendations

To recommend that the Education, Children and Families Committee:

1. Notes the continued progress with Early Years priorities within the Edinburgh Integrated Literacy Strategy action plan 2012-13.

Measures of success

This report is based on:

- Evaluations of work streams within the Integrated Literacy Strategy

- Reports to the Education, Children and Families Literacy Strategy Board and to the Scottish Government

Financial impact

There are no financial implications contained in this report.

Equalities impact

There are considered to be no infringements of the rights of the child in the strategies employed to improve literacy. In schools, those most at risk of not securing positive literacy outcomes are identified at an early stage and support put in place. For Looked after Children and those in Positive Action areas, targeted intervention is aligned with the Integrated Literacy Strategy.

Sustainability impact

There are no adverse impacts arising from this report.

Consultation and engagement

A wide range of partners contribute to our strategies and outcomes for improving literacy.

Background reading / external references

[The Integrated Literacy Strategy Action Plan 2012/13](#)

[The National Literacy Action Plan](#)

[Literacy Report to Education Children and Families Committee March 2012](#)

[Attainment Report to Education Children and Families Committee December 2012](#)

Integrated Literacy Strategy Early Years

1. Background

This report provides members of the Education, Children and Families Committee with an overview of progress with Early Years priorities in the Integrated Literacy Strategy 2012/13 action plan and includes:

- Early Years Literacy
- An update on progress with inter-authority literacy
- Feedback from the supported self evaluation of literacy carried out with inspectors from Education Scotland from February to June 2012.

2. Main report

2.1 The Early Years Literacy Support Group was established in 2011 and is part of the Integrated Literacy Strategy. The Group's aim is to address the National and Local Authority priority to raise achievement for the 20% of children most at risk of failing in literacy. Over the past three years the group has therefore ensured that a targeted programme of interventions and support has been put in place in positive action settings in the city. This has included additional training for practitioners, sharing of information about effective resources, encouragement to try new interventions and support in evaluating the impact of these effectively. This work has taken place alongside the implementation of the CIRCLE Up, Up and Away, Building Foundations for Literacy in the Early Years resource. This resource has been developed in collaboration between the City of Edinburgh Council, Queen Margaret University and NHS Lothian. It gives practitioners an effective tool kit to identify risk and resilience factors in children and then plan a targeted programme of support for them. It helps practitioners to consider a range of factors that will impact on a child's literacy development including environment, routine, motivation and the skills they have developed so far. It also includes ideas for involving parents and carers directly in the developed programmes. Almost all early years settings in the city have received training in the use of this resource and given a copy of it. Day and foster carers have also been trained and given copies to use. Evaluation of Up, Up and Away shows that its implementation has the following impacts:

- Earlier identification of factors which place children at greater literacy risk. Some children who did not have a planning framework in place were identified as being at medium to high risk and received targeted intervention to support literacy at an earlier stage.
- In a pilot study there were statistically significant positive and measured changes for the children involved.
- It has been rated very positively by staff and carers involved in the pilot and in longer term evaluation of the role out of the resource.
- Using the resource led to increased knowledge and confidence in staff and carers related to building literacy foundations. In the pilot 81% would definitely recommend it to a colleague.
- Staff and carers were more aware of the importance of a literacy rich environment and found it useful and positive to reflect on the strengths and areas for improvement in their setting.
- Staff and carers changed their practice when supporting foundations to literacy. 80% reported that they had started to use new literacy ideas.
- Participants reported that they changed the way they involve families who may find it hard to engage in existing opportunities to support their children. 73% changed the way they share ideas with parents/ carers.
- It adds new information in relation to steps that staff and carers can take to build foundations to literacy. It acts as a central source of shared information for both novice and very experienced practitioners.
- The resource encourages settings to take a preventative approach to literacy failure.
- The Early Years Literacy Support Group are currently undertaking an audit across 12 Early Years Centres to identify the number of children working with Up Up and Away, to monitor the engagement of parents and to assess outcomes and impact for children's literacy development.
- From 2011 there has been a small positive shift in children's scores and achievement in baseline assessment in positive action schools; whilst levels across the city have been maintained.

(see Appendix 1 P1 baseline literacy 2010- 2013)

All early years establishments in positive action areas have been given further guidance on identifying children at risk of literacy failure and pathways to support this. Appendix 2 Pathway for meeting literacy needs in early years. Appendix 3 Research Evidence

- 2.2 A sub group of the Early Years Literacy Support Group was established to develop and pilot an effective system to assess, plan and track children's progress in literacy in pre-five establishments. Membership of the group comprised Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, (SALT) Neighbourhood Support Officer, English as an Additional Language (EAL) Principal Teacher, Peripatetic Teacher, Head of Early Years Centre and Early Years Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) to ensure a breadth of expertise and experience contributed to the development of the tool. Over 30 establishments piloted the Pre five Assessment and Planning Tracker and individual support was provided by the team to each centre. This joint working had a positive impact on the implementation of the tool and further consultation took place at feedback events. These focussed on the positive impact for children's early literacy and the engagement of parents.

The Assessment and Planning tracker has been sent to every early years establishment and will provide important information for Primary one teachers and enable them to take account of children's strengths and areas for development in early literacy at transition.

The aim of the group has been to raise children's achievements in literacy by providing an effective system to assess and track children's progress and to plan for challenge and depth in learning experiences. Work will continue to evaluate the impact and outcomes for children.

Positive feedback about the effectiveness of the tool has been gathered from staff and from Education Scotland.

"The planner has supported staff to ensure they are offering a full range of literacy experiences to children...."

"It has helped to assess children's literacy skills"

"Children are more aware of their learning and their next steps and of staff expectations"

"There has been a significant focus on planning literacy experiences based on the skills from the planner. This has ensured a literacy focus across all areas of the nursery. Where gaps in skills have been highlighted for particular children, planning has occurred with reference to the planner to address these."

"It has provided parents with an awareness of the breadth of the curriculum and how they can support the development of literacy at home"

“ Parents have been commenting more regularly on their child’s learning”

Education Scotland 1.1 Improvement in Performance

“children’s progress in early literacy and language is tracked and assessed using individual booklets (Pre five Literacy Assessment and Planning Tracker). Within these booklets the children also assess their progress in the experiences and outcomes. Their progress is extremely well documented by a robust tracking procedure”

Moffat Early Years Centre Education Scotland report June 2012.

Views of parents were gathered and they commented positively on joint working with staff to support development of children’s literacy skills at nursery and in the home.

“I think it is a good tool, helping to quickly identify areas needing work especially for moving into Primary one.

“The traffic light symbols are easy to understand.”

“It was very useful to see the list of literacy skills that we are aiming for from the outset and to see how your child is progressing on these.”

“I remember wanting more information like this when my first child was in pre school so it is genuinely helpful.” Appendix 4 the Pre five Literacy Assessment and Planning Tracker

2.3 Literacy Rich Environment Toolkits for indoors and outdoors have been produced and are being used effectively across all early years settings to improve provision and resources and to support the development of skills in literacy. The tools emphasise the importance of using materials and interactions which facilitate literacy opportunities in the area of language (talking, listening, vocabulary) pre writing skills (drawing, creative use of materials, writing) and emergent reading skills (use of books and stories, ideas, sounds, letter and words) across the nursery. The toolkits will be shared with primary one staff to further support rich, active literacy experiences across learning. Appendix 5 Literacy Rich Environment Toolkits Indoors and Outdoors

2.4 The Early Years Literacy Support Group has also been working with early years settings in identifying and supporting younger children who are at risk of experiencing literacy difficulties in the future. As part of this work there was an identified need for developing staff’s skills and knowledge in the area of supporting children’s early communication skills. The Early Communication Project funded by the City of Edinburgh Council had developed a suitable training package which was already in place, but which had not yet been delivered on a cluster basis. Three Speech and Language Therapists were involved in delivering the training with the support materials being produced by

two Speech and Language Therapy assistants. Educational Psychologists, Support Co-ordinators, Peripatetic Teachers, EAL and Visiting Teaching and Support Service (VTSS) became involved in supporting the training during the session 2012/13. 149 staff were trained in total. Cluster training dates were arranged so that practitioners could share practice and support each other.

The impact of the training is being measured through a follow up questionnaire and this includes staff's confidence regarding supporting children's communication and their confidence in making an appropriate referral to SALT. Further training dates for staff in positive action areas have been planned and a survey monkey will be used to evaluate the positive impact of the communication strategies within the programme.

- 2.5 Children in Positive Action Establishments and appropriate special schools are supported to have access to books through a targeted, sustainable book gifting initiative (Reading Rainbows) for four year olds. The scheme has been developed in partnership with Children and Families Department, Information and Learning Resources, Community Learning and Development (CLD), Family Learning, Psychological Services, Edinburgh City Libraries and targeted establishments. Funding was provided by Edinburgh City Libraries and from the Early Years Team in Children and Families Department. Parent postcards were developed by an Educational Psychologist in conjunction with Early Years staff and these were included in the Rainbow Gifting pack. The aim of the postcards was to offer parents and carers written suggestions related to the 2 storybooks, namely what parents could be doing at home with their child to support learning and literacy development.

In order to evaluate the use and effectiveness of the parent postcards, all families who received the *Rainbow Book Gifting Pack* were asked to complete a Partnership Service Questionnaire, which included specific questions about the use and effectiveness of the postcards. In addition, a small number of parental focus groups were held across the City in May 13 and June 13. These groups were facilitated by an Educational Psychologist and various CLD Family Workers.

Findings from the returns of the questionnaire indicated that of the 56% of the parents and carers who had used the postcards, 85% had found them helpful. Qualitative written information provided by parents indicated that overall the postcards had offered helpful ideas. As one parent noted,

'We enjoyed talking about feelings as suggested (in the postcard), pulling silly faces and photographing them'.

Results from the parental focus groups indicated that overall, the parent postcards were seen as a helpful tool. A significant group of parents reported that they had actively tried the suggestions out and found them helpful. Overall

the consensus among parents interviewed was that postcards were a helpful resource for parents.

A Partnership Service questionnaire was designed collaboratively and sent to all participating Early Years Centres in June to share with parents. There were 61 returned questionnaires and as 1062 packs were gifted across the city, this was a 6% parental return. From the returns, 67% felt more confident about reading stories with their child, and 82% felt more confident in getting involved in their child's learning. The project has been submitted for the Children and Families Award, and a full report is being drafted for Children and Families and Services for Communities Senior Management Teams.

For 2013-14, it is planned to extend the book gifting to four year olds in Early Years Centres, gypsy traveller children, and vulnerable families.

- 2.6 A city wide Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP) programme has been developed for parents using existing resources. PEEP works with parents and children from birth to support learning about communication, literacy and numeracy. Practitioners from a variety of early years settings continue to be trained and evaluation of the impact of the programme is under way. To further support parental engagement with reading, over 200 professionals in Edinburgh been trained in the play@home parenting programme since 2010. Play@home is a parenting programme which aims to strengthen family bonds, develop parenting skills and encourage physical activity through the medium of play. There are currently three specific play@home groups running at North Edinburgh Arts Centre, Moffat Early Years Campus and The Prentice Centre.

CLD with the support of the Workers' Educational Association piloted the delivery of PEEP-related Scottish Qualifications Authority units resulting in 11 parents receiving accreditation.

The evaluation of the impact of PEEP is being recognised nationally.

- 2.7 Speech and Language Therapists have produced an intervention to develop children's knowledge and use of 'higher level' vocabulary and this has been piloted in one primary school. The approach selects and explicitly teaches words in a systematic way that can be easily incorporated into nursery planning and activity. The approach explicitly teaches 60 target words derived from 15 age appropriate and attractive stories. A range of materials has been created for staff to carry out a weekly programme of vocabulary work in the pre-school year. Resources include parent postcards, picture resources and planning materials. A manual to explain the approach and accompany the materials will be available by early autumn 2013

In 2012 an evaluation of parents' comments from semi structured interviews was very positive. Parents reported that their children used more mature vocabulary as a result of the work done in nursery and that it encouraged development of talking at home. They enjoyed using the postcard activities at home.

The impact of the intervention on the children's oral language in comparison to an approximately similar group from a school nursery with a similar level of free school meals entitlement and to an approximately similar group from a school nursery with a much lower level of free school meals entitlement is currently being evaluated. A report on the findings will be produced in the autumn term.

This approach appears suitable for the majority of the children in their pre-school year. An alternative approach is being developed to support language enrichment for the children in their ante pre-school year and those who have much more limited expressive language. Materials are being developed with a focus on building the language linked to nursery routines.

The approach in nursery is part of a larger intervention in which focused intervention for vocabulary development for children in positive action areas is defined and delivered to all stages in Primary school. Data from an evaluation which includes teacher and learner interviews and measures of vocabulary knowledge and use in comparison to 'control' children are currently being analysed.

- 2.8 Talk for Life is a training programme to support approaches to teaching talk in the early years and has been developed by a Literacy Development Officer, Educational Psychologist, English as an Additional Language Principal Teacher, SALT and a Nursery Head Teacher. A series of training events has been well attended by Early Years staff and attendees will be asked to evaluate positive impact on their practice. A support pack for Talk for Life will be posted on GLOW.
- 2.9 Edinburgh will be working with the Scottish Book Trust in 2013/14 to roll out the Assertive Outreach Programme. The Assertive Outreach Programme has been funded by Scottish Government to provide training to staff from Local Authorities, Health Boards, Third Sector Organisations, as well as parent volunteers, to be able to take Book Bug sessions into the homes of vulnerable families and expand Book Bug provision within the community. Four training sessions will be provided for professionals who already work with families in the home. The first Steering Group Meeting was held on 22 August and further information will follow.
- 2.10 A Visual Labelling Pilot Project is currently being carried out in the North area of Edinburgh. The aim is to trial the use of a standardised visual labelling system within early years settings to embed inclusive practice and support communication.

Phase one of the Pilot took place between February 2013 and September 2013

The Pilot phase trialled the implementation of a standardised visual labelling system in three early year's settings.

Each setting received a training session and then trialled a visual labelling package. An evaluation looked at the knowledge, understanding and confidence of staff and the impact on children.

A report will be completed by September 2013.

Phase 2 of the Visual Support Project commenced in June 2013

Additional Project funding was granted by NHS Education for Scotland to extend the work. The funding has allowed partnership working with NHS Lothian and the City of Edinburgh Council. This joint venture will allow further roll out and trial.

Resources and an accredited training package will be developed and delivered to six settings (pre-school and primary).

- 2.11 The Early Years Collaborative is now the main focus for development in early years both nationally and locally. The overarching aim of the collaborative is to make Scotland the best place to grow up in. Three inter-agency workstreams are working collaboratively to implement small tests of change which will be evaluated with a view to further development. Current tests of change include encouraging parents to read to and recite nursery rhymes with their child at home. Both these interventions have been shown to support children's literacy development in the longer term.
- 2.12 Beat This is a creative approach to developing literacy in the early years through rhythm and rhyme. The resource was developed collaboratively and was an Arts and Learning Youth Music Initiative project funded by Creative Scotland. This resource is designed to support the development of literacy skills through musical activities. The resource comprises a series of very practical activity plans all based on rhymes and stories. The activities are fun and motivating for children and aim to develop skills in alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia. Beat This can be personalised and adapted by practitioners encouraging a more creative approach to supporting literacy in the early years. Every early years establishment will receive the resource and training to support the implementation of Beat This will take place during the session 2013/14.
- 2.13 A Journey to Success Joint Development Practice Group has been established to develop literacy within the Early Level of the curriculum and to extend knowledge of Literacy Experiences and Outcomes within the Curriculum for Excellence. Good practice will be shared within the network and at the annual Success in the City roadshow.
- 2.14 Community learning and development family learning workers work with parents and families in targeted early years establishments. Family learning works through delivering events and intensive projects promoting literacy across learning. Family learning aims to have an impact on children's literacy attainment.

and also to engage parents in their own learning to create a sustainable learning culture within the family.

Key projects have included

- ‘Lighthouse Keeper’s Lunch’ in which workers designing activities around the story to create an interactive literacy resource pack
- The Magic Carpet, an activity designed with the Royal Scottish Museum, parents and schools to involve families who had not been previously engaged in learning
- ‘My Child’ in which parents in Pilton follow a structured course on child development. The aim of the group is to work with parents to ensure that children can reach their full potential. Recent research highlighted very strong group cohesion which has resulted in improved social capital within the group
- Scrapbook Project in Fort Early Years Centre is a structured learning opportunity which explores numeracy and literacy experiences and outcomes. The project culminates in the production of family scrapbook or photo album which encourages the sharing of family experiences at home contributing to the nurturing of cultural capital within the family

2.15 Talking Time is a well established early years programme created by the SALT team from NHS Lothian. The resource supports the Early Years Integrated Literacy Strategy to optimise opportunities for emergent literacy through early intervention. This programme is jointly supported and funded by NHS Lothian and the City of Edinburgh Council and has been developed in collaboration with early years staff to include Talking Time 1, Talking Time 2 and Early Talking Time.

The majority of local authority nurseries and early years centres have been trained in Talking Time and the training programme will be further rolled out across the city. Each Talking Time programme consists of flexible topic led session plans aimed at building the foundations of language skills. These include listening and attention, turn taking, peer awareness, developing vocabulary and understanding and promoting confidence with spoken language skills.

Early years staff are provided with written session outlines to follow and materials to use. Resources include picture materials, audio and visual supports and parent information postcards. The staff are trained to understand the aims of the programme and how to present the activities. The first group session is demonstrated by a speech and language therapist. The early years establishment then takes ownership and delivery of the programme.

After the programme has been rolled out in the early years setting SALT will visit for ongoing support and evaluation purposes.

- 2.16 The EAL Early Years team supports early literacy development in Bilingual and Minority Ethnic (BME) children through work at three levels: city-wide strategic, developing capacity in Early Years settings and support for individual learners and their families. EAL involvement in the Early Years Literacy Support Group and related working groups has resulted in considerations for BME learners being incorporated into initiatives such as Literacy Rich Edinburgh, Up Up & Away, Pre five Literacy Assessment and Planning Tracker, Visual Labelling and Talk for Life. At establishment level, the EAL Early Years team has developed mainstream staff confidence to support BME learners' literacy through, supported self-evaluation and planning for improvement, training and the use of the EAL Profile of Competence. Literacy skills of individual BME learners' have been developed through direct classroom support, events to increase BME parental involvement in learning, supporting assessment and contributing to Child's Planning Meetings. The EAL Enhanced Enrolment (Early Years) which draws from the Up Up and Away document has been finalised and is now in use, supporting the early identification of children who may have support needs in addition to emerging bilingualism.

Inter-authority Literacy Hub

- 2.17 Since Edinburgh was identified in 2012 as one of the five national Literacy Hub authorities, we have led work on a Scottish Government funded inter-authority project with East Lothian, West Lothian, Midlothian and Scottish Borders Councils. The project is designed to share and develop best practice in engaging the hardest to reach young people and families with reading, with particular focus on the Early Years and post-16 Literacies. A steering group and an operational group made up of a wide range of representative stakeholders from across the partnership have met regularly since October 2012 and work to deliver inter-authority action plan priorities.
- 2.18 Objectives include: a sharing of the Edinburgh Integrated Literacy Strategy approach with partner authorities to promote the development of a Literacy Strategy in their own authority and a conference and showcase event for literacy leaders in August 2013. This will highlight best practice from across Hub authorities on engaging hard to reach groups with reading. There will be a series of keynote deliveries and interactive workshops. A collated, electronically-available, inter-authority directory of literacy best practice will be made available.

Supported Self Evaluation in Literacy

- 2.19 Two inspectors from Education Scotland worked with the City of Edinburgh Council lead officers for literacy and other literacy practitioners to support our own self- evaluation of the impact of identified priorities within the Integrated Literacy Strategy and operational practices.

2.20 Strengths identified by Education Scotland included:

- Strong commitment from a range of staff to improving self-evaluation in literacy
- Growing awareness in looking at impact on learners
- Willingness to reflect and review progress as the supported self evaluation process evolves
- Staff keen to reflect on their practice and open to new ideas and approaches to improve outcomes for children and young people.

2.21 Aspects for development:

- Develop approaches to strengthening coherence between early years and primary one with reference to assessment, planning and monitoring across the early level.

2.22 The work plan for the early years workstream within The Integrated Literacy Strategy reflects the strengths outlined within this report and aspects for development.

3. Recommendations

To recommend that the Education, Children and Families Committee:

3.1 Notes the continued progress with Early Years priorities within the Edinburgh Integrated Literacy Strategy action plan 2012-13.

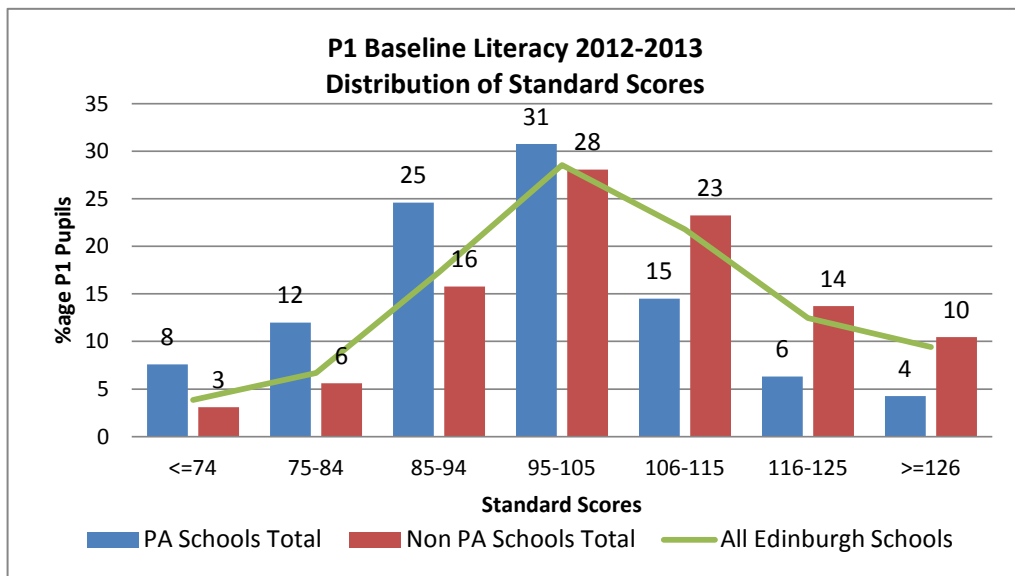
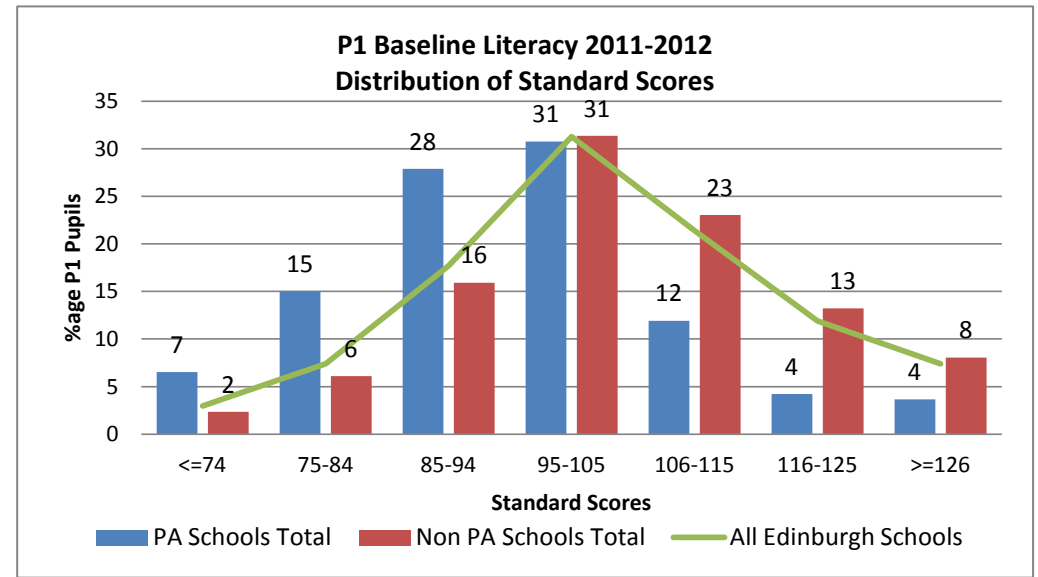
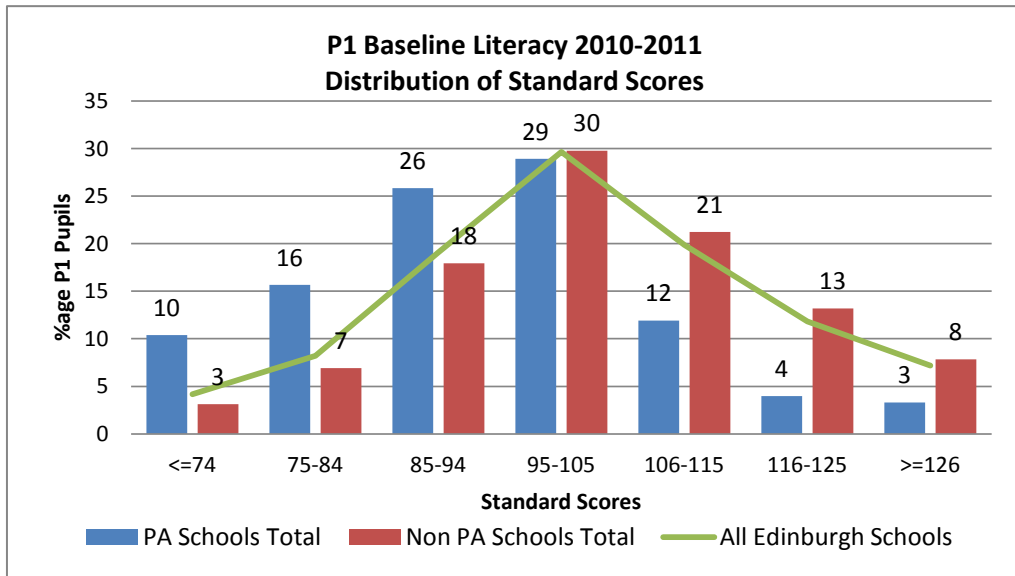
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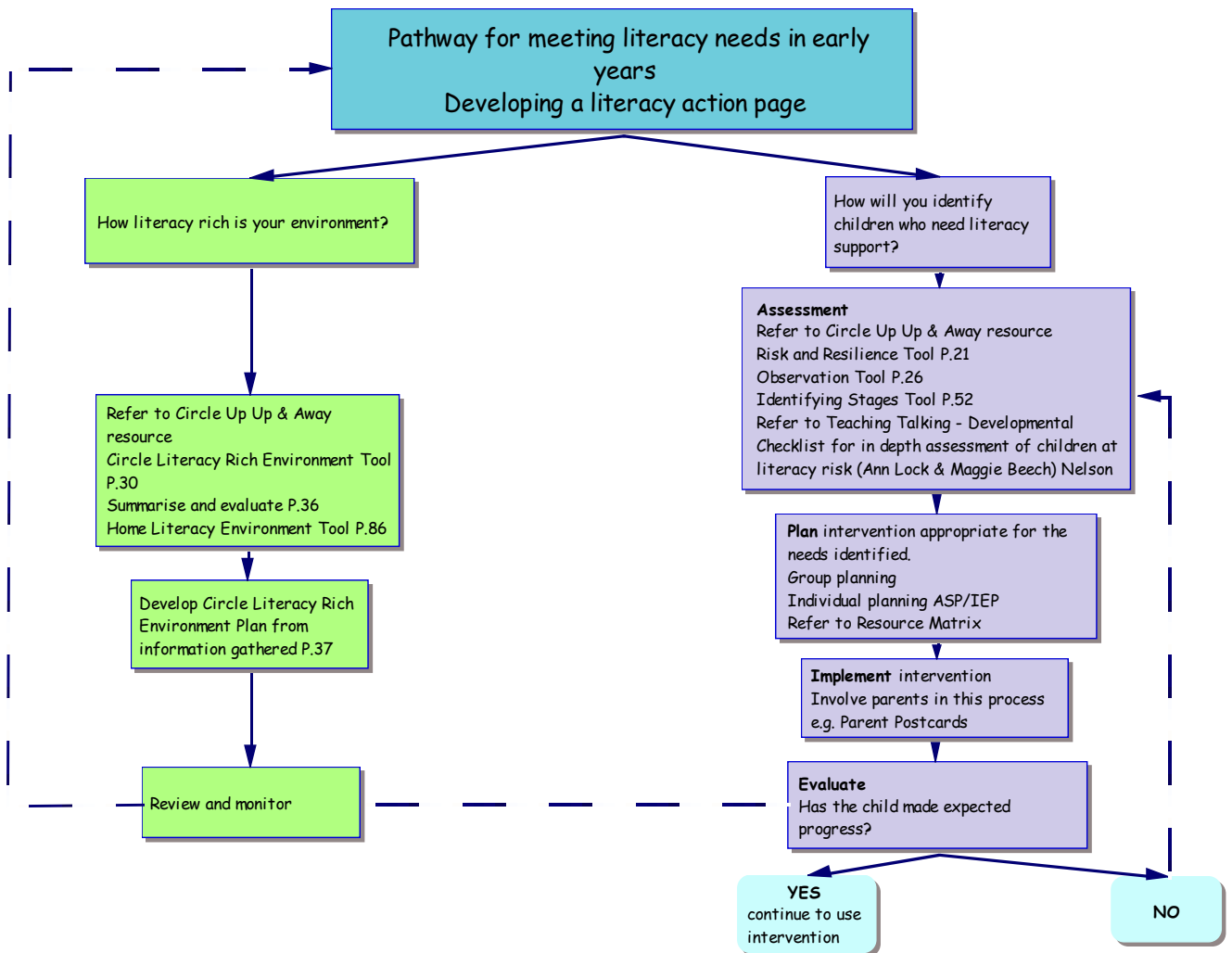
Links

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| Coalition pledges | P5 Seek to ensure the smooth introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence and that management structures within our schools support the new curriculum |
| Council outcomes | CO1 Our children and young people have the best start in life, are able to make and sustain relationships and are ready to succeed. CO2 Our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities |
| Single Outcome Agreement | SO3 Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential |
| Appendices | Appendix 1 Primary One Baseline Literacy 2010 – 2013 Appendix 2 Pathway for meeting literacy needs in early years Appendix 3 Research Evidence Appendix 4 Pre five Literacy Assessment and Planning Tracker Appendix 5 Literacy Rich Environment Toolkits indoors and outdoors |

Appendix 1



City of Edinburgh Integrated Literacy Strategy in Early Years



Appendix 3

Research Evidence

Research evidence suggests that there are clear links between social and economic disadvantage, poor early language skills and later literacy difficulties in children (Hart & Risley, 1995; Nation & Snowling, 2004; Rose, 2006; Schoon et al., 2010; Roulston et al., 2011). Good early language skills are a key foundation to building children's later literacy development. Early development of these skills starts at home; positive parent-child interactions, a nurturing environment and clear routines, boundaries and rich experiences build a child's early language and social development. Research in the neurosciences now shows that the first three years of a child's life are key to early brain development and have a lasting impact on their future development. Research also suggests that it is better to aim to prevent literacy difficulties with effective early intervention rather than having to remediate literacy difficulties later on in a child's life (Justice et al., 2003). In addressing this in Edinburgh we have aimed to take a two fold approach. Firstly there are a range of universal programmes in place which aim to support all children's early literacy development (book start programme, rhyme time in nurseries, PEEP). These programmes aim to meet the needs of most children and work in partnership with parents to support their child. For those children who we know will be at greater risk due to their life circumstances or additional needs we have also developed some more targeted interventions. These aim to identify those children at risk of later difficulty at an early stage and offer targeted support. Early years staff take a lead role in the identification process but then also aim to work very much in partnership with parents and carers to deliver this support. This report will describe the range of work that Edinburgh is doing in this area.

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Appendix 4

Pre 5 Literacy Assessment and Planning Tracker

Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Pre-school Setting: _____

Start Date: _____

Pattern of Attendance: _____

Main language spoken at home: _____

If child has English as an Additional Language (EAL), length of exposure to English: _____

Future School: _____

Overall Literacy Level at transition to Primary 1

Developing

Consolidating

Date:

Secure

Context

Education Scotland (Advice Note 2013-2014) have placed a greater emphasis on planning for progression and expect establishments/you to have a clear strategy for the development and assessment of children's literacy skills to ensure smooth progression and achievement. This tool will enable you to do this. The skills are based on the progression pathways but in some cases these have been adapted to give clear measurable statements. This should enable you to make clear informed

decisions about children's progression.

Part 1: Guidelines for completing this tool

- 1) This tool should be completed by staff over the course of a child's time in their pre 5 setting.
- 2) Information should be gathered over time generally through observation, although sometimes staff may need to set up a specific small group or individual activity to fully assess a child's progress. Points where they may need to do this are indicated in brackets after the relevant statement; DW=Direct Work, SGW=Small Group Work.
- 3) An overview of the child's progress in each area should be given in the 'date' boxes. Staff should ensure that the boxes in all areas are completed prior to the child moving to primary one.
- 4) It is important to involve parents in this process and share the information with them. The document could form the basis for discussion at parent consultations. Boxes for parental comments are included at the end.
- 5) Staff should be mindful of a child's additional support needs when completing the tool and ensure they fully capture the skills a child shows. Any activities to measure a child's skills should be adapted in line with their particular needs e.g. allowing a child to indicate a response by pointing or gesture if their language skills are delayed.
- 6) If a child has English as an Additional Language it is important to reflect this by completing the questions on the front sheet and in their final term of nursery indicating their skills in their home language (the home language box should be used to do this) as well as English. Where interpretation is required, settings can use the CEC Interpreting and Translation Service (ITS@edinburgh.gov.uk) or Bilingual Support Assistants if possible.
- 7) A key for indicating a child's progress within the skill should be used as follows:

| Level of Skill | Coding |
|--|------------|
| Has engaged in some experience of the skill | 1 or red |
| Skill is shown sometimes but is not consistent yet | 2 or amber |
| Skill is shown regularly and spontaneously | 3 or green |

Part 2: Next steps and using this tool in your practice

- 1) Staff should use the information collected using this tool to plan next steps in a child's learning and to monitor their progress on an ongoing basis. The tool should also be used to plan focussed learning experiences based on the experiences and outcomes to provide progression, depth and challenge.
- 2) By completing the tool on several occasions staff should be able to gain a picture of the child's progress over time.
- 3) If a child is showing early development in a lot of areas, is not making progress over time or staff have other concerns about their development they should use the Up, Up and Away resource to plan further adjustments and strategies to support their learning.
- 4) Depending on areas and level of need staff could also consider involving relevant support services such as Speech and Language Therapy Service, Visiting Teacher Support Service, English as an Additional Language Service, Support Co-ordinator, Educational Psychology Service.
- 5) The tool could be included in the PLP as a summary of progress and achievement and to identify next steps in learning. The tool should be used to support transition.
- 6) The tool should be used alongside the environmental rich toolkits indoors and outdoors.

Listening and Talking

Enjoyment and choice

Within a motivating and challenging environment, developing an awareness of the relevance of texts in my life

| Experiences and Outcomes | Skill | Date Code | Date Code | Date Code | Home language last term |
|--|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|
| I enjoy exploring and playing with the patterns and sounds of language, and can use what I learn | In play and games I can recognise initial sounds and find other words beginning with the same sound. | | | | |
| | I can use alliteration and make up silly phrases (smelly socks, big bananas). | | | | |
| | I can clap or tap the correct the number of syllables in my own name. (DW) | | | | |
| I enjoy exploring and choosing stories and other texts to watch, read or listen to, and can share my likes and dislikes. | I often choose stories/ texts to look at within the nursery environment (book corner, interest table, home corner). | | | | |
| | I can explain why I like or dislike a text. (DW/SGW) | | | | |
| | I can talk about real and imaginary experiences. | | | | |
| I enjoy exploring events and characters in stories and other texts, sharing my thoughts in different ways. | I can sit and listen to stage appropriate stories. | | | | |
| | I can name key characters in a story. | | | | |
| | I can talk about what happens in a story/ text and retell it using props. (DW/SGW) | | | | |

Tools for listening and talking

To help me when interacting or presenting within and beyond my place of learning

| Experiences and outcomes | Skill | Date | Date | Date | Home language last term |
|--|--|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| As I listen and talk in different situations, I am learning to take turns and am developing my awareness of when to talk and when to listen. | I can take turns in conversations appropriately and confidently. | | | | |
| | I can listen and make relevant contributions in conversations. | | | | |

Finding and using information

When listening to, watching and talking about texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and specialist vocabulary

| Experiences and outcomes | Skill | Date | Date | Date | Home language last term |
|--|---|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| I listen or watch for useful or interesting information and I use this to make choices or learn new things | I am a good listener and can talk about what I have heard and learned. (DW/SGW) | | | | |
| | I can listen to information and use it to make choices and learn new things. | | | | |

Understanding, analysing and evaluating

Investigating and/or appreciating texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and specialist vocabulary for different purposes

| Experiences and outcomes | Skill | Date | Date | Date | Home language last term |
|---|---|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| To help me understand stories and other texts, I ask questions and link what I am learning with what I already know | I can distinguish between a story book, poetry/rhyme book and information book. | | | | |
| | I can offer a relevant comment about a text. | | | | |
| | I can ask appropriate questions about a text. (DW/SGW) | | | | |
| | When listening to a text I can link what I am hearing to what I already know. | | | | |

Creating texts

Applying the elements other use to create different types of short and extended texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and vocabulary

| Experiences and Outcome | Skill | Date | Date | Date | Home language last term |
|--|--|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| Within real and imaginary situations, I share experiences and feelings, ideas and information in a way that communicates my message. | I can talk about experiences/events. (DW/SGW) | | | | |
| | I can share news and other information. | | | | |
| | I can observe an activity and recount some details about it. | | | | |
| | I can share some of my experiences or feelings. (DW/SGW) | | | | |
| I enjoy exploring events and characters in stories and other texts and I use what I learn to invent my own, sharing these with others in imaginative ways. | I can explore events and characters through discussion, props and role play. | | | | |
| | I can answer who, what, where and why questions when exploring texts. | | | | |
| | I can make up my own story and can share these with others in imaginative ways. | | | | |
| As I listen and take part in conversations & discussions, I discover new words & phrases which I use to help me express my ideas, thoughts & feelings | I can participate in conversations and discussion with others (floor books, circle time, talking tubs, play contexts) and learn new words and phrases. | | | | |
| | I can use new vocabulary appropriately. | | | | |

Reading

Enjoyment and Choice

Within a motivating and challenging environment developing an awareness of the relevance of texts within my life

| Experiences and outcomes | Skill | Date | Date | Date | Home language last term |
|---|--|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| I enjoy exploring and playing with the patterns and sounds of language and can use what I learn. | I can recite 3 nursery rhymes. (DW) | | | | |
| | I can give the last rhyming word when the adult says the rest of the rhyme. (DW) | | | | |
| | I can say if two objects/picture cards share the same rhyme when an adult shows them to me. (DW) | | | | |
| I enjoy exploring and choosing stories and other texts to watch, read or listen to and can share my likes and dislikes. | I often choose books to look at in nursery. I can predict what might happen next in a story. | | | | |
| | I can indicate at group story time if I've enjoyed a story. | | | | |
| | I can tell an adult or peer what I did and didn't like about a story. (DW) | | | | |
| | I can say what might happen next in a story. (DW) | | | | |
| | I can show that I know familiar or repetitive parts of a story or rhyme by filling in the missing part when the adult pauses in reading it. (DW) | | | | |

Tools for reading

To help me use texts with increasingly complex or unfamiliar ideas, structures and vocabulary within and beyond my place of learning

| Experiences and Outcomes | Skill | Date | Date | Date | Home language last term |
|---|--|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| I explore sounds, letters and words discovering how they work together, and I can use what I learn to help me as I read and write | I can recognise some signs and words in and around nursery or the local environment and tell an adult what they mean. (DW) | | | | |
| | DW: I know what sound my name and other favourite things begin with. | | | | |
| | I can show an adult or a peer the back and front of a book, where the words and pictures are, where you begin reading from with a line of text. (DW/SGW) | | | | |
| | When I'm shown three picture cards beginning with different letters I can choose the right one to go with a sound that an adult gives me. (DW) | | | | |

Finding and using information

When reading and using fiction and non-fiction texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and specialist vocabulary

| Experiences and outcomes | Skill | Date | Date | Date | Home language last term |
|---|---|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| I use signs, books or other texts to find useful or interesting information and I use this to plan make choices or learn new things | I can show another person the title, page, cover, words and pictures in the book by pointing and correctly naming them. (SGW) | | | | |
| | I can look at and talk about information from a book, computer or other source. (SGW) | | | | |
| | I can tell someone else what I've learnt and can remember after doing this kind of activity. (DW) | | | | |
| | I can find my own name label and also those for one or two other children in nursery. | | | | |

Understanding, analysing and evaluating

Investigating and / or appreciating fiction and non-fiction texts with increasingly complex idea, structures and specialist vocabulary for different purposes

| Experiences and outcomes | Skill | Date | Date | Date | Home language last term |
|---|--|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| To help me understand stories and other texts, I ask questions and link what I am learning with what I already know | I can ask different questions about a book that I've shared with an adult. (DW) | | | | |
| | At story times I can ask questions about a story we've listened to. | | | | |
| | When an adult pauses in reading a story I can say what I think will happen next. (DW) | | | | |
| | When I have listened to a story I can comment about how it fits with my own experience (e.g. getting lost, first experience of something). | | | | |
| | When we come across a new word in a story I can have a go at working it out from the pictures or text. | | | | |
| I enjoy exploring events and characters in stories and other texts, sharing my thoughts in different ways | I can use props or pictures to help in retelling the main parts of a story | | | | |
| | I can take on the role of a character in a story. | | | | |
| | I can say what I think about different texts in small group discussions. (SGW) | | | | |

Writing

Tools for writing

Using knowledge of technical aspects to help my writing communicate effectively within and beyond my place of learning

| Experiences and outcomes | Skill | Date | Date | Date | Home language last term |
|--|--|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| As I play and learn, I enjoy exploring interesting materials for writing and different ways of recording my experiences and feelings, ideas and information. | I can make marks using paint, chalk pencils , pens, crayons and inks computers. | | | | |
| | I can make my name/words with magnetic letters. (DW/SGW) | | | | |
| | I can draw a story and share it with others or ask an adult to write my story beside my picture. | | | | |
| | I can write some letters by myself . | | | | |

Organising and using information

Considering texts to help create short and extended texts for different purposes

| Experiences and outcomes | Skill | Date | Date | Date | Home language last term |
|--|--|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| Within real and imaginary situations, I share experiences and feelings, ideas and information in a way that communicates my message. | I can make marks to convey messages or information during play (menu at café, list for shopping). | | | | |
| | I can make stories using puppets, in home corner, small world play or when dressing up and share thoughts, ideas and feelings. | | | | |
| | I can draw or create my stories and share them orally with my friends and adults in the nursery. | | | | |

Creating texts

Applying the elements other use to create different types of short and extended texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and vocabulary

| Experiences and outcomes | Skill | Date | Date | Date | Home language last term |
|--|--|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| I enjoy exploring events and characters in stories and other texts and I use what I learn to invent my own, sharing these with others in imaginative ways. | I can draw or create a story and ask my teacher to write my ideas for me. | | | | |
| | I like to draw my favourite characters and events from stories I have heard. | | | | |
| | I often choose to write and draw using paint, chalk, pencils and pens in a variety of play contexts. | | | | |
| | I can draw a picture of myself or of my family. | | | | |
| | I can write my name on my pictures or work. | | | | |
| | I can write some of my letters. (DW/SGW) | | | | |

Parents Comments about progress and next steps

**Parents Comments about
progress and next steps**

Date

**Parents Comments about
progress and next steps**

Date

**Parents Comments about
progress and next steps**

Date

Guidance notes on assessing and teaching early literacy skills

Rhyme

- Teach traditional nursery rhymes.
- Ask the children to act out the rhymes, illustrate them and use puppets to enact them.
- Ask children to recite rhymes in groups and as individuals.
- Make audio-tapes of the children reciting rhymes.
- Provide tapes for children to follow nursery rhymes in books and big books.
- Recite rhymes but miss out the rhyming word and ask the children to supply it.
- Play spot the deliberate mistake by putting in non-rhyming words, for examples 'Humpty Dumpty sat on the fence'
- Make classroom displays of nursery rhymes. These can be related to project and topic work. Write the words in large letters.
- Make class books of favourite rhymes.
- Teach playground and skipping rhymes and games.
- Teach traditional question and answer rhyming games.
- Play dancing and chasing games with changes of direction when rhyming words are chanted.
- Teach number rhymes
- Make up your own variations, for example, 'Two, Four, Six, Eight, these are the things I really hate'
- Make number rhyme books, friezes and displays.
- Recite, invent and act out count down rhymes, for example, 'Ten green bottles standing on the wall, one fell down and knocked out Paul'.
- Invent new words for songs and rhymes.
- Compare traditional rhymes with children's favourite modern songs
- Make up raps.
- Invent limericks.
- Teach simple rhyming slang.
- Invent families of invented animals and monsters with rhyming names.
- Play a rhyming version of 'I-spy'.
- Play with rhyming riddles, for example, a pet that rhymes with 'fat'.
- Play rhyming snap and rhyming lotto with pictures.
- Play odd one out games with pictures or objects – one of which does not rhyme.
- Play Kim's Game with rhyming objects or toys or pictures.
- Ask the children for words that rhyme with their names, or their friends' name.
- Make feely bags and ask children to find rhyming pairs of objects.
- Have a rhyming display with objects and pictures which all rhyme.

Alliteration

- Have a display of alliterative objects and pictures.
- Teach and make up tongue twisters, for example, 'The ragged rascal ran round the rugged rock'.
- Make up a class alliterative book based on children's names, for example, 'Wayne wears wellies'.
- Have a letter/sound of the week and ask children to bring in objects and pictures starting with the chosen letter.
- Ask children to describe themselves alliteratively – 'big Barry', silly Simon', etc.
- Share alliterative counting with children and make up your own – 'two terrible tigers'.
- Invent alliterative descriptions – 'big bears', wet windows', 'happy hairdressers'.
- Make alliterative alphabet books using names, 'Awful Alex', 'Boring Brian', or animals, 'Active Ants', 'Brave Bears'.
- Make up alliterative advertising slogans like, 'Buster's Bread is best'.
- Play listing games, for example, Grandmother Went to Market, with alliterative words.
- Play snap and lotto with alliterative pictures.
- Play odd one out with picture cards – two with alliterative names and one without.

- Make feely bags with objects starting with particular sounds. Ask the children to identify the objects by touch.
- Sort objects into categories according to the initial sounds.
- Look for as many things as possible in a picture or book which start with the same sound.
- Play 'I-spy'.
- Play Kim's Game with alliterative objects.

Rhyme, Alliteration and Learning Letters

- Play snap, lotto and so on using written words.
- Use a big book of rhymes to help children discover that rhyming words have the same group of letters at the end.
- Children can make an alphabet scrapbook and choose pictures to illustrate each letter.
- Children listen to stories from books and pick out the words that start with a particular sound.
- Have a letter of the week table where children put objects or pictures which start with a particular letter.
- Write rimes and onsets on different cards. Ask children to see how many words they can make using different onsets with the same rime.
- Make onset and rime word wheels.
- Encourage children to trace words and to write letters and words in wet sand.
- Play magnetic fishing using rime and onset cards.
- Sing the Alphabet Song and alphabet jingles.
- Display alphabet friezes, commercially produced or made by children or parents.
- Encourage children to play with alphabet tiles and mats. These can be used for simple matching, spelling out words and names and even hop-scotch type spelling games.
- Stack trays in alphabetic order.
- Play alphabet bingo.
- Make sure that nursery and early years classrooms have plenty of alphabet books, jigsaws and games.
- Use computer keyboards and alphabet and rhyme-related software.
- Make posters with a collection of pictures representing a particular letter, for example boy, bus, bat, ball, bag for b.
- Make personal alphabet dictionaries.
- Make a wall hanging with alphabetically labelled pockets. The children can collect pictures of things beginning with each letter and put them in the pockets. At later stages this can be used as a key words dictionary

Pre-school children can learn that:

- print has a purpose
- print holds a message
- print is different from other patterns in the environment
- print has a range of uses
- print is powerful
- everyone, including children, can use print for their own ends
- the words we say are mapped onto print
- print tells the story the pictures merely help
- print is made up of letters
- print has a particular directionality
- print has a particular visual appearance
- spaces separate words
- words like, page, letter, word, read and write are part of the technical vocabulary associated with literacy

Moira Leslie – Developing Literacy in the Early Years

Appendix 5

Building Foundations for Literacy in the Early Years




CIRCLE Nursery Literacy Rich Environment Tool

Literacy Rich Environments

A child's literacy experience can be enriched by the people and the physical environment around him/her. A literacy rich environment emphasises the importance of using materials and interactions which facilitate literacy opportunities. in the areas of language (talking, listening, vocabulary); pre-writing skills (drawing, creative use of materials, writing); and emergent reading skills (use of books and stories, ideas, sounds, letters and words).




Using the Tool

- The CIRCLE Literacy Rich Environment Checklist can be used to help you consider strategies that are in place and possible areas for development.
- The tool can be completed either by one person or by a team.
- Environments can be individualised for each child. You are not expected to identify all of these areas as being in place in every setting.
- Support should incorporate independent and directed experiences.
- We recommend that up to three areas for development are chosen and a plan is made for when and how to put new approaches into place.
- Use symbols to represent your judgement about how well you fulfil each item in the tool.

| Key - Fill in the relevant shape | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| In place and working well |  |
| Partially in place |  |
| An area for development |  |

| Early Years Setting | Signed | Date |
|---------------------|--------|------|
| | | |

A. Selection of "books" and stories

| |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|---|
| Do the books match the interests of the children? | | | |
| Do the children have favourite stories, which they are allowed to read often? | | | |
| Are more than 15 books available to children (not just in a book corner)? | | | |
| Are the books circulated every 4 weeks? | | | |
| Are there 3 or more books related to the current theme in nursery for each child's level? | | | |
| Are some of the same books at home and in the early years setting? | | | |
| Are there story manipulatives available (felt board and characters/ puppets/ props/ symbols)? | | | |
| Are there new books available as well as some old favourites? | | | |
| Are books sent home for bilingual children, before or after reading them in the early years setting? | | | |
| Does the range of books available suit the needs of all stages of learners in your setting? | | | |
| eg Board books, picture and photo books, lift the flap books, noisy books, rhyming and alliteration books, books related to themes, story books, repetitive books, alphabet and counting books, catalogues, brochures, comics, home made books, fiction and non-fiction books, poetry, books about different cultures, TV related books, cookery books, home-made recipe books, phone books, large books | | | |

CIRCLE Nursery Literacy Rich Environment Tool

B Environmental print




| | ★ | ✓ | + |
|--|---|---|---|
| Are there signs / labels with pictures around the room in the early years setting? (eg labelling areas - story corner/water ...)? | | | |
| Are signs and labels visually clear and in a large size of print or handwriting? | | | |
| Is there a variety of writing on display? (e.g. hand written, printed, other languages, Braille, child's writing/drawing) | | | |
| Is print representative of multicultural groups present? (e.g. boxes in junk corner, boxes with script other than English)? | | | |
| Is children's artwork/writing displayed? | | | |
| Is there an attractive alphabet frieze visible at child height? | | | |
| Are written rules with meaningful pictures visible? (e.g. 3 people at the brick corner, 10 minutes each on the computer, no hitting, don't touch this cupboard)? | | | |
| Is written descriptive language visible (e.g. of child's picture; or a written description about a photo of an event) | | | |
| Are tools for reading and writing available for use in play and routines? | | | |
| Is there a calendar and timetable that children can engage with daily? | | | |
| Are there paintings/posters on the walls with favourite story characters/a favourite story tree? | | | |

C. Arrangement: display, location, book area




| | ★ | ✓ | + |
|---|---|---|---|
| Is there a dedicated book area/corner? | | | |
| Is the book area inviting, with a range of colours and sizes of books, and space for sitting? | | | |
| Are books displayed prominently in the classroom? (and if related to current topics, beside other props, e.g. book about an enormous turnip placed beside Harvest vegetables)? | | | |
| Are literacy topics that are addressed in the early years setting then put up on the walls (eg rhyming verses/songs)? | | | |
| Are there examples of print in the environment placed at children's eye height? | | | |
| eg Menus at snack time with words and pictures, phone book in the house corner, maps and simple visual directions; signing in register, recording snacks, feeding pets; recording the weather; input into personal learning plan folder or all about me book or making own books. | | | |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Key - | |
| Fill in the relevant shape | |
| In place and working well | ★ |
| Partially in place | ✓ |
| An area for development | + |




CIRCLE Literacy Rich Environment Tool

| | |
|---|---|
| Key - Fill in the relevant shape | |
| In place and working well |  |
| Partially in place |  |
| An area for development |  |




D. Encouraging writing

| |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Is there a variety of materials available for writing and drawing? | | | |
| eg Whiteboard, chalk board, paint, magnetic letters, crayons, pens, pencils grips, adapted scissors, card, coloured paper, lined paper, white paper, computer. | | | |
| Are tools fit for purpose (eg are they safe, are pencils sharpened, is playdough fresh)? | | | |
| Do adults scribe children's ideas and stories for them? | | | |
| Are children involved in making written props (eg shopping lists)? | | | |
| Are there examples of writing in scripts relevant to the children? | | | |
| Is at least one area set up to be used for drawing and writing? | | | |
| Is writing and drawing encouraged across learning (eg tools to make menus in the house corner, brushes with water outside)? | | | |
| Are there materials for children to make their own books? | | | |
| Can children play with the alphabet (eg hiding letters in sand/jelly; letter cookie cutters or stamps, puzzles): | | | |




D. Encouraging writing (contd)

| |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|---|
| Is there a place where children know they can find their name to copy or to stick on a picture they have created? | | | |
| Are children encouraged to read/write and communicate with others for a purpose? | | | |
| Is there a multi-sensory approach to learning to write? | | | |
| Eg writing in sand, using stencils or rubber stamps, encouraging pincer grip through playing with pegs, opportunity for sensory play with playdough, shaving foam, gluck, typewriter | | | |




E. Planning and Reflection

| |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|
| Is there a system for recording books that have been read and enjoyed? | | | |
| Is there a system for recording best ways to engage each child in literacy activities? | | | |
| Is use of the book corner monitored and evaluated? | | | |
| Do you audit which children engage with the book corner independently and who only do so in adult organised activities? | | | |
| Are literacy targets (for each child with an identified literacy need) displayed and accessible to all in the room? | | | |
| Are literacy targets shared with parents? | | | |
| Do staff carefully observe children and record their responses to literacy activities? | | | |
| Is story time planned in advance and books selected with clear aim? | | | |




CIRCLE Literacy Rich Environment Tool

| | |
|---|---|
| Key - Fill in the relevant shape | |
| In place and working well |  |
| Partially in place |  |
| An area for development |  |




F. Adult support to participate in literacy

| |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Do adults talk about the letter sounds as well as letter names? | | | |
| Do adults tell/make up stories about their own life experiences? | | | |
| Do adults refer to concepts of print (eg pointing out the right way up to hold the book, the author, title, start, end etc)? | | | |
| Do adults use language levels suited to the children and model good language use? | | | |
| When adults tell stories, are all of the children enjoying and engaged in the story? | | | |
| Can all of the children see the book easily (eg is story time tiered, some on chairs, on cushions and some on the floor)? | | | |
| Is there more than one story group, to accommodate different needs? | | | |
| Do you invite specialist storytellers or take children to story telling sessions in the library? | | | |
| Do you invite parents/older children regularly to do dual language storytelling to all children? | | | |
| Are children encouraged to take an active role in story group time in a group setting? | | | |
| Eg choosing books, commenting, asking and answering questions, holding up props, all joining in repeated line, covering parts of the book and asking questions, letting children fill in gaps. | | | |




G. Frequency of literacy experience

| |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|
| Are children invited to share books/stories several times daily? | | | |
| Are there opportunities for 1:1 and small group stories, song and rhyme times as well as whole group activities? | | | |
| Are there lots of opportunities to hear, sing and discuss rhymes in relevant other languages? | | | |
| Can children always put their name on things they make? (eg writing/making a mark/sticking on a printed name/putting in a tray with their name on)? | | | |
| Do children have opportunities to see their name in English, and their home language (eg daily on coat peg)? | | | |
| Do words have a relevant photo or picture beside them? | | | |
| Are story and writing sacks used between home and nursery? | | | |
| Do parents understand how to use story/writing sacks in English and in their home language? | | | |
| Are there spontaneous opportunities to enjoy jingles, word, play, jokes and singing rhymes? | | | |
| Do staff read and refer to the print which is displayed? | | | |
| On outings do adults point out environmental print? | | | |
| Are adults available in the book corner outwith formal story time activities for 1:1 stories? | | | |
| Are children taken on visits to the library? | | | |




CIRCLE Literacy Rich Environment Tool

| | |
|---|---|
| Key - Fill in the relevant shape | |
| In place and working well |  |
| Partially in place |  |
| An area for development |  |

H. Listening and Talking

| |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Are children encouraged to talk and share experiences? | | | |
| Do staff use children's own experiences and interests to promote communication, conversation and expression? | | | |
| Do staff listen attentively to children to extend their learning and encourage children to participate in dialogue? | | | |
| Do children have opportunities to listen and talk as individuals, in small groups, big groups and play contexts? | | | |
| Are children encouraged to explore events and characters in stories and other texts and to share their learning imaginatively? | | | |
| Are children encouraged to talk about their likes and dislikes relating to stories and other text? | | | |




I. Phonological Awareness

| |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|---|
| Do staff promote opportunities for children to enjoy the rhyming components of songs and rhymes? | | | |
| Are children given opportunities to listen and respond to the sounds and rhythms of words through clapping and music games? | | | |
| Are children given opportunities to use sounds and letters of the alphabet (eg My name begins with...: I spy with my little eye...)? | | | |
| Are children encouraged to explore and play with patterns and sounds of language? | | | |
| Eg clapping games, jingles, alliterative rhymes and stories, rhyming snap, tongue twisters | | | |

CIRCLE Literacy Rich Environment Tool

Scoring and interpreting results

- First, complete the tool and decide which aspects of the environment are

| | |
|---|---|
| Key - Fill in the relevant shape | |
| In place and working well |  |
| Partially in place |  |
| An area for development |  |

- Then transfer your judgements onto the summary sheet. Shade the star, tick or cross for each item. From this you see the result summary and you may see that a particular area would benefit from development. The judgements can then be interpreted to indicate particular strengths and areas for development.

Making a Plan

- The summary can be used to make a plan.
- The Plan can then be used to summarise discussion within your team about steps to be taken in the coming weeks and months.
- Think about things people want to change and how much work will be involved in the change.

- Try to set achievable and realistic goals
- Consider the potential barriers and how you might address them.
- Don't change too much at once - you may choose one big thing like revamping the whole story corner or setting up and making story sacks.
- Alternatively, it may make more sense for your setting to select a few smaller things which are changed easily.
- Change can always be challenging and it will be important to build in strategies for maintaining and building on positive changes. For example, write down, How will all staff know about the plan? How will you all be reminded to work on the plan? How will you know when the change is in place and if it's working? How will you celebrate your success?
- Identify who in your setting will make changes and who you may need to enlist for support from partner agencies, for training, resources or information.
- Identify a time to review progress

CIRCLE Literacy Rich Environment Summary

| | | ★ | ✓ | + |
|--|------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Selection of Books and Stories | Books match children's interests | | | |
| | Favourite stories read often | | | |
| | More than 15 books available | | | |
| | Books circulated | | | |
| | Books related to themes | | | |
| | Same books at home | | | |
| | Story manipulatives available | | | |
| | New books available | | | |
| | Books home for bilingual children | | | |
| | Books at all stages | | | |
| Environmental Print | Signs and labels with pictures | | | |
| | Signs and labels large and clear | | | |
| | Variety of writing displayed | | | |
| | Print is culturally representative | | | |
| | Work is displayed | | | |
| | Alphabet frieze visible | | | |
| | Rules have meaningful pictures | | | |
| | Descriptive language visible | | | |
| | Reading/writing tools available | | | |
| | Daily calendar/timetable | | | |
| Arrangement, display, location, book area | Dedicated book area | | | |
| | Inviting space | | | |
| | Books displayed prominently | | | |
| | Literacy topics on wall | | | |
| | Environmental print positioning | | | |
| Encouraging Writing | Variety of materials available | | | |
| | Tools fit for purpose | | | |
| | Adults scribe | | | |
| | Written props | | | |
| | Scripts relevant | | | |
| | Area set for drawing and writing | | | |
| | Writing and drawing encouraged | | | |
| | Materials to make own books | | | |
| | Alphabet play | | | |
| | Name available to copy/stick | | | |
| Planning and Reflection | Recording system for books | | | |
| | Recording systems for engagement | | | |
| | Monitoring and evaluation | | | |
| | Audit | | | |
| | Literacy targets displayed | | | |

| | | ★ | ✓ | + |
|---|---|----------------------------|---|---|
| Planning and Reflection (contd) | Targets shared with parents | | | |
| | Observations | | | |
| | Planning with clear aim | | | |
| Adult support to participate in literacy | Letter sounds/letter name | | | |
| | Tell/make up stories | | | |
| | Refer to concepts in print | | | |
| | Vary language level and model | | | |
| | Enjoyment and engagement | | | |
| | Children can see book | | | |
| | More than one story group | | | |
| | Storytellers/library sessions | | | |
| | Dual language storytelling | | | |
| | Active role for children in groups | | | |
| Frequency of Literacy Experiences | Sharing books during day one to one and group opportunities | | | |
| | Hear/sing and discuss rhymes | | | |
| | Placing name on work belongings | | | |
| | See name | | | |
| | Relevant photo or picture | | | |
| | Writing / story sacks | | | |
| | Home language story sacks | | | |
| | Spontaneous opportunities | | | |
| | Read and refer to print | | | |
| | Point out environmental print | | | |
| | Staff available outwith story time | | | |
| | Library visits | | | |
| | Listening and talking | Talk and share experiences | | |
| Use of child's interests/experiences | | | | |
| Staff use attentive listening | | | | |
| Listen/talk as individuals | | | | |
| Explore events and characters | | | | |
| Explore likes/dislikes of story | | | | |
| Rhyming opportunities | | | | |
| Phonological awareness | Listening/response opportunities | | | |
| | Sounds letters of the alphabet | | | |
| | Explore/play with patterns/sound | | | |
| | | | | |
| Early years setting: | | | | |
| Date: | | | | |
| Signed: | | | | |

CIRCLE Literacy Rich Environment Summary

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <p>You could make a plan, below by writing down which areas to target based on the summary</p> | |
| <p>Date:</p> <p>Environment considered:</p> <p>Date for review:</p> | <p>Areas to Target</p> |
| <p>Write down aspects of the literacy environment that are in place and work well</p> | |
| | |
| | |
| <p>Write down aspects of the literacy environment that could be better</p> | |
| | |
| | |
| <p>Select one thing you would like to change and write down the steps that are needed to make progress; who will</p> | <p>Thing to change</p> |
| | <p>Who will be involved</p> |
| | <p>Resources / training needed</p> |
| <p>What we will do to create successful change</p> | |