

Best Practices in

Literacy Instruction for Early Childhood Education Teachers

Big Ideas	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
<p>Establishes predictable literacy routines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher establishes some rituals and routines for literacy practices to support classroom management during whole group, small group, and independent work time. • Teacher creates some charts that delineate classroom expectations. • Teacher works with students to develop a sense of community. • Paraprofessionals or classroom volunteers prepare materials and perform clerical duties. • Teacher sometimes implements some Reading and/or Writing Workshop components, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read-alouds. ○ Shared reading. ○ Small group instruction. ○ Center time. ○ Teacher-directed writing projects, prompts, and cloze activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and paraprofessional establish rituals and routines for literacy practices to encourage student engagement and self-regulation during whole group, small group, and independent work time. • Teacher, paraprofessional, and students create attribute charts, self-regulation plans, and simple rubrics with icons and visuals to support student understanding and independence. • Teacher, paraprofessional, and students sometimes refer to charts, plans, and rubrics to reinforce and evaluate performance on routines. • Teacher and paraprofessional work with students to develop a sense of community of trust, respect, and empathy. • Teacher and paraprofessional frequently implement Reading and Writing Workshop components, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read-alouds (see Whole Group). ○ Shared reading (see Whole Group). ○ Mini-lessons (e.g., About the Authors for Writing Workshop) (see Whole Group). ○ Meeting with individuals and small groups (see Whole Group). ○ Independent center time (see Whole Group). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and paraprofessional work with students to establish clear rituals and routines for literacy practices to encourage student engagement and self-regulation during whole group, small group, and independent work time. • Teacher, paraprofessional, and students practice rituals and routines and create attribute charts, self-regulation plans, and simple rubrics with icons and visuals to support student understanding and independence. • Teacher, paraprofessional, and students refer to charts, plans, and rubrics regularly to reinforce and evaluate performance on routines. • Teacher and paraprofessional consciously work with students to develop a sense of community of trust, respect, and empathy. • Teacher and paraprofessional consistently plan for and implement Reading and Writing Workshop components daily, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read-alouds (see Whole Group). ○ Shared reading (see Whole Group). ○ Mini-lessons (e.g., About the Authors for Writing Workshop) (see Whole Group). ○ Meeting with individuals and small groups (see Small Group). ○ Independent center time (see Independent Practice).

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<p>Sets up rich, literate classroom environment</p>	<p>Classroom Library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can access a variety of books and materials. Books are organized and displayed. <p>Classroom Arrangement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom has appropriate space used for whole group gatherings. Students' desks are organized to allow some student interaction. Classroom arrangement emphasizes teacher-directed instruction. <p>Classroom Displays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some charts and rubrics, generally teacher-developed, are posted or accessible. Classrooms display some student work. 	<p>Classroom Library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can access a variety of books and reading materials representing various topics of interest, genres, and authors. Books are effectively sorted and labeled in a way students understand. Books are displayed attractively. Students sometimes take home books, including class-made books. <p>Classroom Arrangement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom arrangement accommodates a variety of student groupings (i.e., whole group, small groups, partners, independent work). Classroom arrangement reflects mix of teacher-directed and some student-directed interactions, including centers. <p>Classroom Displays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher and students occasionally refer to class-developed charts and rubrics that are posted or accessible. Teacher and students often refer to relevant, easy-to-read displays during discussions. Classrooms and hallways display regularly changing student work. Some charts contain pictures to support beginning readers and/or ELLs. 	<p>Classroom Library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Books are displayed attractively, are easily accessible, and include a wide collection of culturally diverse materials that represent various topics, authors, and genres. English and Spanish leveled books are available in levels A–3. Books and reading materials, appropriate to students' needs and interests, are available to support science and social studies instruction. Books are effectively sorted and labeled so students can explain, maintain in tubs, and use the library independently. Students regularly take home books and other reading materials. <p>Classroom Arrangement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom arrangement accommodates a variety of student groupings (i.e., whole group, small groups, partners, independent work). Classroom arrangement emphasizes student interactions, in addition to teacher-directed interactions. Teacher encourages productive, accountable talk by having areas and times for students to work together. Books support learning centers within center areas (e.g., block center has books related to building, art center has art books). <p>Classroom Displays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class-developed charts, plans, and examples with appropriate visuals provide effective student references (within fire code regulations). Students can explain how to use charts that reflect current teaching and learning. Classrooms and hallways routinely display student work to provide literacy opportunities and examples of learning and celebrate students' accomplishments. Regularly changed displays reflect ongoing learning.

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<p>Provides foundation for early reading, writing, and oral language development</p>	<p>Early Reading and Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher reads aloud daily. Students develop book-handling skills during buddy and independent reading. Writing is often teacher-directed. <p>Oral Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral language opportunities usually occur in whole group and are teacher-directed. Teacher uses oral language development curriculum (<i>Avenues</i>) to support students' language, literacy, and content development. 	<p>Early Reading and Writing</p> <p>Teacher and paraprofessional usually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read aloud every day to develop oral language and vocabulary, develop reading enjoyment, provide opportunities for accountable talk, and study authors. Establish reading for meaning and concepts of print through daily shared reading with big books, poetry, songs, etc. Support students at their developmental reading and writing stages and honor students' approximations. Establish book-handling skills and love of reading through buddy and independent reading time with easily accessible books. Offer students opportunities to write for a variety of purposes (e.g., to make books during Writing Workshop; to write lists, notes, directions during center time). Use <i>About the Authors</i> to support students in making "stuff." Model writing to support students' understandings of transcribing and making meaning. <p>Oral Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral language opportunities occur in whole and small group throughout the day. Teacher and paraprofessional support students' language development through high-level play. Oral language development curriculum (<i>Avenues</i>) is used to extend oral language, literacy, and content development based around a theme. 	<p>Early Reading and Writing</p> <p>Teacher and paraprofessional consistently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read aloud daily for specific purposes—develop oral language and vocabulary, develop understanding of all the reasons why people read, support comprehension and story structure, provide opportunities for accountable talk, study authors and different genres. Establish reading for meaning, fluency, and concepts of print through daily shared reading with big books, poetry, and songs. Do rhymes and word games with students to develop phonological awareness. Establish book-handling skills and love of reading through buddy and independent reading time with easily accessible books. Support students at their developmental reading and writing stages and honor students' approximations. Offer students opportunities to write for a variety of purposes (e.g., to make books during Writing Workshop; to write lists, notes, directions during center time). Use <i>About the Authors</i> to support students in making "stuff" and understanding how authors make choices when they write books. Provide guided, shared, and interactive writing instruction to support students' understandings of composing and transcribing. <p>Oral Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberate oral language opportunities occur in whole and small group throughout the day. Teacher and paraprofessional create situations that support the Speaking and Listening Standard of a student initiating and sustaining a conversation with comments or questions through at least four exchanges. Teacher and paraprofessional support students' language development through carefully scaffolded high-level play. Oral language development curriculum (<i>Avenues</i>) is used to extend oral language, literacy, and content development based around a theme. Lessons are tied to prior learning.

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<p>Scaffolds instruction by providing effective whole group instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most instruction occurs in whole group. • Teacher occasionally uses sheltered instructional techniques during whole group instruction for ELLs. • Reading Workshop sometimes includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Daily read-alouds. ○ Shared reading lesson. • Whole group instruction during Writing Workshop sometimes includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Writing projects. ○ Mini-lessons on "Making Stuff" (<i>About the Authors</i> by Katie Wood Ray) using mentor author texts. • Mini-lessons sometimes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connections to previous learning. ○ Demonstration (modeling), think-aloud, or explanation. ○ Some student involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group instruction is interspersed with small group and independent time throughout the day. Teacher paces whole group instruction to engage students. • Teacher sometimes uses sheltered instructional techniques during whole group instruction for ELLs. • Reading Workshop usually includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Daily read-alouds, either during theme development or as separate activity. ○ Ten- to 15-minute shared reading lesson. • Whole group instruction during Writing Workshop usually includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mini-lesson that supports student understanding of message, meaning making, and early concepts of print (e.g., concept of letters and words, some letter-sound relationships). ○ Mini-lessons on "Making Stuff" (<i>About the Authors</i> by Katie Wood Ray) using mentor author texts. • Five- to 10-minute mini-lessons usually include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connections to previous learning. ○ Intended learning statement. ○ Explicit demonstration (modeling), think-aloud, or explanation. ○ Active student involvement with significant opportunities for oral rehearsal. ○ Link to students' independent work, where students attempt to apply mini-lesson during small group and independent work. ○ Student sharing linked to mini-lesson instructional focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group instruction is interspersed throughout the day and reinforced in small group and independent time to encourage maximum student engagement. Teacher paces whole group instruction to engage students. • Teacher uses sheltered instructional techniques very intentionally during whole group instruction for ELLs. • Reading Workshop consistently includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Daily read-alouds, either during theme development or as separate activity. ○ Ten- to 15-minute shared reading lessons with planned intended learning. Lessons address identified standards and meet students' needs as determined by ongoing observation and assessment. The same shared reading text is used for 3–5 days to build language, concepts, and literacy understandings. ○ Engaging shared reading texts chosen by teacher and characterized by enlarged text of one or two lines per page, supportive illustrations, repeating text, and rhythm and rhyme (some of the time) to clearly address intended learning. • Writing Workshop consistently includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planned, focused mini-lessons appropriate in supporting student understanding of message, meaning making, and early concepts of print (e.g., concept of letters and words, some letter-sound relationships). ○ Mini-lessons on "Making Stuff" (<i>About the Authors</i> by Katie Wood Ray) using mentor author texts. Students are shown several texts with same themes and/or text structures and encouraged to write using focus text of the day OR previous mentor text. • Five- to 10-minute mini-lessons always include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connections to previous learning. ○ Intended learning statement. ○ Explicit demonstration (modeling), think-aloud, or explanation. ○ Active student involvement with significant opportunities for oral rehearsal. ○ Link to students' independent work, where students attempt to apply mini-lesson during small group and independent work. ○ Student sharing linked to mini-lesson instructional focus.

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<p>Scaffolds instruction by providing small group instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During small group instruction, teacher places students in groups of six or less. • Teacher plans same lesson for all groups. • In reading, teacher works with small groups of students around concept development and rereads texts to extend oral language and concept development. • In writing, teacher occasionally works with small groups to support writing projects. • Teacher occasionally collects anecdotal notes on individual students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher places students by experience in groups of six or less and differentiates lessons for each group. • In reading, teacher uses the model of Intimate Shared Cognition to clarify and extend shared reading and read-aloud texts. Language and concept development are the focus. Teacher uses pictures and props to elicit students' oral language. • In writing, teacher supports students with their writing in small groups and individually by having students orally share their stories and talk about their drawings. • Teacher sometimes uses assisted drawing, shared writing, language experience, and interactive writing in small group instruction to support students' writing development. Teacher encourages exploration of language and writing. • Teacher regularly collects anecdotal notes on individual students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During small group instruction, teacher groups students by experience in groups of six or less and differentiates lessons. Teacher frequently regroups students, depending on students' changing needs. • Well-planned lessons are connected to prior learning. Teacher constantly considers individual students' strengths and needs. • In reading, teacher uses the model of Intimate Shared Cognition to clarify and extend shared reading and read-aloud texts. Teacher focuses on making and extending meaning and on child talk and creates cognitive connections and uses additional resources, such as pictures, props, and puppets, to expand on students' concept development and language learning. • In writing, teacher supports students in small groups and individually by having students orally share their stories and talk about their drawings. • Teacher regularly uses assisted drawing, shared writing, language experience, and interactive writing to support students' writing development and focuses on composing meaning and connecting writing to students' drawing. Teacher encourages exploration of language and writing. • Teacher collects anecdotal notes on individual students' strengths and needs and uses this information to plan next day's lesson and differentiate instruction.

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<p>Scaffolds instruction by providing opportunities for independent practice and self-regulation</p>	<p>Independent Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students sometimes read classroom library books. <p>Centers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher sets up a variety of centers to support literacy, mathematics, language, and concept development, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table toys with puzzles and sorting toys. Sociodramatic play where students play out familiar roles. Science materials for discovery and observation. Blocks where students interact with building materials. Art with a variety of materials. Literacy center that includes writing materials, books, and other literacy-related materials. Center time is regularly scheduled. Materials are clean and organized. Students know behavioral expectations. Teacher determines student placements during center time. 	<p>Independent Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During Reading Workshop, students “read” books from book tubs individually and/or with partners, discuss books, and participate in literacy activities, such as re-enacting stories during dramatic play, listening to books on tape, and/or rereading big books and poetry. During Writing Workshop, students write and draw their own messages. <p>Centers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher sets up a variety of centers to support literacy, mathematics, language, and concept development, including all of the following choices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table toys that encourage problem solving with puzzles, manipulatives, small building materials, and sorting toys. Sociodramatic play where students develop language by taking on character roles from stories or people in their environment (e.g., grocery store workers). Science where students develop concepts by experimenting and observing. Mathematics where students extend mathematical understanding by playing Everyday Mathematics games. Blocks where students develop spatial concepts by building things. Art where students express creativity with a variety of art materials. Writing where students practice literacy understandings in a variety of ways (e.g., making books, writing notes to each other, making messages for their parents). Library/listening/big books where students practice literacy understandings by interacting with books in a variety of ways. Teacher is intentional about modeling, supporting, and practicing center activities with students to maximize student engagement at centers. Teacher changes centers to support current instruction and themes. Students attend centers daily and have an opportunity to choose, plan, and reflect on the work they chose. Center tasks provide for class’ developmental range. Materials are well-maintained and organized. Literacy props are available in all centers. 	<p>Independent Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During Reading Workshop, students “read” books from book tubs individually and/or with partners, discuss books, and participate in literacy activities, such as re-enacting stories during dramatic play, listening to books on tape, and/or rereading big books and poetry. During Writing Workshop, students write and draw their own messages. <p>Centers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher sets up a variety of centers that support literacy, mathematics, language, and concept development, including all of the following choices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics and/or table toys to encourage problem solving with manipulatives and extend mathematical understandings previously taught in small group using Everyday Mathematics games. Kid-friendly five-finger plans tied to specific content and materials previously used in small group are also available. Sociodramatic play where students practice roles and language tied to stories and content previously taught in small group. Roles and language are elaborate and change during the year according to literacy and content units of study. Science where students practice and extend previously taught scientific concepts. Functional writing, drawing, and journaling are integral to students’ experiments and observations. Blocks with play animals, people, props, and writing/drawing materials for students to build structures and play out previously taught scenarios. Art where students express creativity and recreate products tied to a specific theme or literacy unit previously introduced by teacher. Kid-friendly plans are provided for students to use to create. Writing where students practice literacy understanding and create books and drawings tied to content previously taught in Reading and Writing Workshops. Reading where students practice literacy understandings by interacting with a variety of literacy materials, including books tubbed by themes, big books, songs, poems, charts, stories on tape, computer stories, puppets, and props tied to specific stories. Teacher is intentional about modeling, supporting, and practicing center activities with students to maximize student engagement at centers. Teacher changes centers regularly to support current instruction and themes. Students attend centers daily and have an opportunity to choose, plan, and reflect on the work they chose. Center tasks provide for class’ developmental range. Materials are well-maintained and organized. Literacy props are available in all centers, and their use has been modeled for students.

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	<p>Self-Regulation Some rituals and routines have been practiced, and students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage their behavior with significant teacher support. • Follow directions about what to do next. • Know how to care for resources. • Move around the room with teacher permission. • Begin to problem solve to minimize behavior issues. 	<p>Self-Regulation Rituals and routines are established, and students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage their behavior with some teacher support. • Know what is expected during work time. • Refer to goals while reading. • Transition from one activity to another with teacher support. • Maintain resources respectfully. • Work well with reading partners and in groups for short periods. • Move around the room to locate resources. • Problem solve to minimize behavior issues. <p>Teacher uses contracts and a predictable behavior management system to support students, if needed.</p>	<p>Self-Regulation Teacher supports the development of self-regulation by providing a predictable center management system that uses mediators and oral language. Rituals and routines are firmly established, and students routinely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay on task and manage their behavior independently. • Use charts and artifacts individually to support their learning. • Transition from one activity to another efficiently, independently, and respectfully. • Know what to do during work time and when the time ends. • Know what to do when they finish an activity. • Maintain resources respectfully. • Work well with partners and in small groups, turn-taking conversationally. • Move around the room without disruption to locate resources and confer. • Problem solve to minimize behavior issues and encourage respect for others' learning.
<p>Uses literacy artifacts effectively</p>	<p>Book Tubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher usually chooses books for partner or independent reading. <p>Anecdotal Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher maintains a system to collect anecdotal notes during the year. • Teacher makes entries during large or small group or one-on-one time. 	<p>Book Tubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher sometimes supports students in choosing engaging books for partner and independent reading and support their reading for extended period. <p>Anecdotal Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher maintains a system to collect anecdotal notes during the year. • Teacher makes entries during large or small group or one-on-one time that include observations about students' use of strategies for concepts of print, phonemic awareness, comprehension, and fluency, and about ability to talk about the book. 	<p>Book Tubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher consistently supports students in choosing engaging books for partner and independent reading and support their reading for extended period. <p>Anecdotal Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher maintains a system to collect anecdotal notes during the year to reflect on individual students' strengths, needs, and progress. • Teacher makes frequent entries during large or small group or one-on-one time that include observations (including running records, if appropriate) about students' use of strategies for concepts of print, phonemic awareness, comprehension, and fluency, and about use of oral language and ability to talk about their response to the book.

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<p>Works to meet ALL students' needs (e.g., ELL, special education, gifted and talented)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read-alouds and mini-lessons are aimed at most students' listening comprehension levels. • Teacher builds on students' background knowledge. • Teacher sometimes has students turn and talk and buddy read. • Teacher creates some charts that sometimes includes icons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read-alouds and mini-lessons are aimed at most students' listening comprehension levels. Teacher uses SIOP techniques, including using visuals, realia, and/or gestures, for students who will be challenged by the book. • Teacher builds on students' background experiences and concept knowledge. • Teacher uses a variety of grouping formats for students who need more support for oral language practice (e.g., buddy reading, turn-and-talk procedures). Students sometimes participate in both homogeneous and heterogeneous groupings to meet different purposes. • Charts and rubrics have icons and visuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read-alouds and shared reading are aimed at most students' listening comprehension levels. For students who will be challenged by the book, teacher may prepare those students in Intimate Shared Cognition small groups ahead of time to support their engagement during whole group instruction. During the lesson, teacher uses SIOP techniques, including using visuals and/or realia, gesturing and acting out, having students repeat in own words what they are to do, prompting students appropriately to respond at their language proficiency levels, an/or extending their language. • Teacher builds on students' strengths and connects to students' background experiences and concept knowledge. Teacher builds background knowledge, if necessary. • Teacher uses a variety of grouping formats for students who need more support for oral language practice (e.g., buddy reading, turn-and-talk procedures). Students participate in both homogeneous and heterogeneous groupings to meet different purposes. • Teacher offers students frequent, multiple opportunities to interact with one another and use oral language purposefully during whole group, small group, and independent time. • To encourage the home-school connection, students can take home books (e.g., book bags). • Attribute charts and plans are written with student input and in child-friendly language with visuals or icons to support meaning.