



Professional Learning Module
Emergent Writing for Early Learners

Meeting the Needs of All Learners

Most classrooms include children with a variety of literacy exposure and skills as well as developmental mastery. Intentional teachers help all children become writers by modeling, observing and coaching children in both planned and unplanned instructional activities.

As children learn to write, teachers should focus on the process they use, not the look of their finished product. Watching children as they write teaches you what they know and understand about how print works. Do not be surprised when you see children occasionally writing backwards, they are still learning about directionality and placement in writing. Writing letters backwards is not an indication of a reading problem. It can be developmentally appropriate. Showing children how you write teaches them how print works.



Teachers can adjust their lesson plans to accommodate all children at their current skill level. Children with fine motor skill impairments may find it easier to “write” with letter tiles or magnetic letters. To help children feel more comfortable while writing, teachers can make available additional materials including pencil grippers and wider writing instruments which can be easier for children with fine motor impairments to hold in their hands.

Children who have English as a second language will better understand the purpose of writing if the teacher models writing as the child dictates. This conveys the message that the words we speak can be written down. When English language learners begin to invent spelling, they oftentimes use both of their languages to construct words. For example, Spanish speaking children might write “ll” for the /y/ sound. By understanding this typical phase of writing for English language learners, teachers can better interpret the children’s writing and encourage more attempts.

- * See Content Resources “How do I write...? Scaffolding Preschooler’s Early Writing Skills,”