EMERGENT WRITING
Emergent Writing Stretches Across ELOF Domains

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NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning
Emergent Writing Stretches Across ELOF Domains

- Approaches to Learning
  - Initiative and Curiosity (Infant)
  - Creativity (Infant/Toddler & Preschool)

- Language and Literacy
  - Language and communication (Infant/Toddler)
  - Literacy (Preschool)

- Cognition
  - Imitation and symbolic representation and play (Infant/Toddler)
  - Counting and Cardinality (Preschool)

- Perceptual Motor and Physical Development
  - Fine motor (Infant/Toddler & Preschool)
Framework for Effective Practice

- Highly individualized teaching and learning
- Implementing research-based curriculum and teaching practices
- Parent/family engagement
- Screening and ongoing child assessment
- Nurturing, responsive, and effective interactions and engaging environments
Session Objectives

• **Identify** the significance of young children’s emergent writing for school readiness

• **Describe** what emergent writing looks like in young children

• **Implement** practical ways to begin to support emergent writing in your care setting
Emergent Writing
Overview & Development
Definition of Emergent Writing

• Children’s early attempts writing begins with random marks and drawings and advances to invented and conventional spelling

• Children as young as 2 years understand that writing has meaning and communicates ideas
Early Stages of Emergent Writing

Children often write in drawings or scribbles without using letters
Early Stages of Emergent Writing

0. Pre-drawing
Random marks without meaning attached to them

1. Drawing
Drawings that represent writing

2. Scribbling
Marks or scribbles the child intends to be writing

3. Wavy Scribbles/Mock Handwriting
Wavy scribbles that have left-to-right progression; child pretends to write words
Children begin to understand that writing includes specific symbols (letters) and follow certain patterns, but they do not yet understand or have letter-sound correspondence.
Middle Stages of Emergent Writing

4. Letter-like Forms/Mock Letters
Letters and marks that resemble letter-like shapes

5. Letter Strings
Strings of letters that do not create words, written left to right, including uppercase and lowercase letters

6. Transitional Writing
Letters with spaces in between to resemble words; letters or words copied from environmental print; letters often reversed
Late Stages of Emergent Writing Development

Children begin to understand and intentionally use letters to represent sounds, often starting with representing beginning sounds, then moving to ending sounds, middle sounds, and invented and more conventional spelling.
## Late Stages of Emergent Writing

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<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>7. Invented Spelling</td>
<td>Invented or phonetic spelling; different ways to represent the sounds in words; often, the first letter of the word or beginning and ending sounds represent the entire word.</td>
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<td>8. Beginning Word and Phrase Writing</td>
<td>Words with beginning, middle, and ending letter sounds; short phrases</td>
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<td>9. Conventional Spelling and Sentence Writing</td>
<td>Correct spelling, generally the child’s name and simpler or familiar words; sentences with punctuation and correct use of uppercase and lowercase letters</td>
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Supporting Emergent Writing
Practical Tips and Tools
Supporting the Earliest Stages of Writing

• To support pre-drawing, early drawing, and scribbling:
  • Provide writing materials for children and encourage their use
  • If children can talk, ask them to tell you about their drawing
  • Revisit children’s drawing the next day and have children again tell you what it is or says
Supporting Middle and Later Stages of Writing

- Start with name writing
- Model writing throughout the day and in different contexts
- Engage in shared and independent writing with children
- Include authentic opportunities for writing throughout the day
- Encourage peer scaffolding

Remember... You are supporting a *process*, not an outcome.
Supporting the Emergent Writing of All Children

- Accept all levels of children’s writing
- Accept children’s writing errors as learning or teaching opportunities
- Be mindful of children’s physical abilities to write
- Allow children to write in whatever language they are most comfortable
  - Be aware of general differences between writing in English and writing in children’s home language
Learning Activity: Writing in Your Setting

• Select samples of children’s writing from your care setting, and review their drawing and writing

• In which stage(s) of emergent writing are children?
  • Don’t forget to consider whether the sample shows children’s teacher-supported or independent writing

• What supports can you put in place during writing for children to help them develop in this area?

• What learning opportunities can you put in place to encourage children to practice writing in a fun and meaningful way?
Review