

Research Précis

EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY: Literacy and Language Development

Pre K Guidelines consists of twelve guidelines, in three domains, with specific goals to be achieved for each. Guideline IV, Literacy and Language Learning, will be focused on in this edition.

Guideline IV, Goal 1, consists of five objectives:

Objective 1 – Children will discriminate between sounds in their environment.

Objective 2 – Children will listen attentively.

Objective 3 – Children will listen for pleasure and enjoyment.

Objective 4 – Children will develop phonemic awareness.

Objective 5 – Children will be able to identify letter-sound relationships.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to manipulate sounds in spoken language. English consists of around 41 specific sounds, called phonemes. Phonemic awareness (PA) is not to be confused with phonics, which is the ability to identify letter-sound relationships, as stated in objective 5, and relates with written language. Children need to listen to and learn a great variety of nursery rhymes, poems, chants, and texts that use alliteration (words grouped together that use the same first sound or group of sounds). They need to have a teacher who plays with language, making up rhymes and chants. They also should sing songs that accent beginning sounds or segment words, clapping out the syllables with a teacher. By engaging in these types of activities, children will be able to fill in rhyming words in familiar texts and be able to recite nursery rhymes, poems, and songs, and make up their own rhymes. They will also develop the ability to hear sounds in words, such as the beginning, middle, and end sounds, and become aware of syllables by clapping them.

The first ever set of national guidelines was released in November 2002 at the annual convention of the National Association of Educators of Young Children (NAEYC). These guidelines are intended as a foundation for states, districts, private schools, and education centers to use in formulating policies, standards, and curricula. The guidelines were put together by a group of recognized education specialists and underwritten by the McGraw-Hill companies. These state in very specific terms what children ages 3-5 should be taught and how. The most basic premise of the guidelines is that children learn through play. Interaction with adults as they play provides opportunities for broadening children's learning and readiness to learn.