

## Children's Development in Early Reading and Writing

An Article Excerpted from- "Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children"- International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children

Learning to read and write is critical to a child's success in school and later in life. One of the best predictors of whether a child will function competently in school and go on to contribute actively in our increasingly literate society is the level to which the child progresses in reading and writing. Although reading and writing abilities continue to develop throughout the life span, the early childhood years—from birth through age eight—are the most important period for literacy development.

**Phase 1:** Awareness and exploration (goals for preschool). Children explore their environment and build the foundations for learning to read and write.

### Children can

- Understand that print carries a message
- Engage in reading and writing attempts
- Participate in rhyming games and listening to storybooks
- Use known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language

### What parents and family members can do

- Encourage children to talk with children, engage them in conversation, give names of things, show interest in what a child says
- Read and reread stories with predictable text to children
- Provide opportunities for children to draw and print, using markers, crayons, and pencils

**Phase 2:** Experimental reading and writing (goals for kindergarten). Children develop basic concepts of print and begin to engage in and experiment with reading and writing.

### Kindergartners can

- Use descriptive language to explain and explore simple narrative stories or informational texts
- Recognize letters and letter-sound matches
- Understand left-to-right and top-to-bottom orientation and familiar concepts of print
- Begin to write letters of the alphabet and some high-frequency words

### What parents and family members can do

- Daily read and reread narrative and informational stories to children
- Encourage children's participation and attempts of reading and writing
- Play games that involve specific directions (such as "Simon Says")
- Have conversations with children during mealtimes and throughout the day

Note: this list is intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive. Children at any grade level will function at a variety of phases along the reading/writing continuum.

References: Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children - A position statement of the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children

www.naeyc.org

## Brick wall...



Play Group



Play Group



Group Activity - Nursery



Nursery



Jr. k



Jr. k



Jr. K



Sr. k



Sr. k



Class 1



Class 2



Class 2



## "Brick-Beat"

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Dear Parents,

Recently, when I was visiting the classrooms I started interacting with a child. I saw one of his drawings on the board and recognized it immediately. This child's drawings are very well detailed and each drawing has multiple objects. I was quite impressed with it! However, I have observed that he always draws in a particular style- making small grids on the plain paper and then drawing objects within each grid. Maybe because he is a good organizer! When I told him that without reading his name I had identified his drawing, he instantly asked me "How?" I asked him to make a guess. He replied, "Because my drawing is bad!" I immediately told him that in fact his drawing was very good and neat. But he refused to believe me and said that he knew it was bad.

This incident struck me and I wondered why the child was feeling less confident about his drawing (and himself). Is it because, we as adults, give children such messages about their abilities? How can we help each child to develop better self-esteem and confidence in his/her own self while they are growing up? I recently read that 'the average child hears the word "no" or "don't" over 148,000 times while growing up, compared with just a few thousand yes messages.' It is hard to develop self-esteem when you constantly hear the word 'no.' Children develop some independence if they are encouraged to develop skills at their own pace. Children who are told no continuously or who are shamed, begin to doubt their abilities.

What we can do as educators and parents is to be conscious about the language we use and interactions we have with our children. We can purposefully make a change in our speech habits, according to Mimi Doe, author of 10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting. 'If you use negative words - catch yourself. Count how many times you say 'don't' to your children. Of course we need to use firm words at times and alert our child to emergencies and dangers, but the habitual no's begin to eat away at a child's spirit.'

With this thought, we wish all the parents a very Happy New Year and hope the year 2012 brings loads of fun, laughter and sharing with your children. Happy Reading!

Best Wishes,

**Renita Handa**

Founder

Redbricks Education Foundation



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## Knowledge Bus



The end of 2011 witnessed the return of the much spoken of Knowledge Bus activity, but at new venues across the city. Ahmedabad Management Association and thereafter Alpha One, Vastrapur, were party to a lot of children and parents struggling to figure out the fun filled Maths and Science puzzles laid out before them by Redbricks volunteers. From educational exhibits to

mind-boggling puzzles to painting and clay-modelling for tots, the Knowledge Bus had something for everyone.

## Highlights

### Redbricks Teachers Institute- An Enlightening End to The First Trimester

The institute launched a Post Graduate program in Early Childhood Care & Education from 7th November, 2011 for teachers and mothers. Students have completed first trimester of their studies on 31st January, 2012 and now are looking forward to their second trimester. The program has become very enriching through interactive discussions among the students and the faculties. The students have been also visiting Redbricks classes regularly for their fieldwork through observations and are learning by connecting theory with practice. Reflections from some students on their experience are as below-



" My experience was enriching, the classroom, the learning, the environment has helped me improve in all aspects of being a better mother and a great friend to my child." - **Kirti Dave**

" It was a good learning experience as a person and a future teacher. It changed my view about pre school education. I started having positive attitude towards each child's demands. I also learnt to make most from the time available." - **Mamta Sutaria**

### Educational Visit to Chetan Balwadi by Redbricks Teachers

In December, the academic team of Redbricks went for an educational visit to Chetan Balwadi- A lab school at M. S. University, Baroda. The school is renowned in Asia for its play-based and developmentally appropriate Early childhood program. Redbricks teachers got an opportunity to understand the curriculum and spend time in classrooms observing the different sessions in action with children. They also learnt more about the teacher's role in working with young children by observing expert teachers in the classrooms. All in all, it was an enriching experience for the team, which immediately brought back learnings to their practice at Redbricks.

### Project Approach at Redbricks

During January, Nursery to Grade 2 children again engaged themselves in deep inquiry about various topics through the Project Approach. The topics chosen were Nursery-Vehicles, Jr. kg- Clothes, Sr.kg- Furniture, Class 1-Vehicles (School Bus) and Class 2-Ahmedabad City (Gandhi Ashram and Darwajas). Once again, children and teachers amazed all of us with the learnings and models put up at the culminating displays of the projects. Engagement from all the parents has been very helpful in planning and conducting the projects at school. We thank you for all your support & appreciation!

## Kathotsava 2012

Redbricks Education and Kathalaya, Bangalore partnered to promote the dying art of storytelling in the city of Ahmedabad. In a span of three days, the festival has touched more than 500 people (children and adults). On 24th January, the festival started with an event for underprivileged children, who witnessed a street play from students of MICA and a nature trail in Sundervan Park. On 26th January, children and parents enjoyed listening to stories from Kathalaya facilitators at Sundervan Centre & also took a nature trail in the park. On 27th January, 3 to 10 year old children participated in workshops and listened to stories with puppets, represented the stories through drawings, gave their own titles to stories, made own animal puppets and enacted stories using puppets.

On 28th January, in the morning, educators and parents from renowned schools of Ahmedabad came together to learn the art of storytelling from Geeta Ramanujam. They engaged in listening, voice modulation exercises, body movements, etc., and delved to find their hidden storytellers. In the evening, the festival ended with culminating performances by Kathalaya facilitators, children and participants of adult workshop. Truly, Kathotsava- a celebration of stories will now continue in the homes of all the participants and their families.



## Celebrations!

### Diwali

Children engaged in creative and physical activities like Rangoli making, Diya making, Outdoor games, Puppet shows, Dancing to music, etc. and Mathia and Shakarpara were served as festive food.

### Sports Day

Sports Day was celebrated by Playgroup children at Redbricks Satellite & by Nursery to Grade 2 children at the St. Xavier's Loyola School grounds. Children surprised everyone with their immense excitement, drills, acrobats, and races of varied formats. Parents and teachers were active participants in the sports day as they too were part of racing events.

### Christmas

A Christmas story video was shown and a display of the birth of Jesus Christ was also constructed for children's understanding. Children also interacted with Santa Claus, sang and danced to Christmas carols.

### Uttarayan

It was celebrated through stories of kite flying, children sharing their kite flying experiences, dancing on music and flying kites & balloons in the school garden as well as on the terrace. Chikki was served as the festive food to all children.

### Republic Day

Republic Day was celebrated on the 25th of January starting with a small discourse on the significance of the national flag and a small presentation to the children on the national symbol. This was followed by a craft activity, performances of patriotic songs of unity from the children and finally ended with the National Anthem.

## Snippets

### School Picnic

An annual school picnic was organized in the month of January. Playgroup children visited Prahladnagar Garden while Nursery to Grade 2 children visited the Clarion Campus Gardens as an outdoor retreat. All children and teachers enjoyed a day together by riding in the bus, playing various outdoor games, dancing, watching a magic show, sharing food, and by just playing in each other's company.



### Educational Field visits at Redbricks

The past months were filled with lots of field visits across classes to enhance understanding about various curriculum related aspects. Some major field visits include-

- Playgroup - Visit to Sundarvan to learn about different animals, their habitats and behaviours
- Nursery - Visit to Honda Showroom to learn about Vehicles in their project
- Jr. kg - Visits to Printing and dyeing factory, Boutique and Blind people association (weaving unit)
- Sr. kg - Visits to Furniture showroom, Furniture manufacturing unit and Science City
- Class 1 - Visit to Crossword bookstore to learn about the different kind of books
- Class 2 - Visit to see the Darwajas of Ahmedabad and to Gandhi Ashram to learn about Ahmedabad city



### Chess Tournament Co-sponsored by Redbricks

Redbricks co-sponsored a national chess tournament at Karnavati Club organised by R.K. Chokshi School of Chess, which witnessed over 100 players from across the state. Mrs. Renita Handa was the chief guest at the culmination where she talked about importance of sports in education and handed out prizes to the winners.

