

NUMERACY AND LITERACY- IT'S EVERYWHERE!

What can learning look like in a play-based early learning program?

Did you know that the Pre-primary Program in Nova Scotia follows a play-based curriculum? A play-based curriculum recognizes that when children are playing, they are also learning!

An environment that intentionally encourages meaningful play has material that are flexible and grow with the child. These environments support children's learning and their *desire* to learn.

When we think of numeracy, we might think of "1+1=2," and we might think of literacy as early reader books. They teach the basic concepts, but they don't leave much room to expand. In play, children are naturally motivated to continue learning and applying these concepts, and often end up with deeper understanding than we can imagine!

More Information

For more information about this research project please visit our website eccrc.ca/msvu or scan the QR code for direct access to the report.



Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation Inc.

Below are examples from a research project that shows how numeracy and literacy is occurring in play-based Pre-primary Programs in Nova Scotia:



Numeracy and Literacy:

- Some notepads and a song called 'We're Going on a Number Hunt' invited children to take note of the numbers found in their community and to ask 'what does this mean?'.

Concepts of Numeracy and Literacy:

- Early writing and inventive spelling
- Understanding Symbols
- Counting/Enumeration

Literacy

- While collecting worms for the classroom compost, the worm made the first letter of the child's name in her hand. The child was so excited. She felt that the worm was talking just to her.



Concepts of Literacy:

- Alphabet Awareness
- Communication
- Meaning Making



Numeracy

- In the loose parts corner, the child chose to take out the scale and the rocks. He sat there for awhile, determined to get the arrow to stay in the middle.

Concepts of Numeracy:

- Problem-Solving
- Classifying/Comparing
- Measurement

Tips for supporting numeracy and literacy at home

Numeracy and literacy is not just in the classroom- it's everywhere! The best way to support this learning is to follow your child's lead. What are they most interested in? What activities does your child engage in the most? Following your child's interest encourages meaningful play that supports their learning. It is also a wonderful way to spend quality time with your child.

Below are some ideas of how you can (or may already be) supporting early numeracy and literacy skills in your every day interactions with your child.

Easy to reach materials

When play materials are available, children are free to play as inspiration hits them. Paper and pencils on a child-sized shelf means that a sign can be made or a menu can be written while playing 'restaurant'.

Look for non-traditional materials

Things around your home like buttons, gems, and rocks can have many purposes. Invite your child to sort the items based on colour, size, or shape. When talking about materials use math words like smaller, bigger, the same, more, less, adding together, taking away.

Make use of the world around you

Our world is full of numeracy and literacy opportunities. Help children look for patterns in nature, in your home, during play. The outdoor environment offers unexpected ways to play. Take a walk around the neighbourhood. Where do you see numbers or letters in your community?

Be a role model

Children are always watching and learning from their loved ones. When they see numeracy and literacy skills in real life, this is more meaningful than any organized activity. For example, make grocery lists, or read books together.

Cooking, measuring, and baking

Baking is a wonderful way to teach the mathematical concepts of measurement, and reading recipes together supports emerging literacy- in addition to the feeling of pride that comes with making something yourself.

Sing, dance, and pretend

Singing songs and rhyming helps children play with sound and words. Dance and movement supports self-expression and playing pretend encourages role-taking and imagination. These are all important elements of literacy.

