



Dear Parents,

As we know our classroom will be made up of children from all over the world that are all at different levels of literacy in their mother tongue and also the English language. I aim to provide a **Literacy-Rich Environment** in the classroom for all the students to help aide in their literacy learning. Research states that "literacy development begins at birth and grows in the contexts of home, school, and community through authentic experiences" (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011, p. 69). While at school the children will be surrounded in an English language, literacy rich environment. As many of the children are not native English speakers this same environment does not exist outside of school. That is why I need you to be involved in literacy learning activities at home with your child, and ones that will help your child become more familiar with the English language. This handout gives different examples of how you can create this environment for your child outside of the classroom!

Thematic Units

We will be teaching thematic units in which the entire week will be spent on the same topic. Literacy will be incorporated into all aspects of the unit to help aide in vocabulary and comprehension. Here are ways in which you can help your child comprehend and understand the unit topic even further.

- Talk about the unit topic with your child in English every night. Ask them to explain what was learned that day.
- When opportunity arises to provide an actual experience that relates to the lesson, let your child experience it. Creating this background knowledge outside of the classroom will help your child gain knowledge about the unit being learned and this knowledge will aide in comprehension.
- Read books, tell stories, draw pictures and do activities at home that relate to the unit being learned. Have your child bring items they find relating to the unit to the classroom so they can share with the class.



*“In order to learn to read in English, ELLs, like native speakers, must develop phonological awareness”
(Morrow & Gambrell, 2011, p. 121).*

Phonics & Phonemic Awareness

If your child is just learning English, or if your child already speaks the English language, we will be working on recognizing letters, that letters make sounds, that letters make words, that these words have meaning and what this meaning is. No matter the level of English literacy your child is at there are things you can do at home to help increase their phonic and phonemic awareness.

- Sing the English alphabet song with your child. Write the alphabet with your child in upper and lower case. Speak the words these letters make with your child!
- We will be working on letters of the week and encourage your child to show you items at home that begin with this letter, speak words at home that begin with this letter, and be actively engaged with using the various letters they are learning.
- Rhyme and Nursery Rhyme with your child. Including songs and rhymes will greatly help your child in good phonemic development. A great website to use with fun songs and colorful videos is www.moothergooseclub.com We will be using a lot of these nursery rhymes in class as well. www.duckduckmoose.com also has many available rhymes via apps.
- When children are on the computer or Ipads use educational apps that help with their letter and word recognition. (Word Wagon, Starfall ABC's, Interactive Alphabet-ABC Flashcards)
- READ, READ, READ with your child!!! The more they hear the letters, the sounds, the words, and see that these words have meaning the more familiar they will become with them. This will lead to them feeling more confident to speak and use these words!
- Have a wide range of books in English available for your child to interact with and explore on their own. Have your child read to you!

Vocabulary & Comprehension

- Create labels in English at home to help your child increase their vocabulary of everyday objects and at the same time comprehend what those words mean.
- When discussing something in your native language, substitute English words whenever possible to increase your child's vocabulary.
- Have your child tell you stories in English or retell a book they like in English.
- Have them draw pictures to help show their comprehension of things they are learning in English.
- Help aid them in their understanding of words and stories by explaining in their mother tongue so they don't feel overwhelmed or get frustrated.
- Be enthusiastic with your child about the English language!

The classroom and home learning environment needs to be a safe place for your child, not one where there is "right" or "wrong" ways of learning the English language. "It is a space where readers construct and build their own understanding of themselves and of what works for them and under what conditions" (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011, p. 260). By creating this rich learning environment at home, as well as the classroom, your child will be able to feel safe and confident as they begin their journey through their English language literacy development.



