



Umbrella Program Excellence Team

Newsletter

Issue 7

2025

Umbrella Family

Literacy
Adventures:
Bringing Learning
to Life Indoors
and Out!



GRATITUDE FOR YOUR
INSPIRATION AND
COLLABORATION

umbrella educators

This newsletter is a true reflection of the dedication, creativity, and collaboration that educators brought to our Community of Practice. It was developed with the inspiration drawn directly from the incredible work you do every day in your programs.

Your innovative ideas and commitment to creating meaningful learning experiences for children have been truly inspiring. The insights and practices shared during our sessions have not only enriched this newsletter but have also created a ripple effect, impacting programs across our sites.

Thank you for the networking, support, and collaboration you've shown throughout this process. Your willingness to share, learn, and grow together is what makes this community so special.

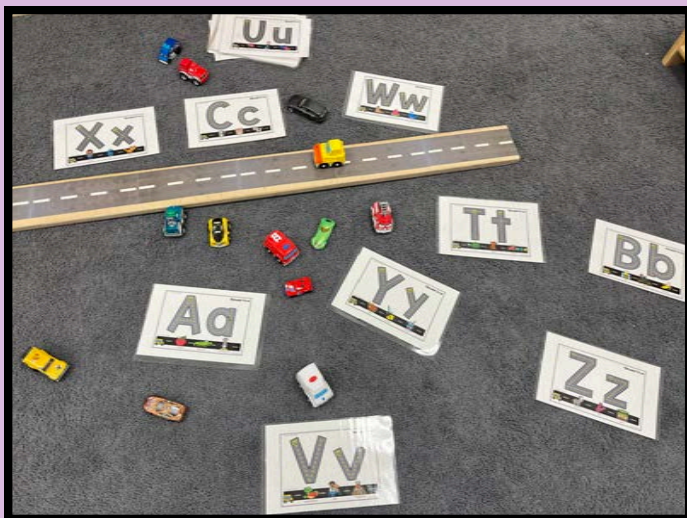
To every educator—thank you for the important work you do. Without your passion and dedication, this newsletter wouldn't exist. It stands as a testament to your hard work and the incredible impact you have on children's lives.

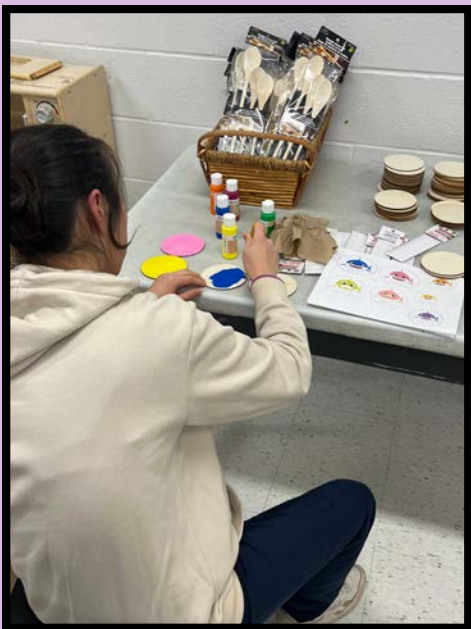
With heartfelt gratitude,
Program Excellence Team

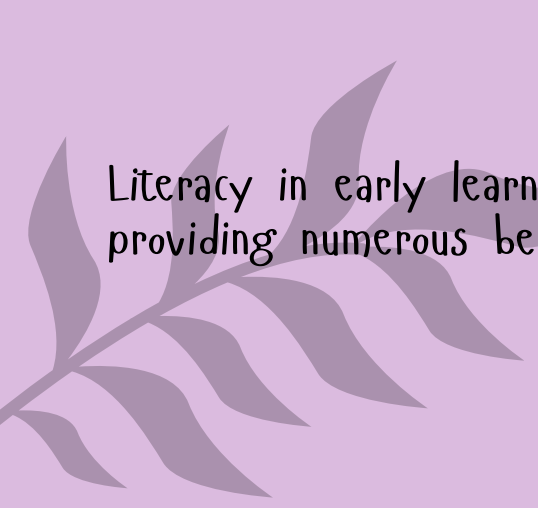


LITERACY

Community of Practice








Literacy in early learning is foundational for children's development, providing numerous benefits that extend across academic, social, and emotional domains.

Cognitive Development:

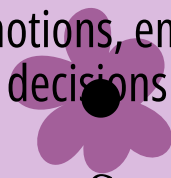


Early literacy activities like reading, storytelling, and exposure to language enhance cognitive abilities. Children develop vocabulary, comprehension, memory, and problem-solving skills.

Language Skills:

Through literacy-rich environments, children learn to communicate effectively, express ideas, and understand others. Exposure to books and interactive storytelling boosts language acquisition and grammar awareness.

Social and Emotional Growth:

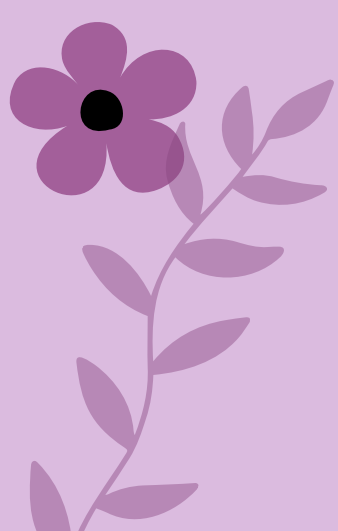


Literacy experiences, such as group reading or storytelling, help children understand emotions, empathy, and social cues. Discussing characters' emotions and decisions fosters emotional awareness and regulation.

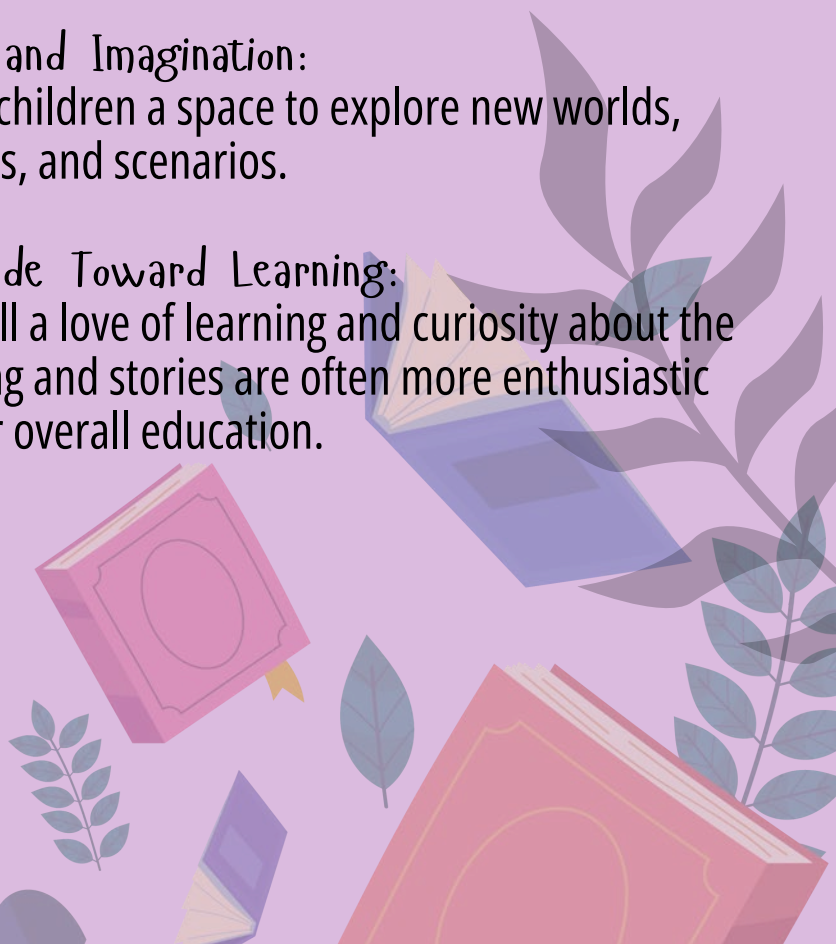
Creativity and Imagination:

Stories fuel imagination, giving children a space to explore new worlds, characters, and scenarios.

Positive Attitude Toward Learning:



Engaging literacy experiences instill a love of learning and curiosity about the world. Children who enjoy reading and stories are often more enthusiastic about their overall education.



Why does reading aloud to children matter?

- Builds a bond between child and educator
- Builds vocabulary
- Models language use
- Strengthens understanding of connection between spoken and written words
- Develops joy of reading
- Familiarizes children with how books work
- Increases attention span
- Builds critical thinking skills
- Builds comprehension skills

Literacy Throughout the Day

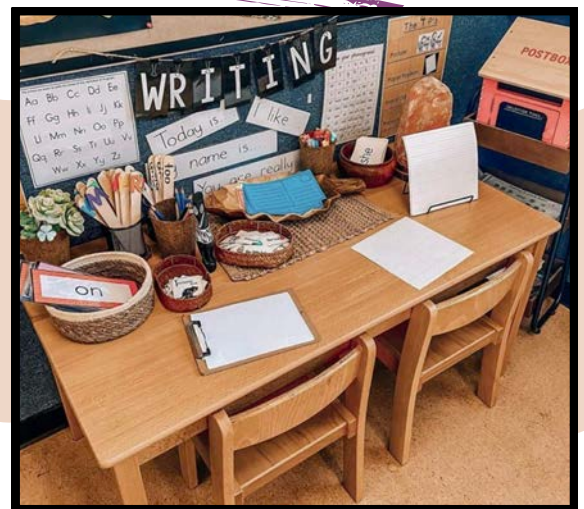
- Transitions
- Circle time
- Communicating with children/families
- Choice/Play/Discovery time
- Eating times
- Washroom Routine
- Outside spaces



WRITING area



- Name books
- Typewriter or keyboard
- Markers, pens, gel pens
- Pretty stationery
- Stapler
- File box with photo directory of classmates
- Envelopes, stickers
- Stamp pads, stampers

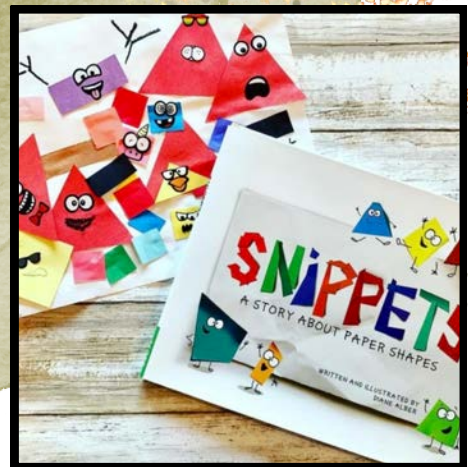


ART

area



- Posters of art to talk about feelings
- Wide range of art materials
- Clean up routine on poster so children can do it themselves

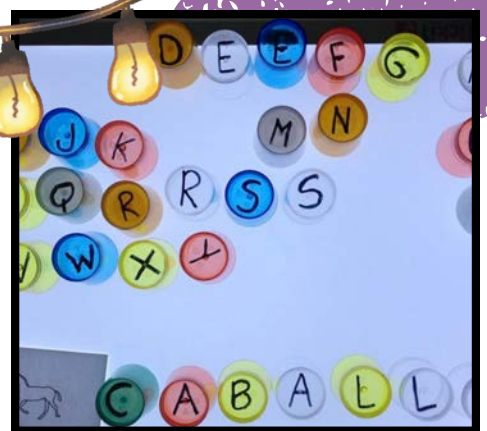


LOOSE PARTS

area

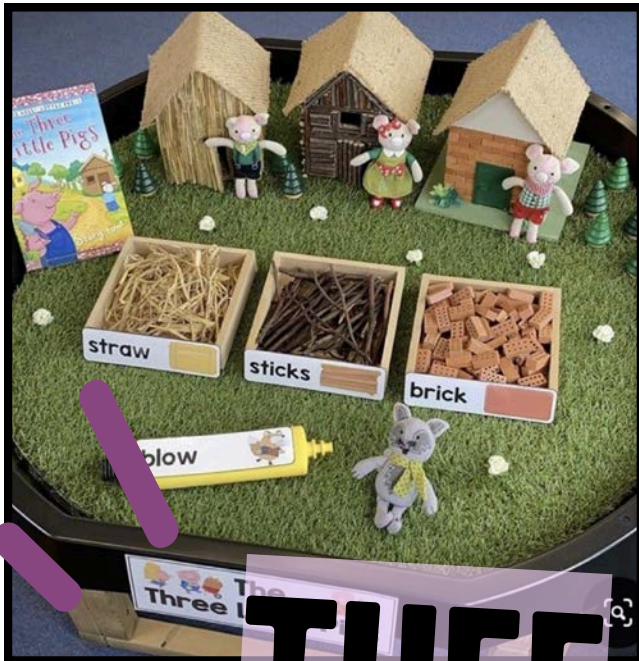


Loose parts can support literacy by encouraging children to create letters, words, or stories using various materials. For example, sticks, stones, or bottle caps can be arranged to form letters or words. Additionally, loose parts can act as props for storytelling, allowing children to build scenes, characters, and narratives, enhancing their oral language and imaginative expression.

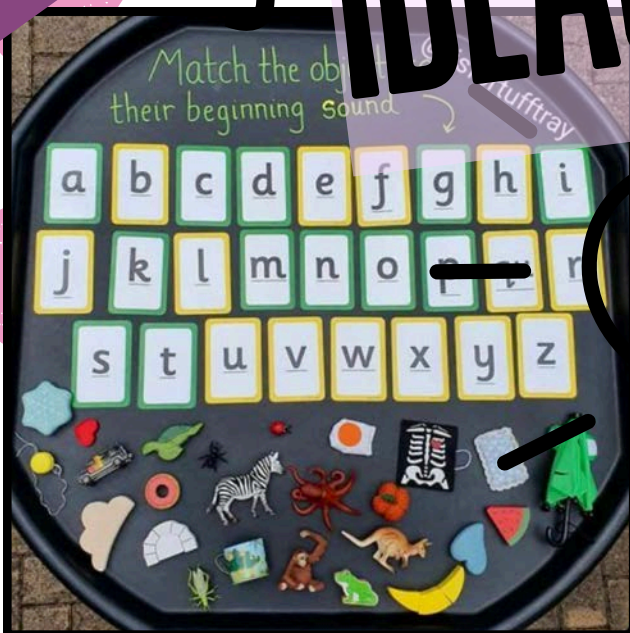


TUFF TRAY

area

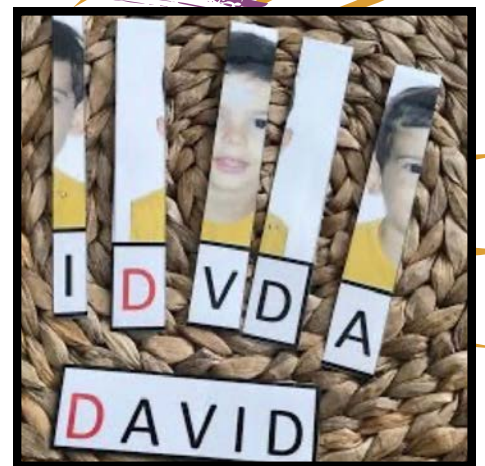


TUFF tray IDEAS!

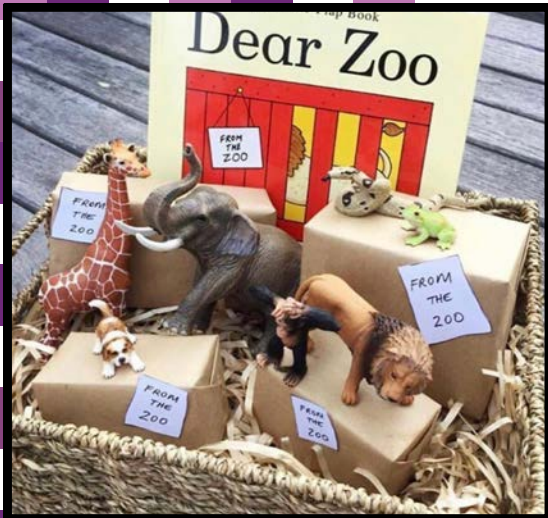




- Topic books
- Wide range of genres
- Wide range of levels
- Magazines
- Audio books
- Book posters or book jackets on display



BLOCK area



Construction Zone

Road signs

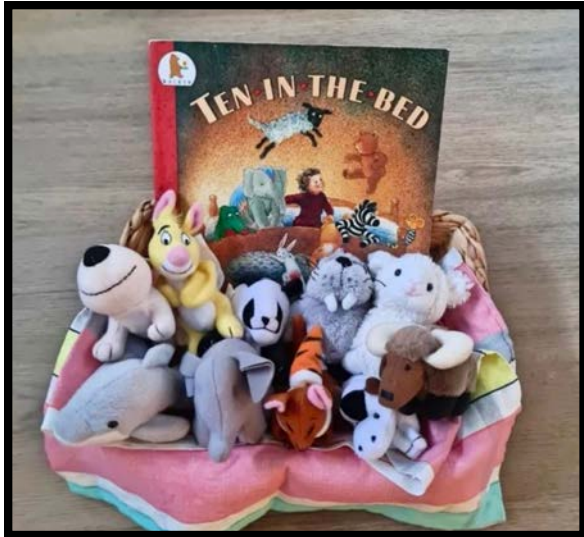
Graph paper, clipboards,
paper towel tubes

Books on homes, shapes,
building things

Label block shelves with
real words such as
cylinders, arches, cones, etc.



DRAMATIC
area



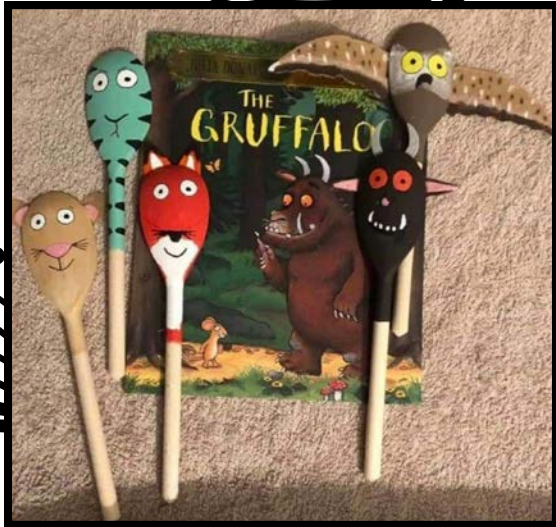
Authentic literacy materials
such as menus, newspaper
ads, food containers, seed
packets, posters, maps,
envelopes, stamps, packages,
catalogs, day planners,
phones, writing materials,
field guides, flight manual,
travel brochures, tickets....



Book Baskets on Nature topics
Field guides, binoculars
Magnifying glasses
Nature journals
Rulers, sketching pencils/paints, flashlight, tweezers
Dramatic play materials for story telling
Puppets

Rulers, sketching pencils/paints, flashlight, tweezers
Dramatic play materials for story telling
Puppets

GATHERING time



- Read aloud
- Story stick storytelling
- Writing together
- Music
- Shared Reading



SENSORY area



- Post some texture words nearby to give you a nudge: cool, slippery, prickly, springy, cold, slimy, powdery, coarse, smooth, rough, sticky, etc.



TRANSITIONS

routines

Washroom/
Diapering

- Talking, talking, talking
- Singing
- Environmental print
- Bath books
- Sequencing/picture prompts

LET'S
TALK

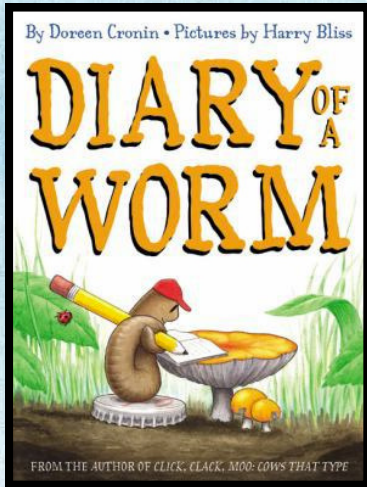
LISTEN.
LISTEN...

Eating Times

- Talking, Talking, Talking
- About food, about dining customs at home, textures of what you're eating, colours of what you're eating, menu planning for the future
- Thank you note to the cooks

BRINGING NATURE

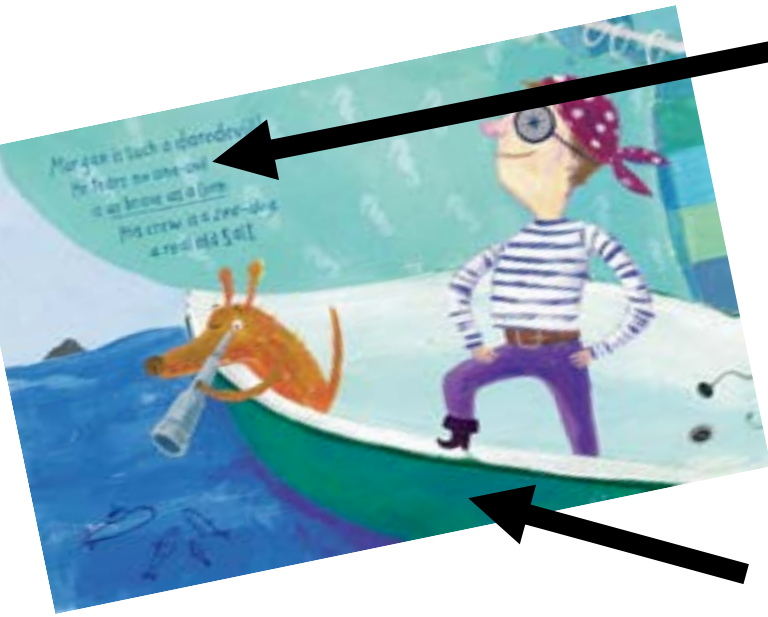
inside and out



- Story Stones
- Pieces of natural materials like leaves, stones, beach glass, bark or sticks for making art
- Mural paper to make large natural scenes for plays or in response to reading
- Wood blocks for building with clipboards for sign making or with graph paper for building designing
- Plants
- Class pet
- Fish tank or aquaculture system
- Posters and bulletin boards featuring the natural world
- Natural materials in the sensory table or exploration table in the science area (sand, gravel, feed corn, bird seed, snow, leaves, pine cones and alder cones, sea shells, water, seed pods, potting soil, rock collections, bark, disks of wood)
- Indoor garden and label
- Book Picnics
- Scavenger hunts
- Birding (or bugging)
- Story telling outside
- Read aloud
- Reader response art
- Documenting change over time: My Nature Spot
- Nature writing
- Nature journaling



3 ways to read a book



1. Read the words

2. Read the pictures



3. Retell the story



THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN

Loris Malaguzzi
(translated by Lella Gandini)

No way.
The hundred is there.
The child is made of one hundred.
The child has a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.
a hundred, always a hundred
ways of listening
of marveling, of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds to discover
a hundred worlds to invent
a hundred worlds to dream.
The child has a hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine.
The school and the culture
separate the head from the body.
They tell the child to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and Christmas.
They tell the child
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine.
They tell the child
that work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream
are things
that do not belong together.
And thus they tell the child
that the hundred is not there.
The child says
"No way – The hundred is there."

