



Early Level Literacy Activities

Here are some activities that could be incorporated into your setting that link in with the literacy progression framework.

The activities are only examples and can be added and amended to meet the needs of the children in the group.

These activities should be used creatively by the staff and only as a guide.

Some of these activities are taken from Highland literacy emerging literacy website.

Remember to add extra support or challenge when needed.

Listening & Attention

I enjoy exploring and playing with patterns and sounds of language and can use what I learn.

LIT0-01a/ LIT0-11a/ LIT 0-20a

- Jigsaw puzzles
- Fine motor tasks
- Dot to dot
- Steal the keys/bell
- Find the odd-one-out
- Spot the difference
- Maze puzzles
- Copy 'the teacher' (no spoken language)
- Beans active game
- Sticky Kids active action songs
- Stop & Walk and reverse
- Memory games
- Categorising and sorting
- Picture books
- I went shopping and I bought ...
- Simon Says
- Do as I say not as I do
- Musical chairs/lions etc.
- Learning songs and rhymes
- Board games



It is important that in all of these activities you explicitly teach & reinforce good listening skills and what good listening looks like during group experiences.

Remind the children about the things that good listeners do (e.g. keep quiet, have ears and eyes ready).

Invite the children to show you how good they are at listening, and talk about why listening carefully is important.

Auditory Discrimination - Hearing differences between a range of sounds

As I listen and talk in different situations, I am learning to take turns and am developing my awareness of when I talk and when to listen. LIT 0-02a/ENG 0-03a



- **Listening walks indoors/outdoors**

Encourage the children to listen attentively to the sounds around them. Talk about the different sounds they can hear. After they have enjoyed a listening walk indoors or outdoors, make a list of all the sounds they can remember. The list can be in words or pictures, and prompted by replaying sounds recorded on the walk.

- **A listening moment:** This is another activity that can take place indoors or outdoors. Remind the children how to be good listeners. Invite them to show how good they are at listening by remembering all the sounds they hear when they listen for a moment. Ask them what made each sound and encourage them to try to make the sound themselves.

- **Drum outdoors:** Give each child a beater or make drumsticks, for example from short pieces of dowel. Encourage the children to explore the outdoor area and discover how different sounds are made by tapping or stroking with their beaters: a wooden door, a wire fence, a metal slide, and a few items such as pipes and upturned pots you have 'planted'. Ask each child to demonstrate their favourite sound. The whole group can join in and copy. Ask each child to take up position ready to make their favourite sound. An adult or a child acts as conductor and raises a beater high in the air to signal to the children to play loudly and lowers it to signal playing softly.

- **Teddy is lost in the jungle:** One child (the rescuer) is taken aside while a teddy bear is hidden somewhere in the room. Tell the other children they are going to guide the rescuer to the teddy by singing louder as the rescuer gets closer to, or quietly as the rescuer moves further away from the teddy. Alternatively lead the children in singing a familiar song, rhyme or jingle, speeding up and slowing down to guide the rescuer.

- **Mrs _____ has a box:** Turn a box on its side with the opening facing away from the children. One by one, place between four and six familiar noisy items (e.g. a set of keys, biscuit packet, squeaky toy) into the box, pausing to name them and demonstrate the sound each one makes. Sing to the tune of 'Old MacDonald' but using your own name or one of the children's:

Mrs...has a box ee i ee i o And in that box she has a...

Stop. Gesture and ask the children to listen.

Handle one of the objects in the box, out of sight, to make a noise. The children take it in turns to guess what is making the sound. Continue the song but imitating the sound using your voice.

With a zzz zzz here and a zzz zzz there...

Allow the children to take a turn at making a noise from inside the box and use their names as you sing.

- **Favourite sounds:** Ask the children to think about sounds that they do and do not like (e.g. stormy weather, barking dogs, car horns, crying babies) and to say why. Imitate these sounds.
- **New words to old songs:** Take a song or rhyme the children know well and invent new words to suit the purpose and the children's interests. Use percussion instruments to accompany the new lyrics.
- **Adjust the volume:** Two children sit opposite each other with identical instruments. Ask them to copy each other making loud sounds and quiet sounds. It may be necessary to demonstrate with two adults copying each other first. Then try the activity with an adult with one child.

- **Roly poly:** Rehearse the rhyme with the actions (rotating hand over hand as in the song 'Wind the bobbin up').
Ro ... ly ... po ... ly ... ever ... so ... slowly *Ro ... ly ... poly faster.*
 (Increase the speed of the action as you increase the speed of the rhyme.)
 Now add in new verses, such as:
Stamp ... your ... feet ... ever ... so ... slowly *Stamp ... your feet faster.*
 Ask the children to suggest sounds and movements to be incorporated into the song.
Say hello ever so quietly *Say HELLO LOUDER!*
- **Listen to the beat:** Play different rhythms. Remind the children to use their listening ears and to move in time to the beat – fast, slow, skipping, marching, etc. Keep the beat simple at first (e.g. suitable for marching) then move on to more complex rhythms for the children to skip or gallop to.
- **I know a word:** Throughout the course of daily activities, encourage the children to think about and play with rhyming words. The adult begins with the prompt: *I know a word that rhymes with cat, you need to put one on your head and the word is...hat.* This can be used for all sorts of situations and also with some children's names: *I know a girl whose dress is neater, she is sitting next to Robbie and her name is... Rita.* As children become familiar with rhyme, they will supply the missing word themselves.
- **I spy names:** With a small group of children sitting in a circle, start the game by saying *I spy someone whose name begins with...* and give the sound of the first letter, for example /s/. Then ask: *Who can it be?* Sally stands up, everyone says his name and he carries on the game, saying *I spy someone whose name begins with...* and so on. If any children call out the name before the child with that name stands up, still let the child whose name it is take the next turn.
- **Name play:** Call out a child's name and make up a fun sentence starting with the name (e.g. *Ben has a big, bouncy ball, Katie keeps a kettle in the kitchen, Tim has ten, tickly toes, Fiona found a fine, fat frog*). Ask the children to think up similar sentences for their own names to share with others.
- **Voice sounds:** Show children how they can make sounds with their voices & allow them to offer suggestions for items and sounds for example: *Make your voice go down a slide – wheee! Make your voice bounce like a ball – boing, boing. Sound really disappointed – oh. Hiss like a snake – ssssss. Keep everyone quiet – shshshsh. Gently moo like a cow – mmmooooo. Look astonished – oooooo! Be a train – chchchchch. Buzz like a bumble bee – zzzzzzz. Be a clock – tick tock. This can be extended by joining single speech sounds into pairs (e.g. ee-aw like a donkey).*
- **Target sounds:** Give each child a target sound to put into a story when they hear a particular word or character (e.g. make a 'ch' sound when they hear the word 'train'). Start with a single sound that the small group of children can make together when they hear a target word. Be prepared to prompt initially and leave pauses in your reading to make it obvious where the sounds are required.
- **Whose voice?:** Ask children to close their eyes. Choose one child to say something (e.g. by touching them lightly on the shoulder). The children then open their eyes and have to guess who spoke. Or one child blindfolded/sitting facing away on a chair and get someone to say their name. Who said it. Make it harder by encouraging children to disguise their voice!
- **I s-p-y:** I spy for younger children; rather than just giving the initial sound, sound out the whole word e.g. I spy a ch-air, I spy a b-e-n-ch, I spy J-oh-n.
- **Clapping rhythms:** Clap a simple rhythm and ask the children to clap it back to you. Vary the rhythm that you clap. Once the children are used to this activity, invite a child to clap the rhythm for others to copy. Clapping names, syllables and words too can extend this.

- **Rhyming your name:** Choose a child's name and make nonsense rhymes with it using the initial letters in order of the alphabet, pointing to the alphabet frieze as you go e.g. Aan, Ban, Can, Dan, E-an, Fan, Gan ... for Dan.

Visual and Auditory Memory

I listen or watch for useful information and I use this to make choices or learn new things. LIT0-04a

As I listen and take part in conversations and discussions, I discover new words and phrases which I use to help me express my ideas, thoughts and feelings. LIT0-10a

Visual memory is the ability to recall information that has been presented visually. Auditory memory - The ability to process auditory information is essential if a child is to comprehend the spoken word. 'Auditory processing' has been defined as 'the ability to hold, sequence, and process accurately what is heard' (Rowe, Pollard & Rowe 2003).

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy me (visual or auditory with no visual just words) • What's missing/what's moved – KIMS games • Spot the difference • Snap • Pairs • Recalling events & stories • Clapping band (sequence of claps, progressively harder) • Threading (collect colours and thread – strategies for remembering) • Bingo (children can have pictures but don't show them for auditory memory activities only name) • Learning a new song | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound bingo (can you make your own sound game with familiar sounds in your setting?) • "we're going on a sound hunt" • Musical chairs • Treasure hunt (verbal clues, multiple instructions, progressively harder) • I went to the supermarket and I bought/I went to the woods and I saw • Pass the message (Chinese whispers without intentional changing of the message!) |
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Word Boundaries

Adult to say a sentence aloud: 'Today is Tuesday'. Adult to say sentence aloud a second time

- Modelling a hop/skip/jump
- Adding a cube to a tower
- Putting a counter on a 10 frame/grid
- Doing an action eg. pat thigh for each word that they say
- Taking a step onto a different shape mat/hula hoop
- Using a musical instrument

Children do activity alongside adult now – joining in with the action after each word is said.

- Be the sentence - Physical involvement and hands-on activity - each child physically represent a word in a sentence. Verbal or pictures ("We" "went" "to" "the" "shop"). Make it harder by giving children words in wrong order – work together to make a sentence.

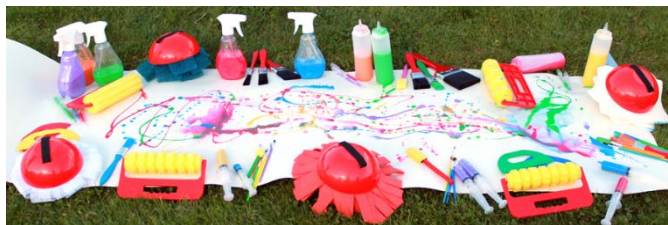
Rhyme awareness and detection

- Nursery rhymes and songs – sing these together and exaggerate the rhymes.
- Reading rhyming books and drawing children's attention to the words that sound the same at the end – they rhyme. Be careful to make sure you are talking about sounds and not words, letters or spellings.
- Rhyming pots/bags – using objects or pictures, not words. Can the children find the matching rhymes?
- Items in a basket that rhyme – can the children pick out the ones that rhyme?
- Rhyming bingo games/cards on free online sites, such as Twinkl (make sure they do not have any writing on them).

This list is not exhaustive – many other activities will also promote phonological awareness. This can be achieved through a group time experience – however please cater these to your individual children's needs. Many of them will and should be able to be achieved through free flow play also.

Pre-Handwriting Skills - Fine Motor Skills, Scissor Skills & Pre-writing Skills

As I play and learn, I enjoy exploring interesting materials for writing and different ways of recording my experiences and feelings, ideas and information. LIT0-21b



Fine motor games, threading activities, hand strengthening activities:

- Provide them with opportunities to use scissors to cut out shapes and patterns
- Provide them with big paper and drawing implements
- Allow them to make marks outside with paint brushes and water or large chalks
- Create a chain with pasta and a shoe lace
- Create objects using dough
- Make finger puppets
- Put coins into a money box
- Turn a deck of cards over as quickly as they can
- Hammering
- Squeezing bubble wrap
- Playing with wind-up toys
- Post money into a piggy bank.

Squashing and Squeezing:

- **Whole Hand:** Popping bubble wrap, play-dough, paint and glue in squeezable bottles, stress balls
- **Pincer/Tripod:** Bubble wrap - one pop at a time, small spray bottles/water gun, picking up items with tongs/tweezers

Pushing and Pulling:

- **Whole Hand:** Tug-of-war, hole punchers, kneading & rolling play-doh, balloon pump, hammering, large interlocking toys, eg Duplo
- **Pincer/Tripod:** Tearing strips of paper, finding small items hidden in play-dough, small interlocking toys, eg Lego, Stickle-Bricks

Freeze Position (Balance):

- **Whole Hand:** Cup your hands and stretch them out in front of you, get someone to put items in to you hands and see how long you can hold them for.
- **Pincer/Tripod:** Fill a small container with water/rice, hold upright in the tips of fingers – try not to spill!

Rotating/Turning:

- Nuts and Bolts
- Screwing Lids
- Twisting Toys

Hand-Eye Co-Ordination:

- Threading and Lacing Finger Football
- Peeling and placing stickers
- Ink stampers (or make your own out of potatoes)

Precision and Control:

- Finger Puppets
- Games that have small pieces, cards or dice, such as Connect 4, Snap, Snakes and Ladders
- Ball Walk: Use your fingers to walk it around a table-top obstacle course