



Storyplay

**Building Story Bridges to Literacy:
Stimulating Print Awareness**



Anything you say in any language can be made into print

- Write it down! Read it!
- Invite family and community members to help.
- Encourage the children to do these activities as well.

Be a reading and writing role model every day: Read and write for and with the children.

A PRINT-RICH ENVIRONMENT

What is it?

- Some environments have nothing in print.
- Some have very little printed material.
- Print-rich environments have print that is used and displayed for different purposes, such as signs, notices, advertisements, magazines, newspapers, books, timetables, posters and letters.

How?

Use and display mother tongue and bilingual print on the walls.

What to use?

Scissors, wool or string, stapler, needles, glue, scrap paper and cardboard, posters, pictures, alphabet and number charts, children's work, list of birthdays, timetable, days, colours, classroom rules, poems, songs, photographs, maps, newspapers and magazines, calendars.

Why?

A print-rich environment helps learning because children become familiar with why and how we write and read.

WRITE MESSAGES

When?

Every day!

How?

Write a regular message to the children on the board. Read it with them and soon they will try to read for themselves.

Wednesday 7th March

Hello, children.

Which story shall we read today?

Love, Ms Mbotshwa

Why?

Messages are good examples of different reasons for writing.

DISPLAY PICTURES

How?

Collect magazines and newspapers. Choose interesting pictures to cut out and stick onto cardboard. Put them on display.

Why?

Interesting pictures give us things to think about, talk about and write about.



ALPHABET CHARTS

How?

Make and display different kinds of alphabet charts.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Why?

Children see how to form letters and match letters to sounds.

Different alphabet charts let children see that writing can look very different.

Suggestions for using the alphabet

- Chant or sing the alphabet with the children, pointing to the letters as you go.
- Provide materials for children to create alphabet letters and alphabet-letter people, animals and objects. These could be clay, wire, sticks, string, paper, pencils, crayons and paint.
- Talk about the shapes of capital and small letters, the names and sounds of the letters. Some languages only use sounds and don't have letter names. Encourage curiosity: tell children that this is the case. For example, in isiXhosa, we say the sounds the letters make. In English, we say the letter names and make a sound for each letter. Some letters go together with others to make new sounds. Different languages sometimes share sounds with letters, and sometimes they make different sounds, e.g. in English and isiXhosa, B sounds the same, but C never does.

- Give the children pieces of text from newspapers or magazines and ask them to find letters that are important to them – for example, from their names, or family and friends' names.
- Make up phrases or verses that have alliteration (most of the words start with the same letter).
- Play games with sounds: What would happen if we took the b away from book. We'd have -ook!
- Make an alphabet collage on topics such as animals, food, clothes, sport, things we use at home.

For example, Animals

Provide the children with scissors, glue, paper, pencils, crayons, paint, etc. and magazines with pictures of animals.

Encourage the children to find (or draw) pictures of animals that start with a particular letter of the alphabet.

Children can cut out or tear out pictures and glue them to paper to make the collage.

Make a bilingual collage, where the children try to find things that use the same letter in different languages, for example, in English b in *book* and in isiXhosa, b in *bulukwe*.

B b

bread

basket

ball

Busi

Talk about how different languages use letters and sounds differently.

Look at examples of this with the children. For example, with isiXhosa and English, the c in *colour* and the c in *ukucula*, and the X in *Xolisa* and the x in *mix*.

MAKE LETTERCARDS

How?

You can cut letters out of a newspaper, stick them onto cardboard and put them in a box to use.



MAKE A WORD WALL

How?

Make big alphabet cards and display them. Find words beginning with that letter, write them on cards and stick them under the letter.

Find or draw pictures to go with the words.

MAKE A POSTER

When?

Make a new poster every week!

Why?

You are a writing role model:

- Children see how much you value and enjoy writing.
- You show them that what you say or sing can be written down, and that writing is meaningful.
- You can use any language or combination of languages to make a mother tongue or bilingual print-rich environment.
- Children get to see and learn how adults spell and form letters and words.

What to use?

You could use, a rhyme, a riddle, a song, or something else that appeals to you.

Remember!

- Make the poster big enough to be seen by a group, and by the children at the back of the class.
- Display posters at the children's eye level.
- Change the posters regularly.

How to illustrate?

Paintings, drawings, magazine pictures, or a mixture of these.

Making a print poster with children

- Invite a group of children to sit as close as possible to where you are writing.
- Give them turns to suggest popular songs, rhymes or wordplays. Choose one to use.
- Keep it short, especially at first. If there are many verses, save some for another day.
- First say the whole text together.
- Write the words big enough for the children sitting further away to see.
- Use appropriate punctuation.
- You could use the opportunity to teach or revise something special, like when to use a capital letter, or how to spell a word.
- Say a phrase out loud: 'Incy wincy spider'.
- Then: Let's first write 'Incy'.
- How do we spell 'Incy'? Capital I (say the letter's name) because it is the first letter of a name, n-c-y. (Use the appropriate convention with letters for the language you are writing in) Sound out the word slowly as you write.
- Then say the whole word, 'Incy'.
- Ask the children to say what comes next.
- Once you have written the whole text, ask the children to read with you as you point to the words.
- Display the poster at the children's eye level for a few days so that they can read it with you, alone or with a friend. Remove it before they stop noticing it, and display it again on another occasion.



MAKE BOOKS

Children enjoy being writers and illustrators. Encourage them to turn their own ideas and stories into books.

When?

Whenever you like, but at least once a week.

How?

You need paper and something to write and draw with.

Vary the number of pages – make short books and long books.

Make extra books with blank pages for the children to write in.

- Cut paper into strips wide enough to write on.
- Write a word or sentence and draw pictures on each strip.
- Put the strips together in the correct order.
- Add a cardboard cover if you wish.
- Tie or staple the strips together.
- Write the title of the book and your name on the cover.
- Draw a picture, too, if you want to.

Why?

Children explore and learn about books; being writers; letters, words, sentences and punctuation; the importance of conventional spelling; being creative; and their own lives, imaginations, interests and thoughts.

MAKE A LIBRARY

How?

- Make some shelves to keep your books on.
- Display books made by you and the children, books from the library, and donated books.
- Encourage the children to look at these and other books, alone or with a friend.
- Encourage children to take books home to share with family members.
- Change the books frequently so that you and the children don't get bored.

Why?

To learn to read, children need many opportunities with books.

READ ALOUD TO CHILDREN

When?

Tell and read stories every day.

Read the same text again and again, as long as the children are enjoying it.

Why?

You are their reading role model:

- Children see how much you value and enjoy reading.
- They grow to love listening to stories.
- Their vocabulary and language grows.
- They want to become readers and writers.



How?

Before:

Get to know the available stories and story books. Read them.

- Choose a story you like, and an appropriate story for your group of children.
- Think of how to introduce the story to the children.
- Practise reading the story aloud.

With all texts, teachers do the first reading without interruptions. Then they read again, stopping to talk about what is happening in the picture/s.

Think about open-ended questions to ask the children. Examples of open-ended questions are:

How would you feel if?

What do you think will happen next?

What would you do if you were xx?

What if something else had happened?

During:

- Put expression in your voice.
- Pause and look at the children every now and then.
- Show and talk about the pictures. Pictures help to tell the story, and sometimes tell more than the words do.
- Ask open -ended questions and allow comments from the children.
- Read the story again if they want it.

STORY BASKET

How?

- Collect interesting things that you can use to spark ideas for stories, and for talking together. For example, dolls, pebbles, feathers, little cars, a watch, a hairbrush, an old photograph.
- Take turns to choose objects. Describe or talk about the object you've chosen. Does it remind you of anything? What? When?
- Make up a story about the object. You can start with once upon a time... or I remember...
- Write down and read the interesting stories together.

Why?

- This is a powerful way to stir imagination, create stories and support language learning.
- It allows you to use the children's mother tongue and additional languages.
- You can include all kinds of personally significant objects which increase emotional connection and engagement.

