

Activities for Developing a Literacy-Rich Environment

Observing Print in Our World

We live in a print-rich world! There are signs on billboards, store windows, restaurants, and along the road. Young children benefit when adults and older children take the time to point out and talk about the print that is all around us.

Children:

- understand that print has meaning
- begin to associate printed and spoken words, and printed words with their corresponding person, place or thing
- begin to see likenesses and differences in letters and words.

Directions: Help children notice and begin to recognize print that appears often in their environment. Invite children to read signs on familiar places and objects (STOP sign, McDonald's). Praise them when they are able to do so. The following are some additional ideas for helping young children become more observant of the print in their world.

Environmental Print: This term refers to any print located in the environment: road signs, billboards, store and restaurant signs, food containers, to name a few. Invite your children to help you “read the trash.” Put some empty food containers and other items containing easily recognizable labels in a clean garbage bag or can. As you take out the items (cereal box, soup can, toothpaste container) ask the children to identify each one. Praise them for knowing how to “read” each label. Make one or more books using environmental print. You might also make a *Concentration* game using environmental print.

Home: Children can help put away groceries—reading each label as it is put away. They might also cut out logos with words they recognize (Sears, J.C. Penney's, Disney) and glue these onto cards or pages to make their own matching game or wordbook.

Grocery Shopping: Children love to go grocery shopping—even pretend shopping in the classroom. Collect several empty food containers (ask families to help with this). Locate coupons for as many products as possible, using box tops or ends or matching label when a coupon for an item cannot be found. Invite children to make a *coupon saver* by decorating an envelope to store their coupons and box tops. They can then use these to go to the class grocery store to locate and “purchase” their needed items.

Home: Let your children help you make a picture grocery list. Put a large sheet of paper on your refrigerator or other convenient location. Each time an item that needs to be replaced is emptied, peel or cut off the label and let your children attach it to the paper with tape or glue. When it is time to go shopping, bring along the picture list and let your child help you locate the items in the store by matching the picture with the item on the shelf.