

State of Maine Early Childhood Early Learning Guidelines

Updated 2009. This document can be viewed in its entirety at:
<http://www.maine.gov/education/standards.htm>

The *State of Maine Early Childhood Learning Guidelines* serves as a guide for state and local early care and education practitioners' efforts to improve early childhood professional practice and programs for young children ages three through their entrance into kindergarten.

Early Language and Literacy

To develop good thinking strategies, the early learning environment must engage young children as active learners. Young children form a strong foundation for English language arts when their emergent literacy skills (reading, writing, and speaking) are developed to build their beginning reading and writing abilities. Hands-on exposure to books and language arts, creative expression through play, and guided encouragement from adults develop the child's verbal and writing skills as well as a love of reading and the spoken word. They provide the child not only with the tools for lifelong learning, but also with the ability to become a critical thinker and effective communicator. The early childhood learning environment provides children with opportunities to explore and understand the basic elements of spoken and written language and the ways in which these are used.

To succeed in school and life, young children must develop linguistic and cultural skills to communicate successfully in a diverse society. Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience, whether communication takes place face-to-face, in writing, or across the centuries through the reading of literature.

Early Language and Literacy <i>Children develop knowledge and skills related to:</i>	Indicators
E) Print Concepts Understanding that words they see in print and words they speak and hear are related.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognizes own written name ▪ Identifies some labels and signs, e.g., stop, go, exit ▪ Recognizes that letters are grouped to form words.
F) Alphabet Knowledge Recognizing that sounds are associated with letters of the alphabet and that they form words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies some letters of the alphabet
G) Early Writing Using symbols to represent words and ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tells about experiences and discoveries, both orally and in writing, which could include child's own invented, emergent writing. ▪ Experiments with growing variety of writing tools, materials, and resources, including adaptive communication and writing devices ▪ Understands that writing is a way of communicating (ex., dictates ideas or events)§Uses scribbles, shapes, or pictures to represent thoughts or ideas ▪ Copies or prints own name ▪ Engages in writing using letter-like symbols to make letters or words.