



Early Childhood Education

Staff Report to the Tulsa Public Schools Board of Education



October 21, 2019



Why is early childhood education important for our students?

High-quality early learning experiences can have a life changing impact:

- Students are better prepared for kindergarten;
- Students have higher math test scores in middle school;
- Students are less likely to have been retained in grade;
- Students are more likely to have strong attendance and ultimately graduate high school; and
- Students who are economically disadvantaged are more likely to go to college and earn more over their lifetime.



What does it mean to provide high-quality early learning experiences?

Early Childhood Vision of Excellence

In Tulsa Public Schools, our goal is to ensure that all students have equitable access to excellent early childhood education across the district. Our early childhood programs prepare students for success in elementary school and to realize their potential to become healthy, thriving members of the community.

What is happening in our early childhood classrooms?



High-quality,
responsive
learning
experiences

Joyful and
purposeful play

Oral language
development

Rigorous,
intellectually
stimulating work

Social emotional
development

Families and
caregivers are
partners



How are we ensuring all children have the opportunity for a strong start in school?





How are we building strong partnerships with early childhood families?

Eugene Field, Kerr, Mark Twain and Marshall elementary schools held welcome events for pre-K families to:

- Create a welcoming experience and a sense of belonging; and
- Build families' understanding of the importance of early childhood learning and the role of strong attendance in student success.

81% of pre-kindergarten families attended

60% of kindergarten families attended

95% of families reported that the event helped them to feel welcomed by their school





How are we building strong partnerships with early childhood families?

Big Beginnings for Our Littlest Learners is a guide to support parents and caregivers in understanding early childhood, transitioning their child to school, and supporting their child's growth and development.

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Literacy

Learning to read and write starts long before first grade and has long-lasting effects. When children learn basic reading skills in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten such as recognizing letters and rhyming words, it is easier for them to learn more challenging reading skills in later grades. The experiences children have with books and print materials greatly influence their ability to understand what they read. Children need to be exposed to a variety of story books and non-fiction texts with rich vocabulary that represent and include diversity of families, cultures and languages.

From the earliest years, everything that adults do to support children's language and literacy is critical. Parents and caregivers should provide opportunities for children to interact with words and print as often as possible, in books, magazines, sign, labels and logos. Parents can foster a child's love of reading and boost their literacy skills by reading aloud to their child each day. On the next page you will find some other tips and ideas to help your child build and practice their literacy skills at home.

What to Expect in Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten

By the end of pre-kindergarten, your child will:

- identify his/her first name;
- understand the correct way to hold a book;
- understand that print carries meaning;
- recognize familiar signs and print in his or her surroundings and community;
- identify most letters and be able to connect some letters to sounds;
- begin to understand rhyme; and
- show interest in reading and writing.

By the end of kindergarten your child will:

- name and write all letters and their sounds;
- recognize rhyming words and the sounds in words;
- sound out simple three-letter words such as cat, sit, hen, lot;
- read common words found in books such as the, I, a, see, are;
- answer questions about a story that has been read aloud;
- begin writing by sounding out words; and
- show interest in books and writing.

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Reflection

What are some of your favorite books or stories you remember from your childhood that you could share with your child?

Our Family Goals

Goal setting is a great way to monitor your child's learning and development. Use the boxes below to create two goals for your child's language development this year.

My child's literacy goal

Example: Learn all the letters in his name and the sounds they make.

My family's literacy goal

Example: Check out and read new books from the library each month.

Tips for Families

- Explore different types of print like labels, magazines or books. Ask your child to find words that start with a specific letter or sound. For example, "Can you find a word that starts with a 'B'? What sound does that make? What other words start with that sound?"
- Read non-fiction books to your child about topics that interest them.
- Tell stories and read to your child in their home language.
- Give your child a word and ask him or her to respond with a word that rhymes with it.
- Encourage your child to use writing materials including pencils, pens, markers, etc. They can make cards or pictures to send to family or friends.

Resources



Tell me a story activity

Making a book or story page with your child helps them build the understanding that their words carry a meaning. Ask them to draw a picture of an event or story they'd like to share. Ask them about their picture as they draw. When they are ready, ask them to tell their story and write down the words they say.

Book recommendations

"Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" by Bill Martin Jr.
 "Night in the Country" by Cynthia Rylant
 "Lola Loves Stories" by Anna McQuinn
 "LMNO Peas" by Keith Baker
 "Alphabet City" by Stephen T. Johnson
 "How Rocket Learned to Read" by Tad Hills
 "Noodle Magic" by Roseanne Greenfield Thong
 "Beatrice Doesn't Want To" by Laura Numeroff

The Tulsa City-County Library offers a wide variety of FREE books, audiobooks, music, and CDs for all ages. All you need is a library card. www.tulsalibrary.org



Discussion