

Early Literacy Checklist

Early Literacy Consultants

*Brenda Jenner 905-574-6876 ext 235 or email jennerb@ascy.ca
& Evette Sauriol - 905-574-6876 ext 234 or email sauriole@ascy.ca*

What is the Early Literacy Checklist?

The Early Literacy Checklist is a reflective self-assessment tool enabling programs and specialists working with young children:

- to better evaluate to what extent they support literacy in young children**
- to better evaluate to what extent they support literacy within families**
- to better evaluate to what extent they engage in community partnerships in supporting child and family literacy.**

Who Should Use the Early Literacy Checklist?

- **Any early years program or service which includes: Ontario Early Years Centres, child care centres, home child care agencies and associations, libraries, family resource programs and kindergarten.**
- **The checklist is adaptable to the varied programs**

What Will the Early Literacy Checklist Tell Me?

The Checklist examines how well early years programs and services:

- **Support literacy in young children**
- **Support literacy within families**
- **Engage in community partnerships in supporting child and family literacy.**

Scoring is along a continuum of:
frequently - practiced on a regular basis
occasionally - practiced sometimes
seldom - usually not practiced

Collaborating on Implementing the Early Literacy Checklist

**Programs should use the Checklist together with the
Early Literacy Consultant when he/she visits your
program.**

Working with the ELC will help:

- how he/she can best support the work you are already doing**
- to determine literacy resources for which your program may be eligible.**

The Benefits of using the Early Literacy Checklist

The checklist will:

- **identify strengths and gaps in your program**
- **direct program development**
- **encourage new ways of thinking about accessing resources beyond your program**
- **assist with new staff orientation and/or act as a refresher**
- **support planning and evaluation (staff and program)**
- **support proposals for new or enhanced funding and/or partnerships**

The Community Literacy Plan

Each year, the Early Literacy Consultant will convene a meeting of early years programs and practitioners in an effort to evaluate how well the community is doing in terms of supporting children's early literacy and language development.

Your involvement and participation in completing the Checklist will benefit your program and your community.

Early Literacy Checklist

Part One: Supporting Literacy in Young Children

A. Environments - Demonstrating a commitment to preparing the environment to support literacy acquisition in young children.

The following items are available	F	O	S	Comments
<p>Children’s books including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Art books (including books about artists, music, instruments, musicians) ➤ Fairy tales ➤ Rhyme books ➤ Concept books ➤ Information books (illustrated and non-illustrated on a range of issues children face such as divorce, illness, etc.) ➤ Atlas ➤ Cookbooks ➤ Books that reflect all aspects of diversity and are non-sexist, anti-racist, and non - stereotypical. ➤ Books that cater to a variety of ages and skills. ➤ Board books 				
<p>Books available for loan to children and families</p>				
<p>Books written/compiled by children</p>				



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The following items are available	F	O	S	Comments
<p>Props essential for retelling stories and simple rhymes and folk tales. Prop boxes containing necessary materials to promote dramatics related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Daily living ➤ Specific story books ➤ Community events ➤ Occupations ➤ Recreational activities (camping, ball games) ➤ Felt boards ➤ Musical instruments, including home-made and reflective of diverse cultures ➤ Cooking equipment reflective of diversity ➤ Other 				
<p>Paper, including for example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lined paper ➤ Construction paper ➤ Cardboard ➤ Bristol Board ➤ Tissue and tracing paper ➤ Newspaper and newsprint ➤ Photographic paper ➤ Fingerpaint paper ➤ Pads of paper ➤ Calendars – wall and personal ➤ Magazines ➤ Charts, maps ➤ Flip chart paper ➤ Post-it Notes ➤ Notebooks ➤ Other 				

The following items are available:	F	O	S	Comments
<p>Writing/Drawing Tools, including, for instance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pens ➤ Pencils, wax and crayon ➤ Crayons ➤ Markers ➤ Paint - including fingerpaint ➤ Charcoal, pastel and chalk ➤ Tape recorders and tapes – video and audio ➤ Fax machines ➤ Printers ➤ Camera and video cameras ➤ Slide and Overhead projector and screens ➤ Easels ➤ Other 				
<i>Physical Set-Up:</i>				
<p>Photographs, posters and pictures for display that depict events/things relevant to children’s lives (reflecting their family composition, holidays and other events) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Illustrations from Children’s Books ➤ Nature, music and other cultural items ➤ Non-stereotypical representations of the above 				
<p>Letters of the alphabet in English/French and/or in another language including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Braille and Sign Language 				
<p>Reading Centres/Corners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Child-sized chairs, tables, as well as sofas and other comfortable seating for reading and/or listening to stories <p>Bookshelves that display as well as store</p>				

B. Interactions - Facilitating the emergence of knowledge and skills that support literacy acquisition in young children

The following occur:	F	O	S	Comments
<p>Time and staff support for each child, individually and in groups, to express ideas or feelings during an activity or routine.</p>				
<p>Use of total communication approach (aural, oral, visual) during daily activities and routines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Symbol/written words ➤ Signs ➤ Gestures ➤ Concrete objects ➤ Pictures ➤ Songs/chants ➤ Role play ➤ Facial expressions ➤ Other 				
<p>Adult language adjusted to match and support extension of the communication styles of each child, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Simplify and slow down language ➤ Repeat and expand on child's speech ➤ Use consistent words for same objects or activities ➤ Use of key words and phrases from the languages spoken by children and families in the program, including sign language, Braille and augmentative communication systems ➤ Teaching key words and phrases from the languages spoken by children and families to other children and families and staff. ➤ Use of a variety of positive responses when children speak in their first language, including smiling and showing interest in what they are saying 				

The following occur:	F	O	S	Comments
<p>Use of varied strategies to help children try new items/materials related to literacy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Modelling the behaviour, including appropriate word choice and avoidance of slang ➤ Repeating child’s words in grammatically correct format ➤ Encouraging peer interaction ➤ Playing with the child ➤ Using open-ended questions to encourage conversations ➤ Introducing a familiar item that links to a new one ➤ Promoting awareness of the connection between oral and written language, i.e. stories dictated by child ➤ Using correct language/grammar ➤ Using sign language 				
<p>Offering a variety of experiences that promote language development in a positive and joyful manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Through art, music, drawing, painting, dramatic play, etc. ➤ Puppetry ➤ Felt board ➤ Story telling ➤ Other 				
<p>Opportunities for listening to ensure children appreciate the communication function of written language such as reading stories, poetry</p>				
<p>Seeking an appropriate response to a variety of materials read aloud</p>				

The following occur:	F	O	S	Comments
Demonstration of how oral and written language connects, i.e. I'm writing what I'm saying				
Demonstrating that writing communicates a message, i.e. adult points out print in the environment and converts it to words "open", "close", "exit"				
Discussion of features of books and other written materials, such as tell stories by looking at pictures, title/illustrations				
Exploration of letters, demonstrating that letters represent sounds and written words convey meanings				
Use of sound patterns to identify and predict words				
Encouraging children to recognize, print and identify letters in their names				



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Early Literacy Checklist

Part Two: Supporting Literacy within the Family

A. Environments - Demonstrating a commitment to preparing the environment to support literacy within the family

The following occur:	F	O	S	Comments
Posted written communications with family members are presented in a format that will be understood by all families, including letters, notices and other signage				
Informal and formal opportunities and facilities are available to accommodate: ➤ Parent networking and mutual support ➤ Parents and children together				
Physical set-up of the program, including bulletin boards, posters, decorations and other cultural items display evidence of the diversity of families in Ontario and are “print-rich”				
Drop-off/Pick-up times and locations are designed to support informal discussion among staff and parents				
Families provided with information – through direct, face-to-face discussions, by telephone and in writing through postings, notices and letters – about upcoming literacy workshops and events				
Program newsletters reflect diversity of Ontario’s families and respect literacy levels of readers				



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B. Interactions - Facilitating the emergence of knowledge and skills that support literacy within the family


The following occur:	F	O	S	Comments
Opportunities for families/practitioner interactions on a spontaneous basis				
Verbal communications with family members are conducted in a way that will be understood by all families, including those whose first language is neither French nor English				
Practitioners greet families warmly and regularly invite them to spend time together				
Practitioners encourage parents and other family members to include their children in gatherings				
Literacy events for families are planned on a regular basis with parent involvement and keeping families' schedules in consideration				
Opportunities provided to work with each family to identify their strengths, goals, interests and resources regarding literacy through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Family-focused interviews ➤ Informal discussions ➤ Home visits ➤ Other 				
Documented information regarding a child's progress in literacy skills development shared with families at times convenient to them				

The following occur:	F	O	S	Comments
Resources – strategies and materials – are available to parents to assist them in supporting their child’s early literacy and language development ➤ Available on-site ➤ Available for loan/take home				
Alternate forms of communication are provided for families who speak a language other than English or French, or communicate through Braille or who experience other barriers				
Parents involved in development of literacy materials, activities and events				
Family literacy activities reflect families’ lives: ➤ Culturally ➤ Socially ➤ Economically ➤ Other				
Parents’ input sought in development of Community Literacy Plan				

Early Literacy Checklist

Part Three: Community partnerships in supporting child and family literacy skills

A. Collaboration - Demonstrating a commitment to forming and strengthening partnerships that promote child and family literacy with the community

The following occur:	F	O	S	Comments
Regular communication and information-sharing with the range of early years programs in the community				
Planning, implementing and hosting of community-based early and family literacy events open to those outside your program				
Staff resources shared with other early years programs in the community including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff-shadowing opportunities so staff in one program learn about one another ➤ Staff-exchange programs so programs with strong literacy components can support programs with literacy challenges ➤ Professional development activities extended to staff in other programs, promoting cross-sectoral collaboration and information-sharing ➤ Two or more staff from different programs and services share a conference registration 				
Funding resources shared with early years programs in the community, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proceeds from funding and/or fundraising shared with other early years programs, where possible 				 Ontario Early Years Petite enfance

The following occur:	F	O	S	Comments
In-kind and volunteer resources shared with early years programs in the community, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Volunteer sharing ➤ Providing space for literacy activities ➤ Sharing on-line access, email addresses, etc. 				
Formal protocols or agreements developed, maintained and tracked for the above resource-sharing				
Participation (attendance) in literacy events sponsored by “other” sectors				
Participation in literacy organization by serving on boards, committees, etc.				
Promoting Early Literacy Specialist role in the community				
Contribution to development of the Community Literacy Plan				

Early Literacy Action Plan:

Date:

	<i>Goals</i>	<i>How to Achieve</i>	<i>Resources Required</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Supporting Literacy in Young Children					
Environments					
Supporting Literacy in Young Children					
Interactions					
Supporting Literacy in Families					
Community Partnerships					
Collaborations					

Early Years Program Staff:

Date:

Early Literacy Specialist:

Date: