

Family Child Care Literacy Environment Checklist

Is your family child care program literacy friendly?

You have a very important role in providing the children in your program with some of their first experiences with books and reading. This checklist was specially designed for family child care programs, and should be used with your older 3's, 4's and younger 5's in mind. Try to go through this checklist 2 or 3 times during the year.

Look around the areas in your home where the children in your program spend most of their time, and think about what you do with the children when they are in your care. If the statement on the checklist is true, place a check in the "true" column. If the statement is false, place a check in the "false" column. When you are finished, count up the number of checks in the true column, and find that number on the chart at the end of the checklist. Use the results as a guideline to see what you can add to your program, and to appreciate the things that you do for children each day. You might also want to share this checklist with the families and invite them to use the results as a guideline for their own activities.

Learning Resources in Your Family Child Care Home

TRUE FALSE

There are plastic or wooden alphabet letters to help children learn the names and shapes of the letters.

There are crayons, pencils and paper for children's writing and drawing.

There are a variety of materials available for pretend play such as puppets, dolls and other toys.

There are materials containing everyday print available for pretend play, such as empty cereal boxes, packaging and labels.

Children see meaningful print used in the home that helps them gain information and organize materials, such as a calendar and labeled containers for crayons or Legos.

Books and Reading in Your Family Child Care Home

TRUE FALSE

A variety of picture books, in readable condition, are located where children can easily reach them.

You read to the children as a group or in small groups every day.

Children have easy access to a variety of alphabet books (e.g., Dr. Seuss's *ABC*).

Children have easy access to books with large print, colorful pictures and photographs.

You regularly borrow books from the public library and families so that the children see a wide variety of age-appropriate books about pretend and real situations.

You regularly change the books available, giving children access to new books as well as some old favorites.

You read some books with the children that include rhyme, repetition and predictable text.

While reading to the children, you point out important features of the book such as the front, back, title and author.

Language and Literacy Activities in Your Family Child Care Home

TRUE FALSE

Each day includes at least one planned literacy activity to introduce letters, sounds, and print.

You encourage the playful use of language through nursery rhymes and songs.

You encourage children to use new ideas and vocabulary throughout the day.

You encourage children to talk about their experiences by asking open-ended questions (e.g., "What did you do at the library today?").

You frequently introduce new words and their meanings to children during discussions or while reading picture books.

You help children to use words to resolve conflicts and think through problems.

Language and Literacy Activities in Your Family Child Care Home (continued)

TRUE FALSE

You regularly engage children in games and activities that help them break spoken words into sound parts (e.g., "Let's clap out the parts of your name.").

Age-appropriate activities are used regularly to help children learn to print the letters of the alphabet.

You regularly help children learn the sounds that alphabet letters make (e.g., "M makes the 'mmm' sound.").

Projects and trips through the year include early language and literacy experiences (e.g., a visit to the library, visiting the supermarket, noticing signs during a neighborhood walk).

You encourage children to practice writing their own names and experiment with making books and writing notes.

You encourage children to scribble and experiment with pretend writing during pretend play.

There are regular games and activities to help children learn to rhyme.

You encourage children to dictate stories to you so that they can see their own words in print.

About Your Ongoing Work with Families

TRUE FALSE

You encourage parents to read to their children daily.

You share your knowledge of literacy and language through meetings and printed information.

You share literacy activities, books, videos, written materials, community resources, and other information with families.

You help families to ensure that children are screened once a year for problems with vision and hearing by a healthcare professional.

You represent children's home languages and cultures in your program through activities, books, songs and vocabulary.

You regularly observe each child and record your observations about progress in early language and literacy skills, and share the information with families.

If you are concerned about a child's development, you encourage the child's family to seek further guidance and evaluation from a qualified professional.

You provide families with information about their child's language and literacy development to pass on to the kindergarten teacher.

About You, the Family Child Care Provider

TRUE FALSE

You read one-on-one with each child several times a week, using that time to personally connect with each child.

You get involved in children's pretend play, encouraging their use of new vocabulary.

You use rich, descriptive vocabulary when talking and playing with the children.

You regularly show children how you use reading and writing for multiple purposes, including writing letters and making lists with the children.

You use positive discipline and guidance with the children, celebrating their successes and accomplishments.

You have received training in early language and literacy.

Count up the number of statements marked TRUE and put that number in the box to the right. See the chart below to find out how literacy-friendly your family child care program is.

31 - 41 Family child care environment has most of the necessary supportive elements.

21 - 30 Family child care environment has many supportive elements.

11 - 20 Family child care environment has some supportive elements.

0 - 10 Family child care environment needs improvement.