

CURRICULUM RESOURCE

More Partner and Group Activities for a Child Care Career

OALCF ALIGNMENT

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	2
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A3. Extract information from films, broadcasts, and presentations	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B1. Interact with others	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B3. Complete and create documents	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B4. Express oneself creatively	2
Competency D - Use Digital Technology	N/A	2
Competency E - Manage Learning	N/A	2
Competency F - Engage with Others	N/A	2

Goal Paths (check all that apply)

- Employment
- Apprenticeship
- Secondary School Credit
- Postsecondary
- Independence

Embedded Skills for Success (check all that apply)

- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Creativity and innovation
- Digital
- Numeracy
- Problem Solving
- Reading
- Writing

NOTES: This is a supplementary resource for practitioners working with groups of LBS learners interested in a career in child care. This resource expands on the series of CLO learner resources that includes Your Path to a Job in Child Care Part 1 and Part 2, Skills for Successfully Working in Child Care Part 1 and Part 2, Resources to Support Your Child Care Career, and Partner and Group Activities for a Child Care Career.

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Introduction

As part of the provincial Skills for Success initiative, Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) has created a series of resources for learners interested in:

- working as Child Care Assistants
- opening a home-based daycare
- apprenticing as Child Development Practitioners
- enrolling in a 2-year Early Childhood Education college diploma program
- becoming Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs)

These resources include:



1. Your Path to a Job in Child Care Part 1
2. Your Path to a Job in Child Care Part 2
3. Skills for Successfully Working in Child Care Part 1
4. Skills for Successfully Working in Child Care Part 2
5. Resources to Support Your Child Care Career

Each of the above resources is intended to be completed by learners independently or with support from an LBS practitioner or tutor.

The resources **Partner and Group Activities for a Child Care Career** and **More Partner and Group Activities for a Child Care Career** expand on the independent resources, offering literacy practitioners group activities that can be used to supplement independent learning. If learners are unfamiliar with working in a group, practitioners may wish to discuss some general rules of effective collaboration in advance.

Note that there are two PowerPoint presentations used in **More Partner and Group Activities for a Child Care Career**:

1. Outdoor Play Spaces for Child Care
2. Using Phonics to Teach Early Language and Reading Skills

In this resource, you will find the following group activities:

Activity 1: Outdoor Play Spaces for Child Care

In this activity, learners will discuss playgrounds and then find out about some of the guidelines and best practices for designing a child care centre's outdoor play space. They will then design their own outdoor play space and present their designs to the rest of the group. **Note:** this activity requires practitioners to use the PowerPoint presentation called "Outdoor Play Spaces for Child Care."

Activity 2: Reflective Journaling

In this activity, learners will discuss what reflective practice is and how journaling can be used to gain a better understanding of how situations make them think and feel. They will review a scenario featuring an Early Childhood Educator and work together to complete a reflection journal on that person's behalf. Finally, they will create their own child care scenarios, exchange them with other learners, and complete a second reflective journal based on the scenario they receive. Learners will receive a reflection journal as a take-away from this activity.

Activity 3: Five Characteristics of Learning Through Play

In this activity, learners will share their thoughts about why play is a good way for children to learn. Then they will watch a video that outlines five characteristics of learning through play. Following the video, they will discuss each of the characteristics, connecting them to child care or their own life experiences. Finally, learners will watch a video focused on play as a motivator for adult behaviour and look for how the five characteristics played a role in the video.

Activity 4: Teaching Early Math Skills

In this activity, learners will consider two different methods for helping young children learn about numbers and early math concepts: reading and game play. They will discuss the benefits of learning math through these techniques and will work in groups to compile a list of books related to numbers and games where numbers or math concepts are used. Finally, they will share and talk about the resources they've found with other learners.

Activity 5: Teaching Early Language and Reading Skills

In this activity, learners will discuss how Early Childhood Educators teach children early language and reading skills. They will be taught several techniques that focus on the use of phonics and work in small groups to decide how they could use those techniques with young children. At the end of the lesson, groups will share what they discussed with other learners. **Note:** This activity requires practitioners to use the PowerPoint presentation called “Using Phonics to Teach Early Language and Reading Skills.”



Practitioners are invited to supplement this series by creating their own partner and group activities to meet the needs of their learners!

Outdoor Play Spaces for Child Care



All licensed child care centres operating for six hours or more per day are required to have outdoor play spaces for children. It is important to know about how outdoor play spaces are designed for children and what they should include.

Summary: In this activity, learners will discuss playgrounds and find out about some of the guidelines and best practices for designing a child care centre’s outdoor play space. They will then design their own outdoor play space and present their designs to the rest of the group.

Recommended supplies: A projector, laptop, and a copy of the PowerPoint presentation “**Outdoor Play Spaces for Child Care.**” You will also need supplies for learners to design their outdoor play space and present it to the rest of the group. These could include:

- blank paper, drafting paper, and/or poster board
- pencils, pencil crayons, and/or markers
- three-dimensional building supplies like Lego, building blocks, and pipe cleaners
- devices with software such as PowerPoint or Word

Facilitator instructions:

Step 1: Begin this activity by leading a discussion using the following questions as prompts. Feel free to add your own questions too!

- Where have you seen playgrounds before?
- What did they include? Was there equipment? If so, what kind?
- Were there open, natural spaces? If so, what were they like?
- Why do you think it’s important for children to play outdoors?
- Do you think there are any rules about the outdoor play areas that child care centres have? If so, what do you think they are?



Step 2: Show learners the PowerPoint presentation “**Outdoor Play Spaces for Child Care.**” Throughout, you will notice key information in a **bold blue font.**

Reinforce these concepts with learners as you share the presentation, using the prompts included below and in the slide deck.

Slide # 3

To confirm learners’ understanding of these terms from “How Does Learning Happen”, ask learners:

- to describe what they think “vigorous physical play” means. Answers could include that it’s “playing hard,” using your whole body in play, and it doesn’t involve sitting still.
- what happens in a child’s body when they do something physically vigorous? Answers could include that their heart rate goes up, they may sweat, they build strength and endurance, etc.
- for examples of vigorous play. Answers could include using a jump rope, playing tag, climbing, etc.
- what they think a “manageable level of challenge” refers to. Answers should reference something that’s difficult to do or that takes effort but that a child can still accomplish.
- what happens when someone is challenged to do something that’s difficult? Answers could include that they have to work harder to do it, that they learn new skills, that they may get discouraged, or that they may be motivated to overcome the challenge (depending on the attitude of the child).

Slide # 4

To confirm learners’ understanding of these terms from “How Does Learning Happen”, ask learners:

- Why can taking risks be a good thing for children’s development? Answers could include that it helps build confidence, that children may not know what they’re capable of until they try something new, and that it can inspire children to grow in new ways.

- Describe “a reasonable degree.” What does it mean? An appropriate answer would reference providing room for children to take risks, but not to the level where they’re likely to hurt themselves in a serious way.

Slide # 5

To confirm learners’ understanding of these terms from “How Does Learning Happen”, ask them what they believe each of the terms below means. Sample definitions have been provided for reference.

- functioning in cognitive areas - how well your brain is working
- perception – the way you see and understand the world around you
- attention – noticing things around you and being able to focus on a task
- creative problem solving – recognizing problems and coming up with new and interesting ways of solving them
- complex thinking – understanding complicated ideas and how things work together or impact each other



Slide # 6

To confirm learners’ understanding of these terms from “How Does Learning Happen”, ask learners:

- What is independence from a child’s point of view? Answers could include being able to do things themselves or not needing help from a grown-up.
- What does it mean when someone perseveres? Answers could include that they stick with things even when they are difficult, or that they can set a goal and don’t quit.
- Why is it important for children to learn self control? Answers could include that it helps children learn to share, control their emotions, or behave appropriately in certain situations.
- Reword the phrase “physical, emotional and intellectual mastery.” An example could be “being an expert at using your body, understanding emotions, and using your brain.”



Slide # 7

To reinforce this recommendation from the Planning and Design Guidelines for Licensed Child Care Centres (<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-childcare-centre-design-guidelines-en-2022-03-30.pdf>), ask learners why it is important that the entire outdoor play space be supervised at the same time? Answers should refer to the safety of the children in care.

Slide # 8

To reinforce this recommendation from the Planning and Design Guidelines for Licensed Child Care Centres, ask learners where they have seen some of these different outdoor play surfaces (grass, rubberized surfaces, concrete) used before. Answers will vary depending on the experience of learners.

Slide # 9

Ask learners what skills they think children might be developing by:

- riding bicycles? Answers could include muscle strength, balance, a sense of direction, etc.
- playing with water? Answers could include concepts like what floats and doesn't, how water feels and acts, etc.
- playing in sand? Answers could include digging and building, how sand feels and acts, etc.

Slide # 10

Let learners know that the term “gross motor play” refers to children using their whole body and large muscles during physical play. The term “fine motor” refers to children using their eyes, hands, and fingers – all smaller muscles.

Slide # 11

Pause and discuss the concept of accessibility with learners. Ask:

- Where have you heard the word “accessible” before? What do you think it means? Answers should refer to making something usable by everyone, taking into account people with varying abilities.
- How are the needs of infants (babies under the age of 1), toddlers (children between 1 and 3 years old), and preschoolers (children between the ages of 3 and 5) different?
- What physical issues could a child have that could make an outdoor play space less accessible? Answers could include vision or hearing loss, mobility challenges such as using a wheelchair, etc.
- What are some examples of developmental issues a child could have? Answers could include learning disabilities, speech or language delays, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, etc.

Slide # 12

Remind learners of the conversation about “manageable level of challenge” and “reasonable degrees of risk-taking” earlier in the presentation. Let them know it’s important for children with varying abilities to participate fully, to be challenged, and to take risks so they can grow and learn.

Slide # 13

Ask learners how they might include opportunities for children to experience, care for, and interact with nature in an outdoor play space. Answers could include having trees, a garden, logs, or rocks in the play space. Note that several suggestions appear on the following slide.

Slide # 14

Ask learners what children are learning when they explore and experience nature. Answers could include that they’re learning to appreciate and respect nature, understanding more about the world around them, learning about where their food comes from, building their physical skills, etc.

Step 3: When you are done showing the PowerPoint, lead a group discussion using the following prompts. Listen to the answers learners provide, and feel free to add your own questions too!

- What could you include in an outdoor play space to help children engage in vigorous physical play?
- What elements of reasonable risk-taking could you include for children to experience?
- How could quiet spaces for less physical activities be included?
- How could you create an outdoor space that is adaptable and includes children with varied abilities?
- How could you ensure children have opportunities to explore and experience nature?

Step 4: Instruct learners to use the supplies you provide to design an outdoor play space for a child care centre. They should keep in mind everything they've learned and discussed. This activity can be completed independently, in pairs or in groups.

Step 5: Have learners present their outdoor play space to the rest of the group. Encourage questions from other learners, and look for ways in which learners incorporate the ideas shared in the PowerPoint. For example:

- Does it appear that both physical and quiet areas have been included?
- Have sight lines for supervision been taken into account?
- Are there natural elements included?
- Are there any accessibility features in the design?



Facilitator tip: Learners are developing their problem-solving, writing, collaboration, creativity and innovation, and collaboration skills while completing this activity.

Reflective Journaling



Reflective practice helps people become more mindful and successful at work – particularly in child care. The most common way that Early Childhood Educators do this is through reflective journaling.

Summary: In this activity, learners will discuss what reflective practice is and how journaling can be used to gain a better understanding of how situations make them think and feel. They will review a scenario featuring an Early Childhood Educator and work together to complete a reflection journal on that person’s behalf. Finally, they will create their own child care scenarios, exchange them with other learners, and complete a second reflective journal based on the scenario they receive. Learners will receive a reflection journal as a take-away from this activity.

Recommended supplies: A whiteboard or flipchart and markers. Paper and pencils, or a digital device with word processing or other note-taking software installed. Digital or printed copies of the document [Edutribe-reflective-journal.pdf](#) for each learner. If you choose to use digital copies, learners will need access to a device on which they can open a fillable PDF document, add text, and save the file.

Facilitator instructions:

Step 1: Begin this activity by leading a discussion using the following questions as prompts. For the first two questions, write down learner responses on a flipchart or whiteboard under two headings: **Reflective** (Question 1) and **Practice** (Question 2).

- If we were talking about reflection in a mirror, it would refer to your own image looking back at you. What if we’re talking about a person who is reflecting? What would that mean?
- How would you define practice? What are you doing when you practice something?

Practitioner note: these two questions should lead to a whiteboard or flipchart with answers similar to those shown on the following page.

Reflective

- thinking about something that happened
- looking back at things in the past
- giving something a lot of thought

Practice

- doing something over and over
- getting better at something
- a way to build your skills

Summarize what reflective practice is, using the words provided by your learners. For example, you may say that reflective practice is *“thinking about something that happened in the past, so you learn how to handle it better.”*

Let learners know that Early Childhood Educators (and many other professionals) use reflective practice to think about and analyze their work. Their goal is to better understand their thoughts, feelings, and behaviour to help them get better at their jobs.

Then, explain the following information to learners:

- Reflective practice involves thinking carefully about different situations you’ve experienced, figuring out why you responded the way you did, and making decisions about how you want to act in the future.
- If you take time to think carefully about how you work each day and how your choices affect children, families, colleagues, and your profession, you can understand your work better and make it even better.
- Reflective practice helps you become more aware of yourself and encourages you to reconsider not just what you do, but also your values and assumptions.
- For some people, reflecting on their work can lead to new learning and changes in how they do things.
- For others, looking at their work critically and working together with others can show them strengths and skills they may have forgotten.

Step 2: Ask learners the following questions.

- What is journaling?
- Have you ever journaled in the past?

Explain that reflective journaling is a common way for Early Childhood Educators to engage in reflective practice. There are several kinds of reflective journals but most will include questions like:

1. What happened today or what would I like to reflect on?
2. How does it make me **feel** and what **thoughts** do I have about the situation?
Tip: feeling and thinking are not the same thing. An Early Childhood Educator may **feel** embarrassed about a situation and **think** that the situation is someone else's fault.
3. What was **good** and what was **bad** about what happened?
4. Now that I've written down answers to Questions 1-3 what have I learned? What are those answers telling me?
5. What would I do differently if the situation happened again in the future?
6. Based on what I have learned, I will now do the following... (i.e., you might change the curriculum, extend learning, monitor a child's behaviour, talk to someone etc.).

Write these questions, or a shortened version of them, on a whiteboard or flipchart so learners can reference them throughout the rest of this activity.

Step 3: Read the scenario “Do You Really Know Who Your Friends Are?” to learners. It



appears on the following page. This scenario has been adapted from a series created by the College of Early Childhood Education (CECE). You can find it, and other scenarios, here:

<https://www.college-ece.ca/members/case-studies-and-scenarios/>

Let learners know that when you are done reading, they will be working together to answer reflection journal questions on behalf of Sam, the Registered Early Childhood Educator in this scenario.

Scenario: Do You Really Know Who Your Friends Are?

Sam is an RECE working in a before and after school program at an elementary school. The children in Sam's group are between 9 and 12 years of age.

One Monday afternoon, Kim, a child in the program, and two other children gather around a computer that is available for the children to use. Sam immediately notices the group because the class rule is that only two people are permitted to use the computer station at a time. They also notice the children whispering, giggling, and pointing at the screen, which begins to attract the attention of the children doing homework nearby.

The children are so engrossed in what they are looking at on the computer screen that they don't notice Sam approaching them. While asking one of the children to start another activity, Sam realizes that the group is logged into a Facebook account and is looking at pictures of Sam.

The night before, Sam had posted photos of themselves and some co-workers at a party. Many of the photos showed Sam and some other staff members of the program drinking alcohol and smoking. Sam's stomach drops and they quickly reach to turn off the computer monitor. Sam is confused as they are almost certain they have their privacy set so that only their Facebook friends can see these photos. Suddenly they remember that they recently became friends with Kim's parents on Facebook!

Ask learners the following reflective journaling questions. Reference the list of questions you wrote on your flipchart or whiteboard as you do.

1. Describe what happened to Sam.
2. How does Sam **feel**, and what are they **thinking**?
3. What was **good** and what was **bad** about what happened?
4. What are the answers to the above questions telling Sam?
5. What could Sam do differently?
6. Based on what they learned from reflecting on this situation, what should Sam do from now on? How, exactly, can they do it?

Step 4: Challenge learners to work in groups to come up with other scenarios they think could happen in a child care setting. They can write the scenario on paper or use a digital device with word processing or note-taking software installed. Choose whichever option works best for your learners.

When they are done, have learners exchange their scenarios with another group. Direct each group to answer reflective journal questions on behalf of the person featured in the scenario.

Step 5: As a takeaway from this activity, provide learners with a digital copy or printed copy of the document **EduTribe-reflective-journal.pdf**. Encourage them to incorporate reflective journaling into their practices, especially when they encounter challenging situations.

Note: EduTribe is a community of Early Childhood Educators in Australia. They offer helpful resources including articles, discussions, free templates, checklists and worksheets. Find them online at: <https://www.edutribe.com.au/>



Facilitator tip: Learners are developing their problem-solving, writing, communication, and collaboration skills while completing this activity. Depending on how you execute the activity, they may also be developing their digital skills.

Five Characteristics of Learning Through Play



It is through play that children learn many of the skills they need for today and for the future. Understanding what happens when children learn through play can help educators create exciting and educational play-based activities.

Summary: In this activity, learners will share their thoughts about why play is a good way for children to learn. Then they will watch a video that outlines five characteristics of learning through play. Following the video, they will discuss each of the characteristics and connect them to child care or their own life experiences. Finally, learners will watch a video focused on play as a motivator for adult behaviour and look for how the five characteristics played a role in the video.

Recommended supplies: A projector and laptop with speakers and internet access. Practitioners may also find it useful to have a whiteboard or flipchart and markers for this activity.

Facilitator instructions:

Step 1: Begin this activity by leading a discussion using the following questions as prompts. Listen to the answers learners provide, and feel free to add your own questions too!

- When I say the word “play”, what sort of things come into your mind?
- How do you think play can be used as a learning tool for children?
- Why do you think that play is a helpful way for people to learn?
- When was the last time you played?



Step 2: Play the video “5 Characteristics of Learning Through Play” by the LEGO Foundation, which is available using this link: <https://youtu.be/rwKpvzEQYwE?si=xSv69KluySoCQrpn>

Step 3: When the video is done, recap the five characteristics of learning through play outlined in the video. Play is:

1. actively engaging
2. socially interactive
3. iterative
4. joyful
5. meaningful

It may be helpful to write these down on a flipchart or whiteboard. A .jpg image of the five characteristics of learning through play has also been included with this resource. You can print it for learners if you wish or display it using a projector.

Step 4: After reviewing the five characteristics, lead a group discussion using the following prompts. Point out which one of the characteristics each question relates to. Listen to the answers learners provide, and feel free to add your own questions too! Note that the answers to these questions do not have to match what is shared in the video.

Actively
engaging

What does active engagement look like? How can you tell when someone is actively engaged in what they are doing? Have you ever felt really engaged in something? What was it?

Practitioner note: The video describes active engagement as being focused, eager to explore, and ready to be challenged. It can also mean being involved and invested in what you’re doing.

Socially
interactive

What sort of skills are children learning when they play with other children?

Practitioner note: The video mentions learning how to see things from other perspectives, explain things, negotiate, and reach a compromise. It also mentions children learning how to communicate and engage with others. Point out that the skills children develop when they play together are very important skills for adults too.

Iterative

Have you heard the word “iterative” before? According to this video, what does it mean? How would you describe it in your own words?

Practitioner note: The video says it’s about making mistakes and learning from what happened. It’s not about being told how to do things correctly. It’s about testing, changing something around, and testing it again. It’s a way to develop critical thinking skills by figuring out what works and why.

Joyful

When have you felt a feeling of joy or a sense of accomplishment at a job well done? Can you remember doing a task that brought you joy but that others might consider work? What was that task? What was it that made it enjoyable for you?

Practitioner note: These questions can be the foundation of a conversation about different perspectives and how what can be pleasant for one person can be unpleasant for another. Take the opportunity to discuss motivation. What motivates people to do a task they might otherwise avoid?

Meaningful

When something is meaningful, we care about it. How can you create meaning in activities for children?

Practitioner note: In the video, the children cared about the handyman and wanted to help him. That made their task of helping design a tool storage system meaningful to them. Point out that finding out what children care about first, and then building activities around those things, can help create meaning.



Step 5: Play the video “The Fun Theory 1 – Piano Staircase Initiative” by Volkswagen, which is available using this link:

<https://youtu.be/SByymar3bds>

Step 6: When the video is done, lead a group discussion using the following prompts. Note that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions.

- What is your reaction to this video? How did it make you feel?
- Why do you think 66% more people chose the stairs over the escalator?
- Aside from more people taking the stairs, what did you notice about the behaviour of people on the stairs once the piano steps were installed?
- Which of the five characteristics do you see in action in this video?
- How could you recreate “the fun theory” demonstrated in this video with children in a child care centre?



Facilitator tip: Learners are developing their creativity and innovation, communication, and problem-solving skills while completing this activity.

Teaching Early Math Skills



Child care providers and Early Childhood Educators need to have strong numeracy skills. They use them in their work and also teach numbers and early math skills to the children in their care.

Summary: In this activity, learners will consider two different methods for helping young children learn about numbers and early math concepts: reading and game play. They will discuss the benefits of learning math through these techniques and will work in groups to compile a list of books related to numbers and games where numbers or math concepts are used. Finally, they will share and talk about the resources they've found with other learners.

Recommended supplies: Learners will need devices with internet access to research books and games related to numeracy. They will also need a way to make a list. While it can be one written on paper, it would be helpful if they had access to a word processing program and a way to share the document they create with other learners (ex., by emailing or printing it).

Facilitator instructions:

Step 1: Let learners know that in this activity, you'll be talking about helping children develop early math skills such as counting, sequencing, and patterning. Lead a group discussion using the following prompts. Listen to the answers learners provide, and feel free to add your own questions too!

- What are some of your earliest memories of numbers, counting, and math?
- How comfortable are you with math now?
- At what age do you think educators start teaching young children numbers, counting, and early math skills?
- What kind of techniques do you think educators use to teach those skills?

Step 2: Explain that in this activity you'll be looking at two different techniques for teaching early math skills:

1. reading
2. game play

Discuss reading and game play using the prompts below. Feel free to add your thoughts, ideas, and questions for learners as well!

Reading



Storytime is a favourite activity for many children, and stories featuring numbers can be an engaging way to introduce early math skills. Books can be used to introduce numbers and help young children understand concepts like counting and measuring in a fun and relaxed way. Because children enjoy stories, reading books that feature numbers helps children develop numeracy skills naturally.

Ask learners:

- What books or stories can you think of that feature numbers?
- How often do you read? Do you enjoy it?
- When was the last time you read aloud?

Practitioner note: recommend that any learners who do not have a lot of experience reading aloud begin finding opportunities to practice. This is a skill that Early Childhood Educators use a lot!

Game-play



Early Childhood Educators use play as a tool for learning all the time. They:

- observe what children are interested in
- use their observations to create activities that children will find compelling
- provide supplies children can use for unstructured play
- lead structured games
- are play partners for children

Ask learners:

- Why do you think that play-based learning works so well?
- What kinds of children's games can you think of?
- Can you think of any games that involve numbers?
- Can you think of a time that you learned something through play? What did you learn?

Step 3: Break learners into two groups. Assign each group one of the two different techniques for teaching early math skills: reading and game play.



Instruct **Group 1** to research books and stories for young children that involve numbers and math concepts. Ask them to compile that list in a document that they can provide to the other group.

Challenge them to find books they could read to children of different ages up to 6 years old.

Suggest that whenever possible, they provide a link to where people could purchase the books they suggest.

Practitioner note: If learners have trouble identifying what books would be appropriate, share the following list with them as inspiration:

- [12 Ways to Get to 11 Paperback by Eve Merriam](#)
- [One Woolly Wombat by Kerry Argent](#)
- [One is a Snail, Ten is a Crab by April Pulley Sayre](#)
- [The Right Number of Elephants by Jeff Sheppard](#)
- [Quack and Count by Keith Baker](#)



Instruct **Group 2** to research games for young children that involve numbers and math concepts. Ask them to compile that list in a document that they can provide to the other group.

Remind them to look at the suggested ages for the games they see and try to find games that are good for children below the age of 7.

Suggest that whenever possible, they provide a link to where people could purchase the games they suggest.

Practitioner note: If learners have trouble identifying what games would be appropriate, share the following list with them as inspiration. Each is appropriate for ages 3+ except “I Sea 10!” which is intended for ages 6+.

- [Monkey Balance Game](#)
- [Chutes and Ladders](#)
- [Count Your Chickens](#)
- [Hi Ho! Cherry-O](#)
- [I Sea 10!](#)

Step 4: Have the groups share their lists with each other. Encourage a group discussion about the books and games on each list using the following questions as prompts. Listen to the answers learners provide, and feel free to add your own questions too!

- Have you read any of these books? Which ones? What do you remember about the story?
- To **Group 2**: Can you think of any other books you would add to this list? Tell us about them!
- Which of these books would you want on the bookshelf at your child care centre? Why did you choose those ones?
- Have you played any of these games? Which ones? What do you remember about playing them?

- To **Group 1**: Can you think of any other games you would add to this list? Tell us about them!
- If you could only buy one of these games to use in your child care centre, which one would you buy and why?

Finish the lesson by reminding learners that when working in child care, they can use books and games to help children understand many different concepts including numbers and math. To extend the discussion, consider asking learners what other concepts they think they could teach this way.



Facilitator tip: Learners are developing their numeracy, reading, problem-solving, and digital skills while completing this activity.



Teaching Early Language and Reading Skills



Being a strong reader is important for educators. They need to read on the job, model reading behaviour to young children, and teach children in their care the skills they will need to begin reading themselves.

Summary: In this activity, learners will discuss how Early Childhood Educators teach children early language and reading skills. They will be taught several techniques that focus on the use of phonics and then work in small groups to decide how they could use those techniques with young children. At the end of the lesson, groups will share what they discussed with other learners.

Recommended supplies: A projector and laptop and a copy of the PowerPoint presentation “Using Phonics to Teach Early Language and Reading Skills.” During the group activity, learners may wish to use a whiteboard or flipchart and markers or similar teaching tools.

Facilitator instructions:

Step 1: Begin the activity by letting learners know that one of the goals of Early Childhood Educators is to help children learn to love language and reading. They do this by reading aloud to children of all ages, even infants.

They also help children:

- identify and name different letters of the alphabet
- understand how letters are put together to form words
- recognize how words sound when you say them out loud
- understand what words mean
- put words together into sentences

Step 2: Lead a group discussion using the following prompts. Listen to the answers learners provide, and feel free to add your own questions too!

- What are some ways you think educators help children learn different letters and how they sound?
- Ask learners if they've heard of the word "phonics" before. Some may even remember it from when they were in school as children.

Explain that it's a way to teach reading by pointing out the different sounds that letters or groups of letters make within a word. By breaking words up into smaller sounds, it becomes easier for early learners to string those individual sounds together to build words. Provide a short example similar to the following:

The sound **toe** plus the sound **mate** plus the sound **oh** can be put together to make the word tomato.

Feel free to make up your own examples as well!



Step 3: Explain that you will be sharing several phonics-based activities learners can do with children to help them develop reading skills. Then, show learners the PowerPoint "**Using Phonics to Teach Early Language and Reading Skills.**" As you display the PowerPoint, share the following information, discussion questions, and prompts.

Sound Recognition (Slide # 3)

Good listening skills can help educators use sound recognition to help children learn language and reading skills. From when they are babies, children make sounds. Repeating those sounds back to children, and then saying words that include those sounds, is a great way to teach language recognition.

Think about the sounds that babies make. They may sound like babbling, but they are the start of early language development.

Ask learners: Can someone give me an example of some of those sounds? How could you connect those sounds to different words?

Connecting Sounds to Letters (Slide # 4)

As children grow and their skills develop, educators can show them letters and help them understand the sounds each letter makes. Knowing what the letter B looks like and that it makes a “bhe” sound is an early building block for spelling, reading, and recognizing words.

Ask learners: How would you connect a sound to the following letters?

D

K

F

Z

What changes when you think about helping children connect sounds to these letters?

A

E

C

Q

Practitioner note: The letters above can make different sounds depending on how they are used. Educators need to connect these letters to more than one sound. As children’s skills develop to include word recognition, they can provide context for the kinds of words that make those sounds. For example, the hard C sound “khe” is used in the word Cat, and the soft C sound “ss” is used in the word Face.

Extension activity: Sounding out letters can be surprisingly tricky. People often add extra sounds to the letter without realizing it. For more information on how to sound out letters effectively, you can show learners the video “44 Phonemes” by RRFTS: <https://youtu.be/wBuA589kfMg?si=cL7IJqXWcDaS7YAP>

Word Recognition (Slide # 5)

We said that knowing what the letter B looks like and that it makes a “bhe” sound is an early building block for spelling, reading, and recognizing words. Educators can use these building blocks to help children put words together.

If children learn that B makes a “bhe” sound, A makes an “aah” sound, and T makes a “teh” sound, educators can string them together. Pointing out each letter as you make its sound helps reinforce letter recognition as well.

For example:

Bhe ----- aah ----- teh.

Bhe ---- aah ---- teh.

Bhe -- aah -- teh.

Bat!



Rhyming Words (Slide # 6)

To use rhyming words as a teaching tool, educators will read aloud and point out how words that rhyme sound and sometimes look the same.

Practitioner note: Read each of the Dr. Seuss quotes shown on the slide and point out the bolded words that rhyme.

“Would you eat them in a **box**? Would you eat them with a **fox**?”

Green Eggs and Ham

This quote can be used to help children recognize less frequently used letters like X. It can also be used to help children associate the look of each word with the object it describes.

Ask learners: As an educator, how could you demonstrate those concepts to a child?

Practitioner note: If learners are unable to come up with ideas, suggest that they could write the letter X on a whiteboard for children when words with an X are used. Have a box and a stuffed fox in the child care room and ask children to collect those things when those words are used.

“From **there** to here, from here to **there**, funny things are **everywhere!**”

Red Fish Blue Fish

This quote can also be used to help children understand the idea of places having names, specifically the meaning behind here, there, and everywhere.

Ask learners: As an educator, how could you demonstrate those concepts to a child?

Practitioner note: If learners are unable to come up with ideas, suggest that they could point to where they are standing or sitting when saying the word “here,” then choose another location to point to when saying the word “there,” and that they could wave their hands in a large circle indicating “everywhere.”

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful **lot**, nothing is going to get better. It's **not**.”

The Lorax

This quote can also be used to help children understand the concepts of caring, size, and positive or negative reactions.

Ask learners: As an educator, how could you demonstrate one of those concepts to a child?

Practitioner note: If learners are unable to come up with ideas, suggest that they could make a heart symbol over their chest when reading the word “cares,” spread their arms wide apart when reading the words “a whole awful lot,” and shake their head “no” when reading the words “nothing is going to get better. It's not.”

Recognizing Syllables and Compound Words (Slide # 7)

Each of the words we've used so far have been short. Shorter two- and three-letter words are the easiest to learn, but they are only the beginning. Educators help children learn longer words by breaking them down into syllables.

One of the easiest ways for children to recognize syllables is to point out the pattern or rhythm of the word. For example, an educator may clap with each syllable of a word.

Practitioner note: demonstrate this practice by clapping while saying the word banana as shown below.

Ba---naa---naa



Compound words, which are multisyllabic words made up of other fully-formed words, can be easier to remember. If children are already familiar with the words bed and room, you can put them together to make the word bedroom. Pan and cake can be put together to make the word pancake.

Not only can you clap with each syllable, but you can talk about the two smaller words within the word and what each word means.

For example, when a bed is inside a room, it's a bedroom. A pancake is made of batter like a cake is, and it's fried in a pan.

Ask learners: We chose two compound words (bedroom and pancake) that children are likely to encounter. What others can you think of? How can you break them down and talk about the smaller words they are made from?

Step 4: When you are done showing the PowerPoint, break learners into small groups. Ask them to come up with examples of how they could help children learn early reading skills like letter and word recognition. Provide them with time to discuss their ideas and prepare a way to share them with the rest of the group.



Step 5: Have learners present their reading activities. Encourage questions from other learners, and look for ways in which learners incorporate the ideas shared in the PowerPoint. For example:

- Did they connect a sound to a letter?
- Did they demonstrate how sounds make words?
- Did they show something to demonstrate what a word means?
- Did they point out syllables or compound words?

Look for groups that used similar techniques. Did they execute them differently?



Facilitator tip: Learners are developing their reading, communication, problem solving and creativity and innovation skills while completing this activity.