Sources of Information About Early Literacy Development

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Abstract

Selected references to the major domains of early literacy development are included in this bibliography. The domains include phonological awareness, oral language, print awareness, alphabet awareness, written language, and text comprehension. The particular sources of information are ones that provide a foundation for understanding those aspects of the early literacy development of young children leading to subsequent literacy competence (e.g. reading, writing, and the cognitive capabilities needed to produce and comprehend text).

This CASEmaker bibliography includes selected references to the major domains of early literacy development of young children. The domains are ones considered the key elements of a child’s early literacy development and subsequent literacy success (U.S. Department of Education, 2003; Snow, Burns, & Griffith, 1998). The domains include the development and emerging mastery of: (1) phonological awareness, (2) oral language, (3) written language, (4) text comprehension, (5) print awareness, and (6) alphabet awareness. Research now indicates that child competencies in these early literacy skills are related to children’s subsequent success in a number of literacy related competencies (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2003a; Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2003b; Learning First Alliance, 2000; National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The Prescription for Practice includes references that practitioners should find helpful for developing a better understanding of the key characteristics of each literacy domain.

Early Literacy Development

The references in this CASEmaker bibliography are organized into six sections, corresponding to each early literacy domain: Phonological awareness, oral language, print awareness, alphabet awareness, written language, and text comprehension.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness refers to a child’s ability to hear, identify, manipulate, and use the sounds spoken in words. This includes, but is not limited to, rhyming, blending, and segmenting of words (Armbruster et al., 2003b). The following articles include descriptions of different aspects of phonological awareness:


Stahl, S. A., & McKenna, M. C. (2000, April). The con-
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“Good reads” for those interested in understanding the early literacy development of young children include the following:


Oral Language

Oral language refers to a child’s ability to relate sounds to meaning that involve the phonological (the rules for combining sounds), semantic (word meaning), and syntactic (rules having to do with the order of words in sentences) components and elements of language use. Oral language also includes a child’s ability to use words to communicate ideas and thoughts through vocabulary, expressive language, and listening comprehension. Information on oral language development is described in the following sources.


Print Awareness

Print awareness refers to a child’s recognition of the rules and characteristics of the written language. Print awareness includes the child’s ability to understand that words in print correspond to speech and directionality (e.g. reading left to right, top to bottom). The development of print awareness is described in the following sources.


**Alphabet Awareness**

Alphabet awareness refers to the child's ability to recognize and name the letters of the alphabet in isolation, the context of word recognition, and as part of word use. A child develops alphabet awareness by exposure and opportunity to experiment with and write the letters of the alphabet. Several articles that include descriptions of the development of alphabet awareness are:


**Written Language**

Written language refers to a child’s ability to represent ideas and words in print form. When children learn to write the letters of the alphabet, their name, and other words, they develop an understanding of the conventions of print and written language. Information about the development of written language is described in:


**Text Comprehension**

Text comprehension refers to a child’s ability to read, listen, and process the meaning of ideas represented in text. Text comprehension is developed in the context of a child’s working vocabulary, ability to relate one’s own experience to the printed text, and the ability to monitor one’s understanding of printed material. Information on text comprehension is described in the following sources:

comprehension acquisition (Ciera Report #2-009). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan School of Education, Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement.


Conclusion

This CASEmaker bibliography included references to selected aspects of the major domains of young children’s early literacy development. The material included in the references provide a foundation for understanding young children’s early literacy development and what aspects of early literacy competence are related to subsequent literacy competence. Additionally, the references include information that practitioners can use to provide children learning opportunities for developing the skills necessary to become competent in literacy. The interested reader should find the following websites helpful in learning more about the domains of early development:

- International Reading Association [http://reading.org](http://reading.org)
- Literacy Development in Young Children [http://www.earlyliteracytoday.org](http://www.earlyliteracytoday.org)
- National Center for Family Literacy [http://famlit.org](http://famlit.org)
- National Institute for Literacy [http://nifl.org](http://nifl.org)

References


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