

Interest-Based Everyday Early Literacy Learning

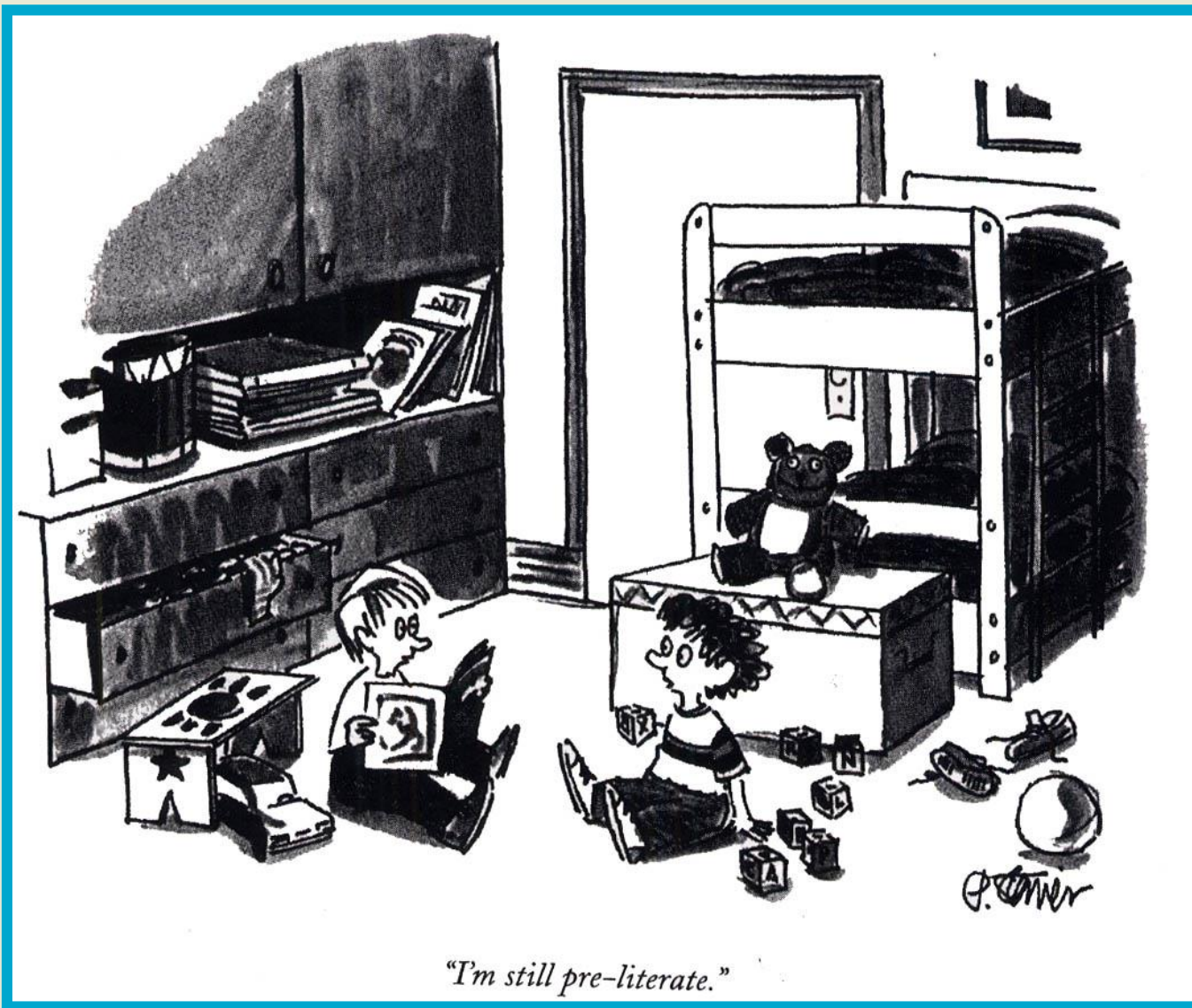
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**Presentation prepared for the Partnership for Inclusion
Practices Session, Farmington, CT, October 1, 2010.**

Purposes of the Presentation

- Describe the kinds of everyday learning opportunities providing young children early literacy development experiences
- Describe a model for early literacy learning developed at the *Center for Early Literacy Learning*
- Introduce participants to child interest-based and everyday literacy learning scales
- Illustrate how to use everyday literacy learning opportunities as the foundation for developing literacy competence

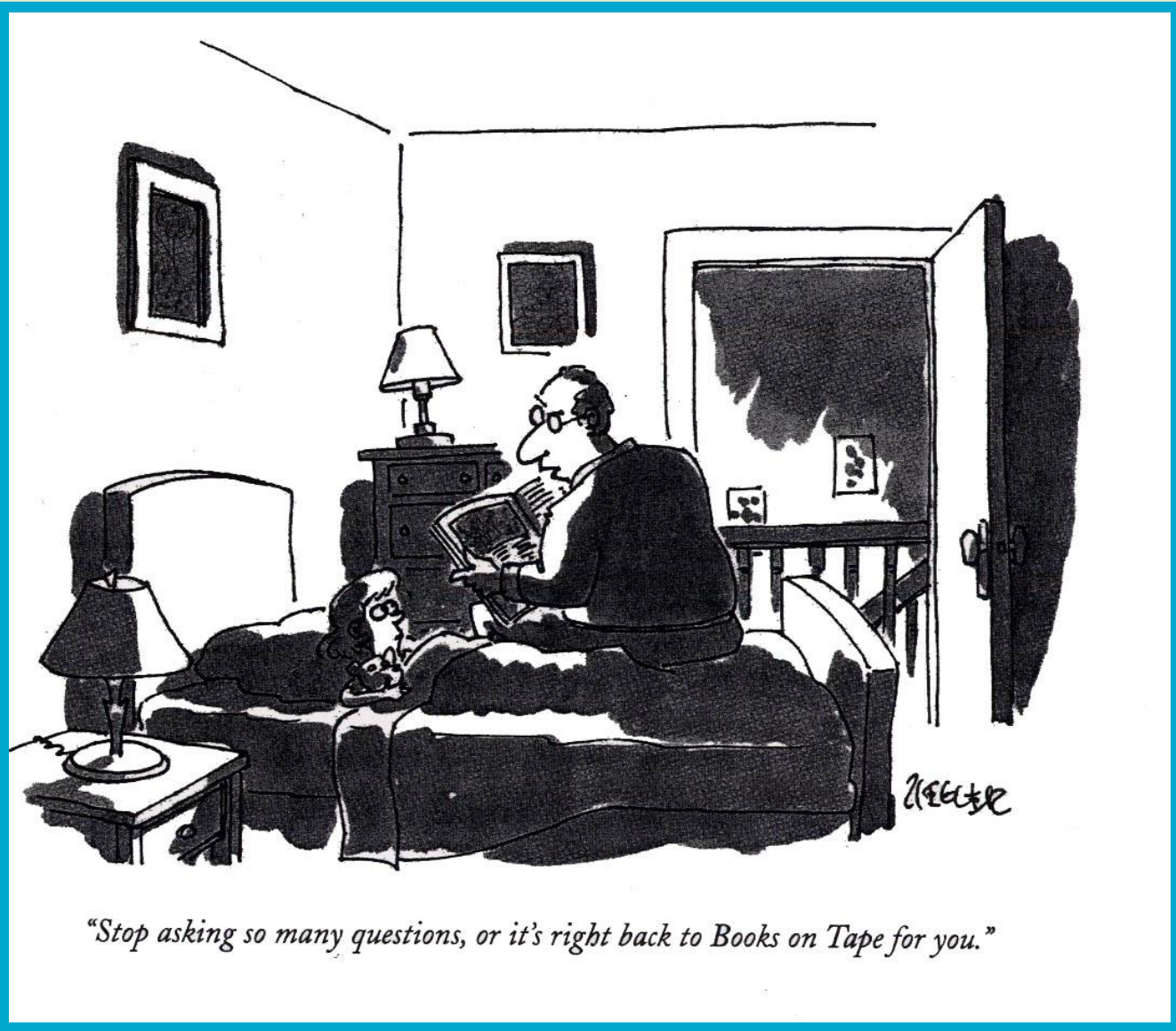


"I'm still pre-literate."

DENNIS THE MENACE/Hank Ketcham



"I DON'T NEED TO ENLARGE MY VO-CAB-U-LARY!
I ALREADY KNOW ENOUGH WORDS TO SAY
EVERYTHING I WANT TO SAY!"



"Stop asking so many questions, or it's right back to Books on Tape for you."



"It's a bedtime story. It doesn't need corroboration."



"I think he's finally asleep."

Six Major Domains of Literacy Learning

- Written Language
- Text Comprehension
- Phonological Awareness
- Print Awareness
- Oral Language
- Alphabetic Awareness

Written Language

Ability to represent ideas or spoken language in a printed or written format







Text Comprehension

Ability to understand and process the meaning of ideas represented in pictures or text







Phonological Awareness

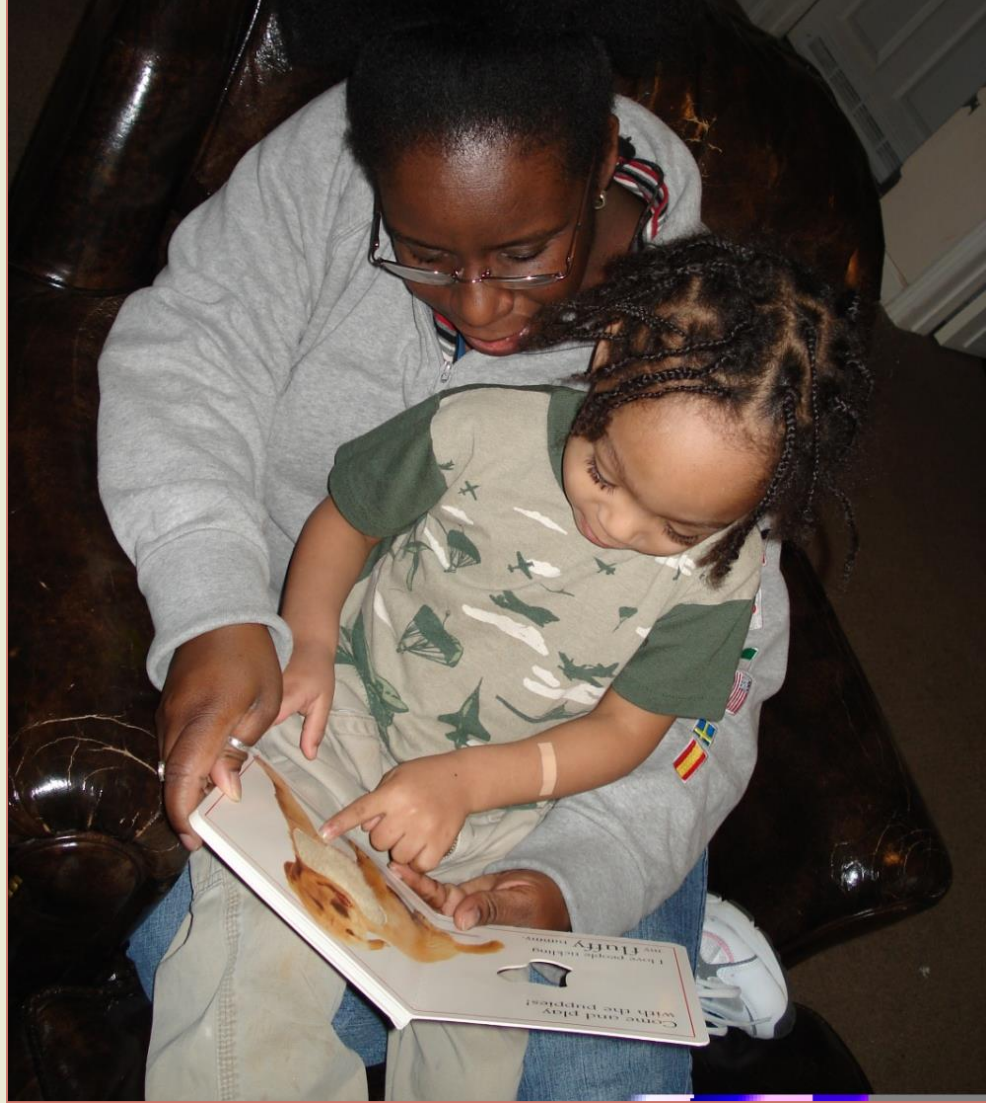
Ability to hear and discriminate the sounds in words and spoken language





Print Awareness

Ability to recognize pictures or symbols and read words in printed format or text accurately and quickly





Oral Language

Ability to use words to communicate ideas and thoughts using language as a tool





Alphabetic Awareness

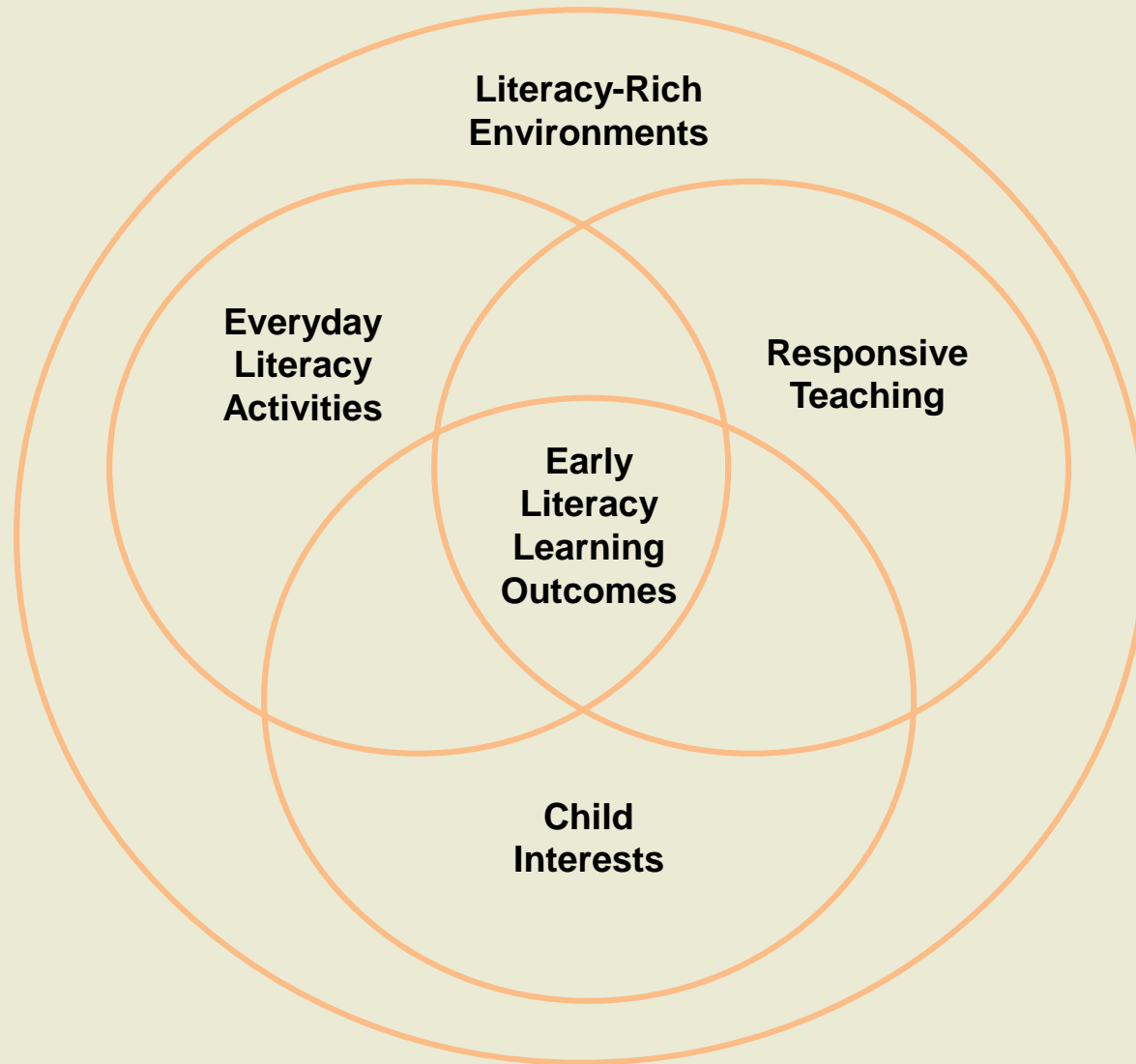
Ability to recognize the letters of the alphabet as part of word recognition and use







Center for Early Literacy Learning Intervention Model



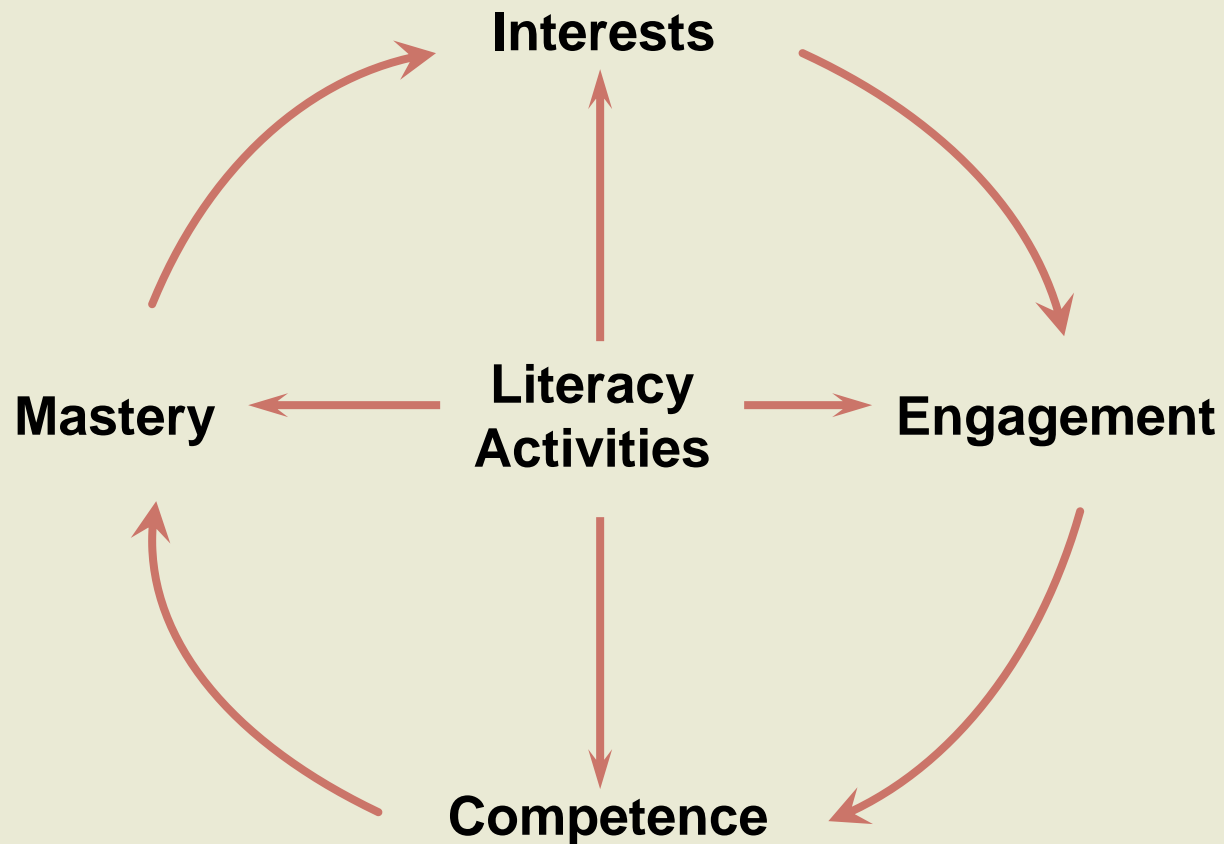
Promoting Child Participation in Everyday Literacy-Learning Activities

- Identifying Child Interests
- Matching Interests to Everyday Activities
- Increasing Child Participation in Interest-Based Activities
- Parent Engagement of Child in Everyday Literacy Learning

Child Interests

- All children, with and without disabilities, have interests and preferences
- A child's interests are the basis of CELL early literacy practices

Interest-Based Cycle of Mastery



Types of Children's Interests

Children have different types of interests:

- **Personal interests** form the basis of activities (e.g., stuffed animals, balls, action figures)
- **Natural interests** in talking, reading, and writing
- **Situational interests** are triggered by features or “interestingness” of the context (e.g., street fair, table with art supplies, new classroom play area)

Examples of Interests Across Developmental Ages

- **Infants**

- Cooing or babbling, rocking, rattles, musical toys, grasping, bright colors, new people

- **Toddlers**

- Music, special story or book, riding toys, colored markers, special friend, bugs

- **Preschoolers**

- Dress-up, books, pets, eating out, painting, games, nursery rhymes, balls

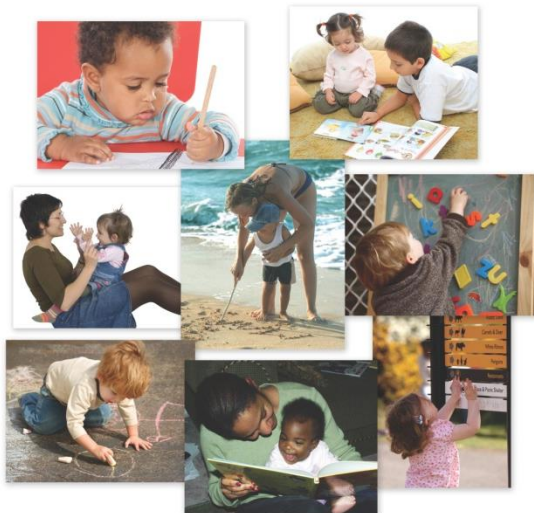
Tools for Linking Interests and Activities



Interest-Based Everyday Literacy Activity Checklist

Young children learn to listen, talk, read, and write as part of their involvement in interesting everyday activities. Inside you'll find a list of activities that your child and your family might do as part of your home and family life. Please mark (✓) the activities that are your child's interests or that might be interesting for your child.

Child's Name _____ Date of Birth _____ Today's Date _____



Interests Assessment *in* Early Childhood Classrooms

Carol M. Trivette, Ph.D.

How To Use the Assessment:

This simple assessment tool provides a quick way to pinpoint interests that are shared by groups of young children. You can use this information as a guide in developing activities that will appeal to the group's interests, enabling the children in your program to experience creative, interest-based learning activities that they will find truly engaging, beneficial, and fun!

Follow These Easy Steps:

1. Look, listen, and observe your class. Focus on what the children are doing and saying. Try to look beyond the obvious to discover what subjects or activities have captured the children's imaginations.
2. Read through the sample interest activities printed in the chart on the following pages. In the blank boxes write additional interests you've observed among the children in your class. Then, while thinking of one child in your class at a time, write his or her first name in three boxes under the three activities you believe hold the greatest interest for him or her. Repeat this process for each class member, writing their first names in the boxes with their three top interests or assets.
3. After indicating all of your class members' greatest interests, consider the chart as a whole. Which activities have the most children's names under them?



Spotting My Child's Very Special Interests

A Workbook for Parents



Possibilities™ presents:

Spotting My Child's Very Special Interests

A Workbook for Parents



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WELCOME!

Participants in the Puckett Institute's *Possibilities* project have found that matching their children's interests with activities and opportunities sparked by those interests results in **powerful learning and FUN!**

Moms and dads appreciate *Possibilities' Bright Ideas Pages* because these collections of community resources and ideas for fun help them select interest-based activities their children will enjoy.

This workbook gives parents a very simple way to pinpoint their children's special interests. Then it's easy to let the interests they've identified serve as starting points for their children's participation in fun learning opportunities in their community.

We invite you to spend a few minutes completing the workbook pages. Use them to discover your child's special interests, and then reap the benefits of interest-based experiences for yourself and your child. As we've learned ... the possibilities are endless!

We think one of our parents expressed it best:

"When your child is having fun, you're having fun!"



What My Child Likes To Do



My child's name: _____ Age: _____

Some things that make my child smile and laugh are:

Some things my child enjoys doing are:

My Child's Preferences

Noticing what activities or things a child chooses or prefers to do is one way to know what he or she is interested in.

When given a choice, what *kinds* of activities does my child choose or prefer?

What things does my child like to do over and over again?

Interest “Indicators”

Smiling, sticking with an activity for a long time, ***asking questions***, or ***having new ideas*** about an activity are some of the things children do that show they’re interested in something.

Some ways my child shows me s/he’s interested in an activity are:
(Hint: Try to use “-ing” verbs like “laughing” or “humming.”)

1 _____ # 3 _____

2 _____ # 4 _____



Special Interests

Some of the things my child is doing when I see him/her doing # 1 (from the previous list) : _____

2: _____

3: _____

4: _____



You might spot some of your child's special interests in the list below, and you'll think of others to add. Make a check mark next to the interests that are his or her favorites.

Animals	Dinosaurs	Housekeeping	Rocks
Animal Play	Doctoring, medicine	Indoor table games	Running
Balls	Dogs	Jewelry	Sand
Baseball	Dolls	Jumping	Scooter, skateboard
Basketball	Drama, acting, theater	Machines	Singing
Beekeeping	Drawing	Making friends	Skating
Bikes	Dress Up	Martial arts	Sliding
Birds	Duck Ponds	Modeling	Snow
Boats, canoes, kayaks	Exploring	Movie/tv/video games	Soccer
Books/Stories	Family Outings	Music	Sorting
Bowling	Fantasy, fairy tales	Musical instruments	Spinning
Boxes	Farms, farming	Nature, environment	Stacking
Bugs/Insects	Firefighting	Needle crafts	Stories
Building	Fishing	Opening, closing	Surprises
Camping	Flowers	Outdoor group games	Swimming
Cars	Flying	Painting	Swinging
Chess	Friends	Pets	Tools
Clay, ceramics	Gardening	Photography	Trains
Climbing	Golf	Picnics	Traveling
Collecting	Gymnastics	Planting	Trucks
Coloring	Hairstyling	Playgrounds	Walking
Cooking	Hand tools	Pretending	Water
Crafts	Helping	Pulling	Weaving
Cutting	Hiding	Pushing	Wheels
Dance Classes	Hiking	Puzzles	Woodworking
Dancing	History		
Digging	Horses		

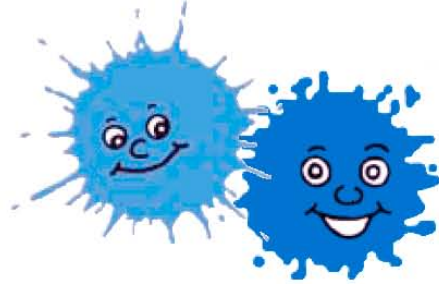
Favorite Places

Children sometimes have special places they like to go that they find fun and enjoyable. Some children like to go to the playground, or go to the movies, or be in the woods....

The places my child especially likes are: _____

What s/he likes to do in these special places: _____





Favorite People

Sometimes the places where children go to meet new friends give us an idea of the kinds of things that interest them.

Where does my child go to meet new friends (Hint: Places some children meet other children are playgrounds, play groups, parks, sporting events, neighbor's homes, etc.) ?

What is my child doing when s/he finds it easiest to meet new friends (or to be with children s/he already knows like neighbors, siblings, or cousins) ?

Matching Interests With Activities

Now that I've spotted many of the things my child is interested in, and many things s/he likes to do, I'm ready to match those interests with fun activities I think s/he would enjoy experiencing in our community.

My child loves:

Let's try:

#1 *Water*
(example)

Swim lessons at the "Y"
Playing with our garden hose, sprinkler
Washing the car with Daddy
Playing in the Montreat playground creek
Tossing pebbles into Lake Tomahawk

#2

#3

#4

#5

From Possibilities to *Participation!*

Finally, the most fun — making it happen!

In other words, what are some things *I* can do now to help make it possible for my child to participate in the interest-based activities I've spotted? There's room below to make your notes!

Example:

Interest: *Water*

Action steps:

- 1. Call "Y" or check their web site for swim class schedule.*
- 2. Check county map for directions to Montreat playground.*
- 3. Plan a family picnic at Lake Tomahawk (call Black Mtn. Rec and Parks Dept. to ask about picnic shelter).*

Interest:

Action steps:

Interest:

Action steps:

Interest:

Action steps:

Just remember:

Interests + Activities = FUN!

Selected Sources of Everyday Literacy Learning Opportunities

Oral Language

- Talking on the telephone
- Saying nursery rhymes
- Pretend phone conversation
- Meal time conversations

Print Awareness

- Looking at a family phone album
- Looking at a picture dictionary
- Cutting letters/pictures from a magazine

Written Language

- Keyboarding
- Making a shopping list
- Drawing with crayons
- Making birthday cards

Language Comprehension

- Listening to bedtime stories
- Looking at magazines
- Listening to Storytellers

Phonological Awareness

- Playing lap games
- Repeating jingles/phrases from TV
- Singing songs

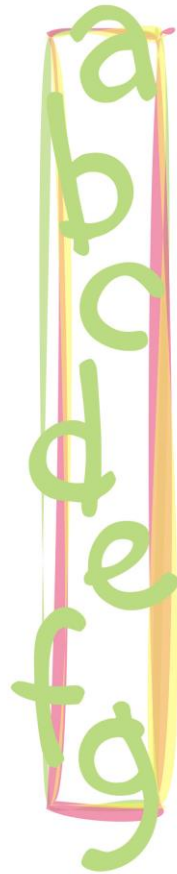
Alphabet Awareness

- Playing with alphabet stamps
- Writing on a chalkboard
- Finding letters of one's name

Early Literacy Experiences Scale

- Extensive review of the preliteracy development literature
- Compilation of preliteracy development experiences
- Classification of the experiences by literacy domain
- Development of scale items
- Field testing of the scale items (in process)
- Use of the scale for research and practice

Early Literacy Experiences Scale



Early Literacy Experiences Scale

Carl J. Dunst
Melinda Raab
Pamela L. Shue

The Early Literacy Experiences Scale includes questions about young children's everyday opportunities to learn and practice early language and literacy skills — talking, reading, writing, and so forth. The scale includes learning opportunities that children between birth and 5 or 6 years of age might experience early in life.

Please indicate how often or how much your child experiences or participates in each of the activities. Remember that no child would be expected to participate in all or even most of the activities all the time.

Early Literacy Experiences Scale

Parents or other caregivers are asked to indicate how often and how frequently a child participates or engages in different preliteracy development activities.

Early Literacy Development Scale

Results or findings can be used to:

- “Map” the literacy development experiences of infants, toddlers and preschoolers.
- Construct profiles of individual children’s literacy experiences.
- Identify everyday literacy experiences that “match” children’s personal interests and decide which learning opportunities are likely to be situationally interesting.

Responsive Teaching Strategy

- Engage the child in interest-based everyday literacy learning activities
- Respond to child literacy behavior to maintain engagement in the activities
- Support child behavior and elaborate on child responses

CELL Practice Guides

All CELL practice guides include four “how to” elements and “real life” examples of the practices being implemented by parents or practitioners.

Center for Early Literacy Learning Evidence-Based Practice Guides

CELL practices (paper, DVD's, PPP, etc.) are prepared in a manner that provides end-users (practitioners and parents) information about four elements of a practice:

- What is the practice?
- What does the practice look like?
- How do you do the practice?
- How do you know the practice worked?

Types of Practice Guides

- Universal Practice Guides
- Practice Guides with Adaptations
- Specialized Practice Guides

Examples of Universal Practice Guides

Linguistic Processing Skills

Phonological Awareness

- Finger Plays and Action Rhymes
- Sound Advice

Oral Language

- Babble On
- Talk is Fun

Listening Comprehension

- Time to Rhyme
- Hear This

Print-Related Skills

Print Awareness

- One for the Books
- First ABC Books

Written Language

- Scribble Scribble
- Get Write on It!

Alphabet Knowledge

- Stamps of Approval
- Exploring Magazines and Catalogs

Text Comprehension

- Read It Again!
- Tuning Into Tales

Especially for parents of young children!

Playing With Words

Symbols and Letters

Before children can learn to read, they need to learn some of the basic rules of print, such as that writing goes from top to bottom and from left to right on a page, what spaces between words mean, and that print is different from pictures. One way to encourage the development of these skills is to provide your toddler with alphabet toys, and play responsively with him using them.

What is the practice?

Interacting with your child around a wide variety of alphabet toys starts the process of making letter learning fun and enjoyable for your toddler. These toys can be alphabet blocks, magnetic or foam letters, alphabet puzzles, or any other toys with the letters prominently displayed to your toddler gets accustomed to looking at and interacting with them.

What does the practice look like?

Letting your toddler play with letter cookie cutters in sand, commercial play dough, or real dough, use sponges cut into letters in the bathtub or with finger paint, and talking to her about what she's doing are all examples of good use of alphabet toys. While your child plays, help by encouraging her to turn the letters in the correct way, and by commenting about letter names and the sounds the letters represent.

How do you do the practice?

The important thing to remember when your toddler is playing with alphabet toys is to make it fun by providing a variety of materials, praising her efforts and following her lead.

- Help your child start to recognize that these toys have letters on them by pointing out the letters in her name that also show up on her toys. Most toddlers like being able to identify their names, and this introduces the idea that printed letters form words and carry meaning.
- Make connections between the toys your child is playing with and the words that the letters on them can make. When playing with alphabet blocks, for example, show your child that stacking or lining them up in a certain order makes words.
- Try to avoid making alphabet toys seem too "hard" or too much like work. Even if he doesn't seem to be paying attention to the letters themselves, the idea that they make words which follow certain rules is becoming more familiar to him, which will make them easier to learn later on.



How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child play enthusiastically with alphabet toys?
- Does your child point out familiar letters on his toys, or anywhere else he sees them?
- Does your child turn his toys so the letters are right side up and going in the right direction?

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Take a look at more ways to play with words

Magnetic Power

Thirty-two-month-old Eva and her Mom are playing with some magnetic letters in the kitchen. "Look, Eva," her mom says. "You have all the letters in your name there, just like on your cup." Eva looks at the letters in front of her on the refrigerator door and on the cup her mom holds up. "It doesn't look like that," she says. "They're not in the right order, and some are upside down," her mom explains. "Can you move them around to make them look like that?" Eva moves the letters around until they look like her name cup. "Great," her mom says. "All your letters are in the right order, and right-side-up. E-V-A. That spells Eva!"



Stamp of Approval

Alex loves the messy fun of finger paints. One day his mom brings him a new package of letter-shaped sponges and lets him explore dipping them in finger paint and pressing them onto construction paper. "Look, Alex," his mom says. "You can make words with all these letters." Together, they share the sponges. Alex's mom shows him how she can use the A, L, E, and X sponges to print his name, while Alex stamps letters at random over the paper. "That's my name," Alex tells his mom. "I'm writing lots of words." The stencils give Alex a feeling of accomplishment and interest in writing, as well as familiarizing him with the look of the letters.

Letters the right way

Keoni, a toddler with motor impairments, and his mom are playing with an alphabet puzzle where each letter piece fits into a letter-shaped cutout. Keoni struggles to get some of the pieces to fit, even when he holds them by the thick knobs in the center of each piece. "Look, Keoni," his mom says. "See these letters on your alphabet poster, how they are all standing in the right direction? Your puzzle letters need to stand in the right direction too or they won't fit." She helps him run his hands over the pieces to feel their shapes, and compare them to his poster to see if they are right side up and facing the right way or not. "That will help you know which one comes next," she says. "If it's backwards or upside down it won't fit."



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Especially for parents of young children!

Feeding Frenzy!

Vocalizing and Listening

Meals can be especially good times to encourage "chats" between yourself and your young child. This handout includes ideas about letting meals be chances for your child to listen, babble, try out new words, and take part in your-turn/my-turn interactions and conversations with you.

What is the practice?

During meals, talk to your baby, encouraging him to "sound off" and gesture to you. This makes family meals enjoyable times for listening and communicating. Your most successful "chats" might happen when you are feeding your child foods he especially likes. The more relaxing and enjoyable the activity, the more it will be a great time for talking.



What does the practice look like?

Imagine a hungry infant seated in a highchair or an infant seat. The parent tells the child, "It's time to eat!" The baby becomes excited and opens his mouth. The parent asks, "Do you want some (child's favorite food)?" The baby's excitement grows. The parent feeds him while saying, "Yum, yum, good!" The back-and-forth flow of feeding time is filled with talk, babbling, gestures, and fun.

How do you do the practice?

When you talk with your child and listen for her responses during mealtimes, you help her become a partner in conversation. You're giving her chances to express things like *I want more*, *This tastes yummy*, *Talk to me some more*, and *This is fun in whatever way she is able*. The ways your child communicates and takes part in back-and-forth communication will depend on her age and interests.

- This activity works best when your child is hungry. Be attentive to your infant's signals and signs that she wants to be fed.
- The activity also works best when you and your child are facing each other in a comfortable position. Placing your child in a highchair, infant seat, or any other seat in which he is at ease is important. If needed, use pillows or rolled towels as props to help him sit upright.
- Talk to your child in short sentences like, "It's time to eat," "I have your favorite food," or "Okay! It's chow time." Ask simple questions: "Are you ready to eat?" "Do you want more oatmeal?" The idea is to get your child excited about meals.
- Pay attention to anything your child does to "tell" you he wants more, wants your attention, etc. Respond to any and all things your child does to get you to continue the mealtime play or "conversation." This might include gestures, sounds, or movements.
- Make the interaction fun and enjoyable. Don't be afraid to play feeding games like using a spoon as a toy airplane!

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child anticipate being fed by opening his mouth?
- Does your child communicate to you by getting excited or reaching out toward the food or spoon?
- Does your child vocalize to try to get your attention?

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Take a look at back-and-forth fun at mealtimes

Favorite Food

If 8-month-old Ashley had her way, she would only eat applesauce! She bubbles with joy whenever she sees her favorite food. She coos, wiggles, and squeals with delight. Her mom knows that Ashley will "talk up a storm" during this meal. Ashley's mom exclaims, "I have your favorite food! Applesauce!" Ashley immediately responds with loud squeals and babbling. Mom pulls Ashley in her highchair and says, "Open up. Here it comes!" Without hesitation, Ashley strains forward to taste her first mouthful. "You like that, don't you?" her mother asks. The entire mealtime turns into a back-and-forth exchange between mother and daughter, each playing her part in this happy conversation.



Food and Togetherness

Six-month-old Nathan loves to eat. He'll let you know in no uncertain way that he is hungry! Dad feeds Nathan while his son is in an infant seat set on the kitchen table. Dad puts some rice cereal on a spoon and begins feeding Nathan. He asks "Do you like that? Do you want more?" Nathan "says" yes by shaking his arms and moving his lips. Dad responds, "Let's try some green beans. What do you think?" Next he says, "What about another bite? Is that a yes?" Dad continues engaging Nathan in conversation by asking questions, describing what he is doing, and so forth. He involves his son in a your-turn/my-turn exchange throughout the meal. It is clear that Nathan not only likes his food but very much enjoys this father-and-son time together.

I'm Ready for More!

Three-month-old Nicole has had difficulties drinking from a bottle ever since she was born. Mom received advice from a professional who has helped her increase Nicole's liquid intake. Mom noticed a while back that Nicole has started looking at her bottle or at her mom while being fed. Mom began experimenting with feeding time to see if she could make it more fun and enjoyable for her daughter. With the baby nestled in her, Mom says, "It's time for your bottle! Are you ready to eat?" Any time Ni-



cole looks at the bottle or at Mom, she puts the nipple in her daughter's mouth. After about four or five sucks, Mom removes the nipple and says, "That was good! Do you want more?" Nicole begins to make sucking movements and Mom again puts the nipple in the baby's mouth. This has turned into a back-and-forth, your-turn/my-turn "conversation." Nicole has figured out that looking, sucking, and making sounds gets Mom to give her more to drink.

CELL

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Practice Guides with Adaptations

Adaptations ensure that children with disabilities:

- Can engage in interest-based early literacy learning activities
- Can master early literacy learning skills
- Can become competent in early literacy behaviors

Adaptations offer just enough assistance so that children with disabilities participate in literacy learning activities in order to master new skills and behaviors as do children without disabilities.

Adaptation Continuum

- 
- Adapt Environment
 - Adapt Activity
 - Adapt Materials
 - Adapt Instruction
 - Provide Assistance

Source: *Cara's Kit*, Milbourne & Campbell, 2007

What are Adaptations?

Adaptations include adjustments, changes, or modifications to the environment, activities, materials, or interactions that support or enhance children's participation in everyday early literacy learning activities.

Environmental Adaptations

Changes or modifications to the physical environment or the use of specialized equipment.

Examples

- Rearrange furniture for easy wheelchair access to the book shelf
- Make a quiet place to support a child who is trying to focus on his/her favorite book
- Provide a child a slant board when he/she is coloring







Adaptations to Activities

Changes or modifications to learning activity to enhance the child's participation.

Examples

- Let the child use his finger to paint instead of using a paint brush that is hard for him to hold
- Let the child use finger puppets as part of telling a story
- Tape paper to the table to provide more stability while the child is coloring
- Let a restless child pick a book she likes to read even if it is in the middle of another story



I have not had a
turn on the computer.

Emely

Eliza

Bradley



Sofie



Kayla

Semaj

Adaptations to Materials

Changes or modifications to the materials used in an activity to enhance children's participation.

Examples

- Use foam to thicken pencils to make them easier to hold
- Provide visual cues on a recipe so the child can follow the steps even if she cannot “read”
- Provide a switch interface so the child can turn a tape recorder on and off to listen to songs or stories
- Place knobs on alphabetical puzzle to help a child place the pieces in or out











Instructional Adaptations

Changes or modifications to the instructions or requirements of the activity to support the child's participation.

Examples

- Shorten the length of time a child participates in drawing so he doesn't lose interest
- Allow a child to stand instead of sit while listening to a story
- Allow a child to use a picture board to answer questions about the story
- Provide extra time for a child with some mild fine motor challenges to finish "writing" her name











Providing Assistance

Adult provides the child direct assistance to accomplish the activity.

Examples

- Adult guides the child's hand when drawing a picture
- Adult takes the child's hand to point to the object the child is trying to identify



Conclusion

- Subsets of everyday family and community activities provide contexts for literacy learning.
- Interest-based participation in everyday literacy activities can enhance child competence.
- Instruments like the *Everyday Literacy Experiences Scale* can focus activity identification.
- Everyday literacy learning should be fun and enjoyable for both children and their parents.