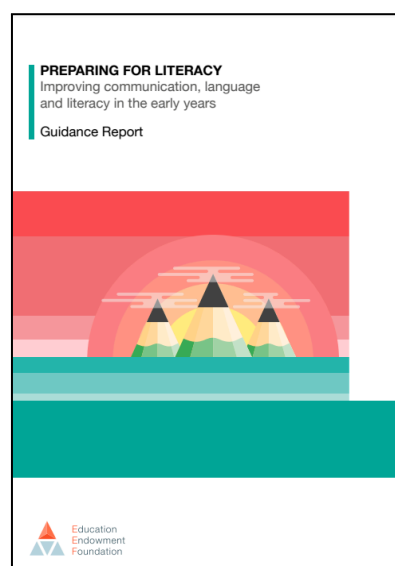
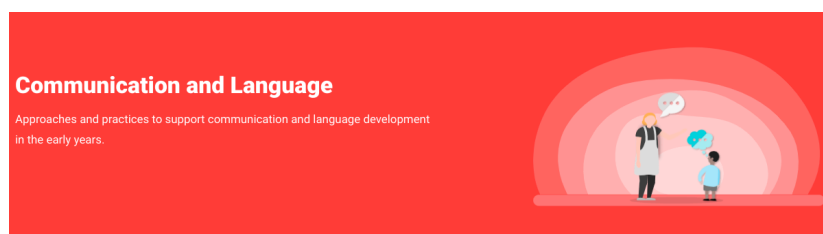
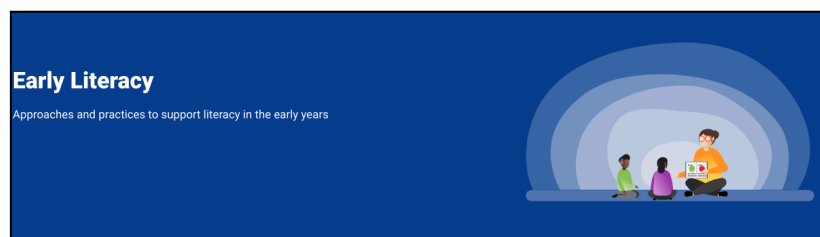


Enhancing Early Literacy: A Guide to Evidence-Based Practices

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Early literacy lays the foundation for a child's lifelong learning journey. It encompasses the essential skills required for reading, writing, and comprehension. As educators and caregivers, it's crucial to implement evidence-based practices to ensure children develop strong literacy skills from an early age. In this blog, we'll explore some of the best practices in early literacy, drawing upon the Early Education Foundation (EEF) [Early Literacy Evidence Store](#), the EEF's [Preparing for Literacy Guidance Report](#) and the EEF's [Communication and Language Evidence Store](#).



The EEF's evidence store and guidance report is built upon a foundation of rigorous research and evidence. Through systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and randomised controlled trials, the EEF evaluates the effectiveness of various literacy interventions and instructional approaches. By synthesising findings from diverse studies, the EEF provides practitioners with invaluable insights into what works best in promoting early literacy development.

Let's unpick some of the key messages from the evidence store and guidance report:

1. Phonics Instruction:

Phonics instruction involves teaching children the relationship between letters and sounds. Research consistently shows that systematic and explicit phonics instruction is highly effective in promoting early reading skills. Teachers can use structured phonics programs that introduce letter-sound correspondences in a logical sequence. Additionally, providing ample opportunities for phonemic awareness activities, such as rhyming and segmenting words, further supports literacy development. This is shown here in [Approach 2 - Communication and Language Evidence Store](#), "*Prior to the introduction of systematic phonics teaching, activities to develop children's phonological awareness and interest in sounds are likely to be beneficial*".

2. Vocabulary Development:

A rich vocabulary is essential for comprehension and communication.

"There is strong evidence that teaching and modelling vocabulary to children in the early years can have a positive effect on their oral language skills," [Approach 1 - Communication and Language Evidence Store](#)

Encourage vocabulary development through interactive read-aloud sessions, discussions, and exposure to diverse texts. Introducing new words in context and providing multiple exposures to target vocabulary enhances retention. Additionally, incorporating word-learning strategies, such as using context clues and word families, strengthens vocabulary acquisition.

3. Language and Communication Skills:

Effective communication skills form the basis of literacy and you can find out even more about the importance of this in the [Communication and Language Evidence Store](#).

“Language provides the foundation of thinking and learning and should be prioritised”, [Recommendation 1 - Preparing for Literacy recommendations poster](#).

Research shows that it is important to encourage language development through meaningful conversations, storytelling, and engaging activities. Create a language-rich environment by exposing children to varied language experiences, including songs, poems, and role play. Scaffold language learning by modelling correct grammar at all times and expanding upon children's language and expressions.

4. Interactive and Engaging Activities

Literacy approaches that involve interactive and engaging activities, such as storytelling, drama and shared reading, can motivate children and foster a love of reading and writing. This is recommended in several approaches in the evidence store.

5. Parents/Carers as Partners

“Effective parental engagement is challenging but has the potential to improve children's communication, language, and literacy,”

[Recommendation 5 - Preparing for Literacy recommendations poster](#)

Literacy approaches that involve parents/carers in reading activities, storytelling and language rich interactions at home can complement the learning in the setting. The guidance report also states that a promising strategy is to run workshops to show parents how to read and talk about books with their children effectively.

Conclusion:

Early literacy development is an intricate process that requires intentional and evidence-based practices. By incorporating strategies supported by research, educators and caregivers can foster a love for reading and empower children with the skills they need to succeed academically and beyond. The EEF evidence store and guidance report serves as a valuable resource, guiding practitioners in implementing effective interventions and approaches to support early literacy development.

Together, let's ensure every child has the opportunity to become a fluent and enthusiastic reader from the earliest stages of their educational journey.