



Module 2

Literacy-Rich Environments, Experiences, & Exchanges

Early Literacy Matters

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Module 2: Literacy-Rich Environments, Experiences, & Exchanges

Module 2 at a glance...

In Module 1, you reflected on your own experiences with books and early literacy, and how those experiences impact the way you introduce early literacy activities and books to children today. Next, you will:

- Consider the ways the classroom's arrangement and selected materials can create opportunities for children birth to five to use language to explore, discover, experience, and make meaning of the world around them.
- Reflect on the ways positive teacher-child and child-to-child interactions help foster self-expression, rich conversations, and interest in books and writing.
- Learn how intentional planning is essential for creating literacy-rich environments, experiences, and exchanges to enhance language development for children birth to five years old.

Learner Outcomes for Module 2

Learner Outcomes (LOs):

- LO1: Learners will examine the ways classroom environments create opportunities for children to use language to explore, discover, experience, and make meaning of the world around them.
- LO2: Learners will describe the ways positive teacher-child and child-to-child interactions help foster self-expression, rich conversations, and interest in books and writing in the scenarios provided.
- LO3: Learners will explore ways to create literacy-rich wall displays that invite children to interact and build knowledge around a unit of study.

Connections to the “Read to be Ready” Campaign:

This module aligns to the current Read to be Ready Campaign’s following key beliefs:

- Early Literacy Matters:
- Teachers are critical:
- It takes a community:

Video link to “Early Literacy Matters” from Read to be Ready Website:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60J8qRjRPkE>

Module 2 Overview

Overview: Module 2 will consist of 3 instructional presentations. These presentations will help you reflect on the special role a literacy-rich classroom environment plays in providing opportunities for children to interact with and learn from one another, teachers, and materials.

- In **Presentation 1**, you will analyze the ways classroom environments create opportunities for children to use language to explore, discover, experience, and make meaning of the world around them.
- In **Presentation 2**, you will examine the ways positive teacher-child and child-to-child interactions help foster self-expression, rich conversations, and interest in books and writing in the scenarios provided.
- In **Presentation 3**, you will explore ways to create literacy-rich displays that invite children to interact and build knowledge around a unit of study.

Following each presentation, you will have the opportunity to apply your learning through Application Activities included in the Learning Guide.

Suggested Timeline for Completing Module

Modules contain 4 short presentations that are designed to be completed during relaxed ratios or other times as set by your school or agency. Your director or program coordinator may suggest or establish a timeline for each presentation to be completed within the module. Please take a moment to confirm your site's requirements while noting the submission deadline for the final Learning Application Assignment that you will submit electronically to your literacy coach for feedback and support. All other completed activities will remain in your participation guide and available for your coaches review.

- **Section 1:** Start at beginning of module and complete Presentation 1 and Practice Activity 1.
- **Section 2:** Complete Presentation 2 and Practice Activity 2.
- **Section 3:** Complete Presentation 3 and Practice Activity 3.
- **Section 4:** Complete Learning Application Assignment for Module 2 and submit it electronically to your literacy coach for feedback and support.

Let's begin with a look at your books...

Before we dive into our Module 2 Presentations, let's start by having you look again through the books you received in your Early Literacy Matters start-up bag. This time, you are looking for books to display and make that contain rich vocabulary words and new concepts to build children's knowledge around.

After looking through the book set, briefly respond to these questions in the Learning Guide:

- Which books will you display where?
- How will children interact with these books?
- How does the text inspire lively conversations and interactions?
- What new words and concepts would children be introduced to?

How Spaces Make Us Feel...

Before discussing intentionally planned learning environments, let's first consider how the way spaces are designed make us feel.

Let's try a visual imagery exercise:

For each of the spaces or places listed below, read the description, close your eyes, imagine the space, and how you would feel in the space. Then open your eyes to read the next description, and repeat the process.

- **Historic Roman Cathedral** with tall ceilings, majestic floor to ceiling tapestries and mosaics.
- **Library** with fluffy chairs, rows of books, soft lighting, light whispers
- **Spa Retreat** with flowing sheer drapes, natural lighting, soft music playing, calm movements
- **Chucky Cheese** with bright colors, lots of moving children, varied levels of noise and activity, smells of food and possibly some sweaty socks as children run joyfully from one fun activity to the next.

Reflection on spaces envisioned...

- The spaces you just envisioned were intentionally designed to make you feel the way you do in them and to carry out specific purposes of relaxation, leisure, worship, and study.
- Just as these environments are purposeful and intentional in design, so should the classrooms we design.

A framework to build upon...

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) considers the developmental levels of each child in the classroom.

When determining appropriate practice, three things are considered:

- What is known about child development and learning,
- What is known about each child as an individual, and
- What is known about each child's current stage of development and the social and cultural contexts which impact that development.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice guides how we teach the instructional standards to our students.

DAP provides a framework

Knowing the definition of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) provides a framework for decisions involving:

- planning instruction,
- designing learning spaces,
- selecting materials to include in centers,
- creating daily schedules,
- promoting positive interactions,
- assessing children's growth, and
- engaging families.

DAP plus Early Learning Standards

Developmentally Appropriate Practice and Early Learning Standards are not exclusive of one another. Instead, they should be “married together” to ensure children are learning what they are expected to know in a way that best supports their physical, social, personal, language, and cognitive needs.

One way to look at the relationship between DAP and Early Learning Standards is”

- Early Learning Standards tell us “The WHAT” to teach
- DAP tells us “The HOW” it will be taught

Teachers play a critical role in marrying the two together and making sure that the relationship is balanced. This is especially important to keep in mind when designing learning spaces for young children.

Preparing for Guests...

- When planning environments, we must first consider who it is we are designing the spaces for,
- Consider how you prepare your own home for guests. What special preparations do you make?
- As teachers, we are preparing for very special guests—the children!
- With this in mind, the environment should begin with the DAP framework aligned with Early Learning Standards and reflect individual children’s developmental stages, needs, interests, learning styles, and cultures.
- The environment should rich in language and literacy and be set up to meet the children where they currently are in the beginning of the year and change accordingly as children grow and are ready to take learning to next levels.

Creating Language & Literacy-Rich Environments

- Instead of just creating a writing and a reading area, consider ways to add language and literacy opportunities in every area of the classroom.
- Think of ways to add books and writing to each area where applicable.
- Think of the types of displays in each area that would provide opportunities for rich conversations and interactions.

Learning from spaces created by others

- A great place to gain ideas for designing spaces for children is to tour other classrooms in your own and other programs.
- After visiting classrooms, think about ways you can incorporate those ideas in your own setting.
- Consider how your children might benefit from similar activities and designed spaces.
- Since we cannot physically tour classrooms together, we will look through a “gallery” of classroom spaces and reflect on strengths of each.

Presentation 1: Examining Environments for 4 Year Olds

Presentation 1: Examining Environments For 4 Year Olds

Look through photos taken of various classroom environments. As you study each photo, consider:

- What types of opportunities are there for children to explore language?
- What kinds of discoveries might children make about language?
- What kinds of interactions could take place here?
- What additional knowledge could children gain?

Add your notes to the appropriate bubbles of the graphic organizer on page 3 of the Learning Guide.

Presentation 1: Examining Environments for 5 Year Olds

Presentation 1: Examining Environments For 5 Year Olds

Look through photos taken of various classroom environments. As you study each photo, consider:

- What types of opportunities are there for children to explore language?
- What kinds of discoveries might children make about language?
- What kinds of interactions could take place here?
- What additional knowledge could children gain?

Add your notes to the appropriate bubbles of the graphic organizer on page 3 of the Learning Guide.

Photos of Learning Environments.... Four Year Olds











Fairy Dust Teaching







Photos of Learning Environments... Five Year Olds













Application Activity 1: My Classroom Environment

- Over the next few days, observe **your own** classroom environment, and
- Use the graphic organizer in the Learning guide to describe how each of the aspects provide children with opportunities to use language to explore, discover, experience, and make meaning of the world around

Reflection on your Classroom Environment

After observing your own classroom environment, briefly reflect on these questions:

- Which areas of your classroom were children most drawn to or responsive to and why?
- How did the design of spaces create or limit opportunities for conversations?
- What changes to learning spaces would you make to increase interest in writing and reading materials?

Completion of Section 1 of Module 2

Congratulations, you just completed Section 1 of Module 2.

- Check to be sure you completed all activities for Section 1 in the Learning Guide.
- Continue to reflect on the environment design and displays invite children to interact and engage in language.
- You are now ready to begin Section 2 learning materials.