

A young boy with a joyful expression is the central focus, wearing a vibrant red short-sleeved shirt. He is seated at a table, his hands resting on a white sheet of paper. On the paper, there are several colorful drawings, including a prominent spider with a purple body and blue legs. Other drawings include circular patterns in orange and green, and some illegible text in blue and red. The background behind the boy is a bright green area with thick, wavy blue and orange lines, suggesting a creative or artistic environment. The entire image is framed by a decorative border of small, multi-colored squares at the top and bottom.

# HANDS ACROSS THE SEA EARLY PAGES PROGRAMME

An Eastern Caribbean Manual for Preschool Literacy



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## Acknowledgements

We're grateful to the many people who played a role in the development of the Early Pages Programme. A leadership team consisting of Amanda Sherlip, Bernadette John, and Gloria Bonaparte developed the programme in Grenada with the support and care of Susan Parke and Dr. Charmaine Christopher at the Early Childhood Education Unit. In Nevis, Florencè Liburd-Smith and Zahnela Claxton provided additional inspiration and opportunities for growth through a soft launch. Palsy Wilkin also played a vital role in the implementation and ongoing success of the initiative.

In addition, we deeply appreciate the Early Childhood Unit and the Ministry of Education in Grenada for allowing us to pilot this programme, train teachers, collect and share materials, and author this manual in support of early childhood education in the Eastern Caribbean. None of this would have been possible without the participation and creativity, of the teachers, students, and parents at Coast Guard Preschool, La Digue Preschool, Limes Preschool, Nehemiah Preschool, Park View Preschool, Riversallee Preschool, Riverview Preschool, Sab Preschool, Snell Hall Preschool, and Windsor Forest Preschool. We are especially grateful for the dedicated leadership of the teachers in charge at each of these schools: Daren Phillip, Jacqueline Noel, Maureen Church, Gail Blackette, Chrislyn La Borde, Galine Andrews, Deborah Ross, Garissa Walker, MaryAnn St. Hillaire, Madonna Telesford.

We recognize Republic Bank (Grenada) Ltd. for their early investments in the pilot programme, and friends Ken and Laura Yagelski for their additional support in the Grenada pilot. We thank Tanya Lowe and the Four Seasons Homeowners Foundation in Nevis for helping us to soft launch the initiative across the island, and for their ongoing active participation in the preschools. We are also grateful to the Board of Directors at Hands Across the Sea for supporting the organisation's vision to ensure children as young as three years old receive the treasures found in libraries and literacy initiatives.

We extend our sincerest gratitude to the Sandals Foundation, without whom this document would not be possible. The Sandals Foundation was an early partner in the pilot through their support of the inaugural Literacy Extravaganza in Grenada during the 2020-21 school year. The Foundation has remained a partner in our vision and on this journey. Through their generosity, we were able to fully fund the creation of this manual, which will become a vital resource in scaling this emergent literacy programme across the Eastern Caribbean. More than 15,000 children each year will have the opportunity to develop life-changing skills through library and literacy initiatives in their preschool with the implementation of the Early Pages Programme. We give our deepest thanks to everyone involved.



# WHY PRESCHOOL LITERACY?

## Building Tomorrow's Leaders



### Who We Are

Hands Across the Sea is the leading non-governmental independent nonprofit literacy organization in the Eastern Caribbean. Founded in 2007, Hands works from the ground up to support and serve local children, educators, families, and communities through vital literacy services and library resources. In their 13th year, Hands Across the Sea identified the need and opportunity for building libraries and literacy programs in support of emergent literacy throughout the Eastern Caribbean.

### Designed for the Caribbean

The Early Pages Programme (EPP) is the first universal emergent literacy program designed with and for the Eastern Caribbean. A preschool pilot was launched at the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year in Grenada with a soft launch in Nevis. After more than two years of diligent, concentrated work in pilot schools, the Early Pages Programme was born. The pilot far exceeded our expectations in terms of increasing student motivation, parental and community engagement, and professional

development opportunities for preschool teachers. Demand for the program quickly spread, and we recognized the opportunity to capture and share our framework, approach, and methodology to extend the program to more schools.

This nuanced program was designed in a Caribbean context, with and for Caribbean teachers and students. It offers a uniquely Caribbean approach to implementation of a grassroots initiative. CARIBBEAN. GRASSROOTS. PILOTED/BEST PRACTICES. Those three factors together make up why this program has been so effective.

The Early Pages Programme aims to raise childhood literacy and prepare children for lifelong success through three intentional actions: (1) integrating literacy as an explicit aspect of the preschool environment; (2) increasing parental engagement; and (3) building awareness and community participation in early childhood literacy.

This document was created to serve as a guide and companion for the implementation of the Early Pages Programme to help educators as they put these principles into practice in their classrooms.

## Why Preschool Literacy?

What makes preschool literacy so vital? Early literacy sets the foundation for a child's lifelong learning and academic success by assisting with:

**Brain Development:** Early literacy activities such as reading, singing, and talking to young children can stimulate brain development and help build neural pathways that support cognitive development.

**Language Development:** Exposure to books and other literacy materials can help children develop their language skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension.

**Academic Success:** Children who start school with strong early literacy skills are more likely to succeed academically and continue to have positive attitudes toward learning.

**Social Skills:** Early literacy activities can also help children develop important social skills, such as listening, following directions, and taking turns.

**Emotional Development:** Reading and other literacy activities can help children understand their emotions and develop empathy for others.

In addition, children's attendance at a preschool with a strong literacy program is highly correlated with reduced special education placements and retention in later elementary school and is especially impactful for children who grow up in poverty (Meloy et al., 2019; Yoshikawa et al., 2013).

Research also reveals the importance of early literacy for success in life. "The indicators of positive effects for early education include fewer arrests, fewer teen pregnancies, and higher employment (Gilliam & Zigler, 2000)." (The Wing Institute)

Studies out of Harvard and UPenn also found that investments in preschool can save between \$4 and \$9 in cost for every \$1 spent, while students who attend a high-quality preschool may contribute an estimated \$7 to \$12 of value to society for every \$1 spent on their education.

In short, early literacy is essential for a child's overall development and success in life. Parents, caregivers, and educators should encourage and support early literacy activities to help children reach their full potential.

## What is Emergent Literacy?

This programme assumes a growing understanding of emergent literacy. Emergent literacy has been defined as "those behaviors shown by very young children as they begin to respond to and approximate reading and writing acts." However, literacy goes beyond reading and writing. It encompasses "the interrelatedness of language: speaking, listening, reading, writing, and viewing."

Emergent literacy refers to a child's earliest exposure to literacy, and generally ranges from birth to about age five or six. The first five years of a child's development are the most formidable. Each second, a child under





five has the capacity to develop more than 1 million new neural connections. Since the brain of a child younger than five develops more quickly than at any other time in life, there is tremendous potential for planting the seeds for success across multiple domains. What we do during this time can make a lifetime of difference for the path our children are set on and their preparation in life.

## Encouraging Parental Involvement

One of the great opportunities presented in a preschool literacy program is to capture the engagement of parents and to build healthy habits not only for children, but also for families. Parental involvement in their child's learning has direct positive impacts on a child's school performance and enjoyment of school, academic achievement, problem-solving skills, cognitive competency, and better behaviour. Indeed, it is the earliest years when parental involvement has the greatest and most lasting impacts.

As summarized by Christina Clark and the National Literacy Trust: "parental involvement in their child's reading has been found to be the most important determinant of language and emergent literacy (Bus, van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995)." Perhaps even more compelling when working across a broad demographic, "Parental involvement in their child's literacy practices is a more powerful force than other family background variables, such as social class, family size and level of parental education (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004), while reading enjoyment is more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status (OECD, 2002)."

Through our work in the field, we have observed that parents of preschool-aged children are particularly motivated to accept an invitation to participate. Parents of preschool-aged children often seek guidance, direction, and support with their energetic young children. Likewise, preschool teachers depend on parents to participate so that learning opportunities at school are carried over into home and life. The relationship between a preschool teacher and a parent is one that involves trust and mutual support. This is a time when we can help parents to build healthy habits with lasting impact.

## What is the Purpose of this Document?

The Early Pages Programme and manual sets out to support a preschool teacher's skills and capacity to achieve educational and developmental goals through a library and literacy approach. Teaching preschool children is difficult and requires patience, creativity, and true leadership.

The purpose of this document is to support the successful implementation of a sustainable library and literacy program for preschoolers. This program is built on 16 years of best practices in developing hundreds of sustainable libraries in Eastern Caribbean schools and communities, which have reached more than 200,000 school-aged children. This program was developed in the context of Caribbean schools and communities and harnesses the assets of the local communities who are served.

# HOW TO LAUNCH

## Checklist for Success

Educators can spend a great deal of time and resources running toward the application and implementation of an educational programme that could ultimately fail because of small but significant missteps in design, tactics, and partnership. Understanding the context, including the social, cultural, and political structures within which your education and early childhood systems are steeped is a critical first step in making sure you are designing a programme and mapping an approach that offers the highest likelihood of collaboration and success for those you serve.

The Early Pages Programme was designed in and for the Eastern Caribbean, and as such, the sustainable programmatic approach embodies a general awareness which is outlined in this manual to help guide you in your implementation.

Now that you have decided to launch your Early Pages Programme, there are some key materials and steps to take to get the initiative up and running in your preschool.

### Resources Needed

- Big Books – We recommend beginning with seven or eight Big Book Titles with one title used per month as an anchor for school activities, curriculum support, and learning initiatives. Some schools choose to use the same title for all age groups during the month of activities, while others have opted to stagger the titles through different age groups and classrooms on a cycle.
- Little Books with multiple copies per title that will be used for unstructured time, breakout lessons, and home-lending programmes.
- Board books for independent learning and play, occupational therapy support, and reading circles.
- Bookshelves and reading area in the classroom space (floor mats, chairs, tables) where children can engage with the books and one another.
- Bookshelf/Lending Library where parents can check out books with school leadership for at-home learning.
- PowerPoint Presentations for teacher/director/school Orientations
- Introduction and Implementation of Early Pages Programme to outline the purpose and goal of the initiative, use of resources, and parental participation.
- Overview and Guide to Completing an Action Plan to provide guidance for the use of monthly action plans accompany each monthly calendar for mapping and achieving classroom goals.
- Parent Agreement to offer support to students with caring direction for parents.
- A central location where you can hold gatherings, trainings, showcases, and oversee central resource distribution as needed.

# Programme Launch & Implementation Checklist

1

Decide that you want an early childhood literacy programme. Reach out to the Early Childhood Unit and establish a relationship and share with them your desire to support children's literacy for emergent learners. Your ECE Unit's level of readiness may depend on your existing work and relationship with them. It may take time to cultivate their trust in your ability to deliver on promises and remain present throughout the approach. No Ministry wants to invest themselves in partnering with fleeting and unqualified partnership.

2

After you have established yourself and come to the agreement that you will bring resources and programmatic partnership, work with your ECE Unit to put together a comprehensive list of preschools. The EPP is designed to serve children ages three to five. Some preschools begin at nursery and run birth to age two, while others run birth to age or ages three to five. Make sure you delineate between these age groups and properly categorize. Additionally, each country has a different systemic approach to how a school is registered: public versus private preschool do not mean the same in any two countries. Work with your local ministry to gain an understanding of their national approach and partnership with private preschools; for private preschools that are not required to adhere to the educational curriculum and/or do not maintain formal assessments or professional development training, it may be wise to first begin testing the programme with those government institutions that have such oversights.

3

Determine which schools are ready. Make sure to match the number of schools you engage with your capacity to have ongoing oversight and support as you implement the programme. We recommend working with no more than 5-10 schools in your first year of practice. This will allow you to learn some of the nuances and patterns of challenges while being available enough to respond to needs in a meaningful way. As you bring on new schools, existing schools in the programme should assume more self-directed leadership and initiative, and the ECE Unit should assume increasing ownership of the ongoing utilization of the resources; however, your relationship should be sustained in a mentorship capacity in providing support, resources, and visits as necessary and appropriate to continue inspiring creativity, motivation, sustainability, and innovation.

4

Understanding the reporting and structural hierarchy of the Ministry of Education will help you avoid missteps. To begin your programme, schedule an orientation for participating preschool directors. As participation requires absenteeism from the school days, it is important that this decision comes from the Ministry of Education. Work with your ECE Officer; ideally, your ECE Unit will make a formal request on your joint behalf that preschool directors please be excused to attend an orientation session to receive resources and training to prepare for the implementation of a preschool literacy programme.

- It is important that preschool supervisors and directors not be excluded from orientations. Without the presence of those in charge of each centre, the educators and responsible school staff lose first-hand knowledge and information on the resources available, their purpose, and programme goals. Second-hand messaging results in variations and misunderstandings that undermine a cohesive programme and will create divisions that are avoidable.

5

During the orientation, go over expectations, goals, action plans, implementation strategy and timelines. Your aim is to encourage understanding of who you are, why you are offering this programme, and to help teachers feel supported through partnership. Be intentional in working to convey that this programme exists to enhance the preschool environment, to uplift the teachers through mentorship, and to build skills that will make preschool management easier and more fulfilling, while readying children for life with educational and social skills only gained through early exposure to literacy. Action and implementation planning are ways to help establish and root the programme, to introduce the manual, and to accompany the transition to clarify and support the teachers and ECE Unit.

6

Identify, name, and define whose role it is to support the ongoing implementation and oversight of the action plans. For schools working with Hands Across the Sea, we will provide on-site support for the onboarding and implementation and will remain an invested partner in the sustainability of the programme working to also encourage the daily oversight under the leadership of the ECE Unit once a programme is rooted.

### Group Activity

What Use is Made of Current Book Collections?

- **Display** : Where and How?
- **Classroom interactions/activities** : What? How often? What format is used?
- **Parent involvement**: What is done at home? How are families supported? What follow-up is done at school?
- **Assessment of students** : How are students assessed at the school? What instrument is used for assessment? How are assessments supporting teaching methods?

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across  
the  
sea

### Leadership

- Who represents your school at trainings?
- What are your plans to share information?
- Do you plan to use information shared with you from partners?
- Are you prepared to make the necessary changes in lesson deliveries/strategies used at your school?
- Do you know who to reach out to for help and support? To share wins, success stories, and updates?

\* Assigning a person to each of these items will help to keep the school organized and well-supported.

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## After your programme is launched and underway, there are key actions for overseeing implementation and ongoing success.

- Create a schedule or system for establishing school check-ins and immediately begin to send out email communications with Action Plan templates to work with school directors and educators. Provide a deadline to the schools for when you expect to receive the completed Action Plans and work 1:1 via email, phone, and in-person with educators to refine the completed Action Plan. This should become easier over time as teachers gain more experience with the tool. Action Plans should cover one month of classroom activities from a broad general approach. See Appendix A [ example of action plan that is blank template]. Action Plans can be singularly focused on one educational goal (i.e., literacy), or can expand across (i.e., literacy and social learning).
- During the early stages of implementation, assign someone to check in with schools weekly by phone or email. Schedule and prioritize that all schools have an in-person visit at least once per term to oversee progress, offer mentorship, and troubleshoot/advise as needed.

- It is good to establish an expectation or a system for having a group meeting periodically, either by term or at the beginning and end of each school year in coordination with either the District Officer and/or the ECE Unit.
- Beginning- and end-of term meetings are well suited for orientation and then a close-out to observe and record successes and challenges. Term check-ins and mid-term check-ins are effective for gathering assessment data, learning about challenges and needs to provide ongoing mentorship, sharing lessons learned, and building community amongst educators and the group.
- NB: We have seen great outcomes when preschools participating as a cohort develop a WhatsApp group together. This channel has become a space where teachers and directors share ideas, wins, challenges, stories, images, and lessons learned with one another and get the support that is often lacking in such small environments (by contrast, primary schools have a large teacher roll and there is a lot of internal support and community as a result; preschools generally have 1-6 personnel and the position can be a bit more isolating).

### Purpose of an Action Plan

To ensure you are not overlooking any important details

- **Efficiency:** to save time, energy, and resources in the long run.
- **Accountability:** to increase the chances that people will do what needs to be done.
- To identify the necessary steps towards a goal.
- To determine what resources are required to reach the goal.
- To formulate a timeline for when specific tasks need to be completed

### Objectives

- The objectives supports attainment of the associated goal.
- A specific **result** that a **person** or **system aims** to achieve within a **time frame** and with available **resources**.

Specific

- What exactly are we going to do, with or for whom?
- Why is this important?
- Who is going to do what? Who is assigned to which roles?
- When do I want to accomplish this?
- How am I going to do this? What is my approach?

## Post-programme Close-out

To close out the school year, we have put together the following list of recommended activities and actions for those in charge of overseeing the Early Pages Programme at each location. These activities should be undertaken at the school level, and also in cohorts (sometimes broken out into districts for larger countries)

### Wrap-up Activities

- Completion of self-evaluation checklist
  - Work within your school and with the ECE Unit and in coordination with Hands Across the Sea (or your outside literacy partner).
- Hold open discussions to celebrate wins, share lessons learned, identify opportunities for strengthening the programme through greater intentionality, and troubleshooting.
- Host exhibition and/or literacy events
  - Hold an Open Library Day for parents, sponsors, Ministry Officials, and partners.
  - Invite parents to school for a student showcase of their children's work.
    - ♦ Schedule one-on-one and small group time with parents to provide individualized feedback and support for sustaining literacy activities during the off-months/summer vacation (parents can also pick-up student portfolio at this time).



## INTRODUCTORY UNIT

# Improve Literacy in Your Classroom:

In this manual you will find advice, instruction, insight, and lived examples of how you can nurture a learning environment, achieve curriculum-adjacent goals, and cultivate a preschool culture where children have the greatest potential to flourish. The Early Pages Programme builds upon 16 years of successful, grassroots literacy programs designed by Hands Across the Sea in the Eastern Caribbean. This manual is the product of a two-year pilot initiative designed with and for Eastern Caribbean preschools and in partnership with the Early Childhood Education Unit and the Ministry of Education.

If you're a literacy specialist, this manual is for you. If you're not a literacy specialist, this manual is also for you. If you've had concerns about integrating literacy into your classroom day out of concern that it will take too much time and effort, or will detract from other activities, you will find that intentionally integrating library and literacy activities will make your classroom run more smoothly over time. Children will become more calm, content, and self-aware; they will develop skills for communication, regulation, collaboration, and problem-solving that will bleed into all aspects of their day and life. Literacy skills are foundational for supporting healthy behaviours, emotional regulation, and cognitive capabilities. A little effort can go a long way toward making the classroom environment one that is more enjoyable for all, and will even set children up to succeed in life.

### Anchor Texts: A Fundamental Tool for Literacy Instruction

The Early Pages relies on the use of physical books as anchor texts to provide fundamental educational and engagement opportunities in the preschool environment. By providing new, relevant, and engaging texts, children develop book knowledge and concepts about print that are fundamental to their learning and development.

An anchor text as referred to in this manual is any book that is read and referred to often, because it can be used to teach a variety of skills and strategies. The book can be used several times for the term for different lessons. You can focus on a specific concept



each time, such as rhymes, phonics, sight words, picture discussions, etc.

Teachers utilize anchor texts to create lesson plans; however, books can also be used for big-picture planning and strategic approaches to accomplishing overarching goals. Anchor texts can inspire excellent teaching strategies that are accessible to students, fun and engaging, and meet multiple goals while nurturing an environment of cooperation, reading, participation, and cooperation.

The Early Pages Programme is built on intentionality and simple but necessary planning techniques that can make a world of difference in the lives of hardworking teachers, high-energy children, and parents who are looking for guidance. Taking a literacy-forward approach will help preschoolers focus, thrive, and connect in ways that will ultimately make the classroom experience one with less conflict and higher gratification for all.

The following units of this manual are dedicated to supporting pedagogical approaches to achieving literacy outputs and outcomes. In the context of early childhood literacy in the Eastern Caribbean, this generally refers to supporting the pursuit of 10 early childhood development indicators in the content areas of Language, Literacy, and Communications:



These 10 development markers focus on building skills and knowledge through experiences with language, print, and literature in the context of social relationships and meaningful activities.

Educational markers and developmental indicators are not mutually exclusive. Oftentimes, the lessons that accomplish one goal also touch upon or layer with another desired learning output. We've chosen to pair several developmental indicators to support a comprehensive approach to utilizing books for practical application to achieve multiple and interrelated goals.

Two of the necessary developmental markers in early childhood education are **Concept of Print** and **Book Knowledge**. These indicators generally ensure that children:

- Know that print carries meaning.
- Know that English is read from left to right and top to bottom.
- Understand that we read books from front to back.
- Understand the connection between spoken and written words.
- Sequence letters to form words.

For many children, preschool will be their first exposure to books. Introducing basic concepts is an important step in building book knowledge and a concept of print. The following activities and simple strategies can build healthy foundations for literacy development:

- Work with students to identify parts of the book: cover, back, pages, spine/binding.
- Support children in their ability to turn pages, handle, and care for a book.
- Differentiate between text and pictures.
- Identify "title," "author," and "illustrator."

We acknowledge these markers as fundamental and foundational. There is no specific unit dedicated to achieving these goals; please note that the combination of conducting regular reading sessions and Read Alouds, and the use of books and anchor texts to achieve the other 8 developmental goals, will inevitably result in a deepened concept of print and book knowledge.

## Start With an Action Plan

The process for implementing this program includes the use of an Action Plan. In preparation for each school month, a Big Book or anchor text should be selected and identified as an anchor text. This text will either serve all students in the school, or different Big Books will serve each class/age during that month (in our case, the texts are circulated such that all age groups have worked with each of the Seven Big Book texts by the end of the school year).

Educators should identify how to employ the anchor text over the course of the calendar month to

achieve as many of the 10 developmental markers as possible. Once complete, Action Plans should be shared internally for review. Depending on how you've assigned responsibility, it is beneficial during the early stages of implementation to share Action Plans either with the ECE Officers/Unit, a Hands Across the Sea Literacy Link, or your local literacy partner or focal point. This process will allow you to receive feedback and support for upcoming initiatives that could further enhance your initiatives. Keeping partners aware and involved in opportunities may amplify your efforts by bringing knowledge, network, insight, partnership, and resources. Likewise, sharing your efforts could help partners to learn from your approaches and share with other schools and networks looking to achieve similar goals.

Action Plans should serve as a mapping tool for the use of resources over a timeframe. Action Plans should not and cannot replace daily classroom plans, but they should elevate, give clarity, inspiration, and open possibilities for approaching daily planning with a larger picture in mind.

**EARLY PAGES PROGRAMME**  
**Action Plan Template**

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Materials: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Goal: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of the book: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Area(s)	Objectives	Activities	Curriculum Content/ Assessment Marker	Means of Verification (Evidence)	Time Bound	Skills to be developed	Person(s) Responsible	Cost/Resources
Language Arts								
Mathematics								
Science								
Social Studies								
Creative Arts								

## UNIT ONE

# Phonological Awareness and Alphabet Knowledge



### Phonological Awareness



- Recognize similarities and differences in letter sounds.
- Recognize beginning sounds of words including alliterations (same initial sound).
- Recognize ending sounds of words including rhymes (same ending sound).
- Separate syllables in words (segmentation).
- Recognize and combines syllables to form words (blending).

### Alphabet Knowledge



- Recognize letters and sounds.
- Recognize letters in their name.

Kelli Johnson, MA. describes phonological awareness as the foundation for learning to read. It is a child's ability to think about the smallest building blocks of speech that plays a key role in reading acquisition (Bishop, Yopp, & Yopp, 2000, cited in Epstein, 2012).

Many researchers refer to phonological awareness as the ability to recognize the sounds that make up words. It is an awareness that the words we speak can be taken apart (Gillis, Ed.D.). 'Phonological' refers to the sound system of language, or the sounds of spoken language. Every day we listen to words and sentences – it is about what we hear and not what we see. It's simply what we do auditorily. In support, Epstein, 2012 explains that phonological awareness refers to all speech sounds in general while phonemic awareness refers to the smallest sound unit in words.

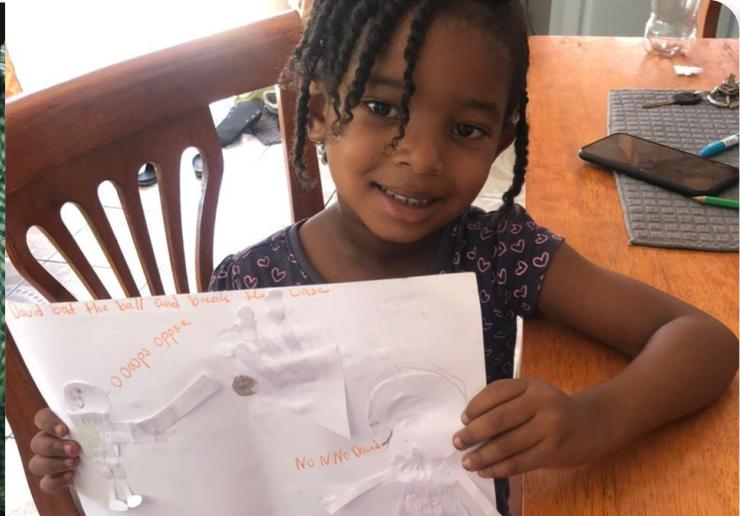
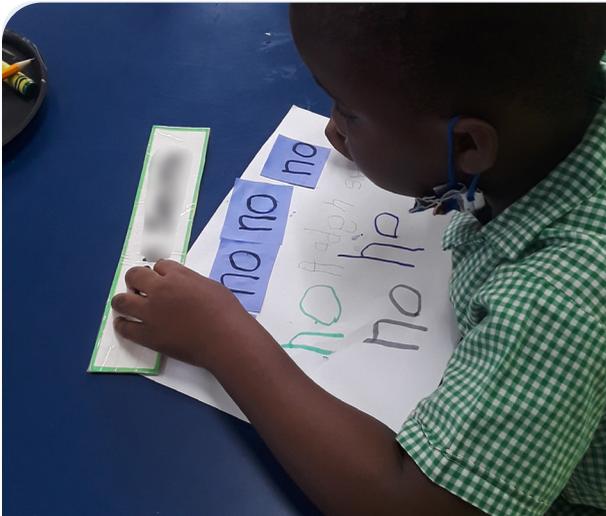
Gaining, sustaining, and maintaining the interest of students in letters and the alphabet is a key component to successfully building phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge. Repetition and exposure help grow these skills. By making lessons interactive, children can begin to internalize their understanding of the alphabet and phonemes.

Kids have difficulty applying these new skills without creativity, games, incentives, or hands-on activities that use them. It is about symbols, sounds, and memory. You will want to keep young students engaged so they do not become bored or overwhelmed and lose interest. It is also vital to remain compassionate and patient with young readers. One school built an action plan around the book *It Begins with an A* after identifying that this book provides a focused approach

to phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge. Another school leaned into the ease and repetition of *No David* for approaching lessons in a fun, interactive, and accessible way. By bringing letters to life, the book lends itself to featuring letters as the object of interest in the accompanying activities.

It is not easy for young children to understand and apply phonemes in English. Children learn basic reading skills at different rates, and quickly learn

some phonemes and have difficulty with others. They continually learn until they achieve mastery in phonics, especially with the complexity of phonics in English. For this reason, students require continuous and ongoing support. Exposure to vocabulary and safe opportunities for practice will give students the greatest opportunities to excel.



### Objectives

Children should be able to: (1) recognize the word “no” and “David,” (2) identify distinct sounds in words, and (3) make each letter sound in order.

### Activities

Make the sound for the letters in the words.

### Educator Tips

Children love the story *No David* and are always eager to read it again. ‘No’ is a word that holds great power; it is exciting for children to interact with the concepts such as child-parent role playing through *No David*. The story is filled with many teaching-learning concepts that make children giggle and keep them engaged. We encourage teachers to go beyond the basic objective of exploring the words and sounds of ‘No’ and ‘David.’ To enrich phonological awareness, children can chant and march to ‘No! No! No! David!’ or ‘Come back here, David!’ Children can also imitate/make/share the different sounds in the story, e.g., David banging away on the frying pan and mummy shouting ‘David! Be Quiet!’ Children should be led to see that the printed text conveys meaning, e.g., the name ‘David.’ They should also understand that a word is a consistent set of letters, e.g. ‘No David’ letters are always arranged in the same order. Children should be invited to make informed guesses at reading and writing the familiar words in the story.



### Objectives

Students should be able to: (1) identify the letter "b," (2) make the letter sound, (3) say a word that begins with the letter, and (4) form simple words using letters.

### Activities

Letters Dance Together  
(Collage using rice, peas, paper)

### Educator Tips

*It Begins with an A* supports the acquisition of phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge because it emphasizes hearing and using the sound of language which helps students to gain and understand simple alphabet knowledge. Children can employ this knowledge to 'decode' words by sounding them out. Here, the book is used as a teaching-learning resource toward a specific objective through hands-on activities listed. Children were given the opportunity to choose letters, name the letter, and then make the sound of that letter. To build fun and excitement, children decorated letters with given cut-out pieces of materials and proudly engaged the letters in a dance which helped to form a lasting impression and supported the consolidation of lessons in their young minds. More advanced lessons could include syllable recognition e.g., as children dance around with letters, they can call and sing name syllables e.g., 'Kan-ga-roo.'



### Objectives

Students should be able to: (1) identify the letter, (2) make the /b/ sound, and (3) say a word that begins with the sound.

### Activities

Mystery Box: children close their eyes, deep into the box, select a letter, identify the letter, say sound and word that begins with the letter.  
(Paper, scissors, cardboard, glue)

### Educator Tips

To bring these lessons to life, children were asked to identify the initial sounds in letters and learnt their names (phonological awareness). Children then demonstrated letter-sound connections e.g., the B in boy makes the /b/ sound (alphabet knowledge). To extend learning, children could be asked to recognize or say real or nonsense rhyming words that are close together, e.g., 'pen' and 'hen'; or ask children to change initial consonants in familiar words from the story e.g., 'foot' '-oot' (phonological awareness). Children could find other additional letters from story or in other printed materials, both upper case and lower case; or, when children need help spelling a word, they can be guided toward emphasising each letter sound connection (alphabet knowledge).

Phonological awareness of different grouping of letters, blends. It is all an ongoing issue. There is no cutoff for teaching phonics and phonemic awareness. There is a lot of complexity in English phonics. As such, students need continuous and ongoing support since phonological awareness does not abide by fast and hard rules. Exposure to vocabulary and safe opportunities for practice will ensure the greatest likelihood of a student's capacity to excel.

Phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge seem like basic aspects of literacy; however, many older students lack an effective handle on use of letters and proper recognition and tonal use due to a lack of repeated exposure and consolidation of these lessons during their early learning experiences.

With phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge, children will build their confidence in their reading and speaking.

Educators should not lose sight of the vital role they play in providing sustained, repeated exposure to these key skills. If we lose interest in reinforcing these basic concepts, we risk losing students who are different learners. Just as music lessons begin with scales and warm-ups, it is important for educators to give children repeated exposure to letters and sounds without the additional pressures of vocabulary, words, writing, and speaking.

## UNIT TWO

# Reading and Comprehension



### Comprehension



- Sequence pictures to tell a story.
- Connect information to their own lives.
- Retell/tell story/events with beginning, middle and end.
- State main characters in a story.
- State the setting of a story.
- Recall important details in a story.
- Make suitable predictions from the story.
- Ask and answer a variety of questions.
- Listen to and join in with stories.
- Show interest in listening to books read by an adult.

### Reading



- Tell stories based on pictures.
- Retell stories based on pictures.
- Read aloud words, simple phrases, or short sentences.

Reading and comprehension development are highly reciprocal. When working to achieve either goal, it benefits students to work comprehensively. Pictures and the ability to match symbols (i.e., letters) with illustrations (pictures) is an act of reading and understanding; therefore, by understanding and correlating the imagery with the words, children can build their ability to decipher context and therefore build comprehension skills.

In the following example, we used *Is Your Mama a Llama* as an anchor text to achieve literacy goals. The book was also a foundational tool for social and emotional development goals and lessons in mathematics. We have included this here to show the interrelated nature of using an anchor text to achieve layered education goals.

# Is Your Mama a Llama?



## GENERAL OBJECTIVES

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

## ACTIVITIES

### LANGUAGE ARTS

Building early literacy, language and communication competencies in students through active engagement.

- The students should be able to:
- Listen to, answer question on the story.
  - Demonstrate the knowledge of books.
  - Identify and make the sound of L l

- Identifying letter L l
- Identifying and making the sound //L//. Pay attention to how the sound is represented.
- Rhyming words
- Retelling story using pictures
- Read the story.
- Discuss the story.
- Answer questions on the story.

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The students will engage in discussions which will help them to develop a positive self-identity.

- The students should be able to:
- Discuss and name their family members.
  - Students talk about how the baby llama felt as he search for his mom.
  - How did the animals respond to the baby llama.

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- Discuss and name their family members.
  - Students talk about how the baby llama felt as he search for his mom.
  - How did the animals respond to the baby llama.

### MATHEMATICS

The students will develop mathematical thinking, skills and knowledge through literacy experiences.

- The students should be able to:
- Count the different types of animals in the story.
  - Sort and classify animals, by attributes, have 2 legs, 4 legs, wings

- Rational counting
- Sorting and classifying.
- Making a pictograph
- One-to-one correspondence.
- Name, count, and compare the amount (value) of animals to represent the number.

One school used the book *Good Night Gorilla* to work on comprehension throughout the month. They engaged in a series of activities that built on the competencies and comprehension the children

gained through repeated exposure and engagement. This can be done with many books, especially those that include a variety of characters, scenes, and a timeline or scenario.

## Good Night Gorilla



### Activity

Creating Story line. (Characters, setting, objects)

### General Objectives

- Children create a visual representation of the story in which they can relate to in a simple manner.
- Children retell the story using visual representation.

### Output

Student-created projects reflect different elements of the story that can be used for display or interaction throughout the course of the month's activities; builds a baseline for the children to build upon as they go further with their activities.

### Materials

Paint (black, white, brown, yellow, brown, red, yellow, green, orange, pink, light and dark blue,) paint brushes, greaseproof paper, glue, glue sticks, glue gun, cardboard, bristol board, newsprint, markers.



### Activity

Retelling and discussion of the book using the storyline.

### General Objectives

- Children share observations, explanations, ideas and feelings as they use language to retell the story in their own words.

### Output

Children draw, write, and retell the stories they have interacted with which becomes evidence of their understanding and also provides insight into which concepts are sticking or missing.

### Materials

Big book for classroom activities, little books for lending for at-home reading to build familiarity.



### Activity

Students are assigned different characters from the book and present for the class on their research

### General Objectives

- Children develops confidence as they use language to speak about different animals.
- Children learn new words and phrases in conversation and activities.

### Output

Students do research, drawing, displays, and presentations on: hyena, zoo keeper, giraffe, lion, armadillo, and other characters and related from the story for the class.

### Materials

Big Book for classroom activities, little books for independent inquiry and for home lending, encyclopedias, reference books, internet/phone.



### Activity

Singing a song about the story.

### General Objectives

- Children understand signing and songs as they connect information and recall fictional animals.

### Output

Children act out and interact with the song and use proper intonation, pauses, inflection, etc.; the play and interaction reflects understanding of story's narrative, characters, behaviours, etc.



### Activity

Children paint animals and characters from the story.

### General Objectives

- Children use a variety of materials to paint and add colour to paintings.
- Children's representation and designs develop from simple to complex and from accidental to incidental.

### Output

Children can deepen their understanding of the story through the images that accompany the words, and can also create their own images to visualize and present their understanding of the story.

### Materials

Paper, paint, paintbrush. Big books for classroom display, little books for independent reference.



### Activity

Poem - "Naughty Gorilla" by student (Malachi)

### General Objectives

- Children comprehend stories and create poems where they connect information and recall fictional animals and events.
- Children share their ideas about characters in the story and add their own meaning to the story.

### Output

Children can play with the larger concept of wild animals beyond the confines of the book and relate it with a more global understanding of the animal and draw connections with books to the living world.

### Materials

paper, pen or pencil, little books for at-home lending for reference

Reading and Comprehension are essential components in a child's literacy journey. Young readers also need to learn to derive meaning from the context in ways that will fundamentally affect how they interact with the world. A child's ability to understand what they read has far-reaching implications on their daily lives, wellbeing, and lifelong success. From their ability to follow written directions to complete a task, reading and comprehension are basic building blocks for any child's healthy development. Children must learn to read and also understand what it says to do so they may complete the tasks given to them. The two skills rely on and build upon one another.

All of literacy is comprehension, and the benefits of literacy initiatives bleed into all other aspects of a child's education and development. For the purposes of this unit, we are drawing attention to how building literacy and other developmental skills can be successfully layered for achieving comprehension, numeracy, and social and emotional learning goals. Nothing is mutually exclusive, but building comprehension in general is useful in bringing practical and other subject matter in for heightening the impact and learning opportunity and reinforcing integrative skills.

## UNIT THREE

# Speaking and Vocabulary



### Speaking



- Speak about pictures and objects.
- Talk about his/her everyday life experiences eg., feelings, likes and dislikes.
- Speak using sentences of increasing length and complexity.

### Vocabulary



- Learn and use words and phrases in activities.
- Use a variety of words to describe and elaborate their experiences and ideas.
- Ask the meaning of unfamiliar words.

A key component to comprehension is vocabulary. A higher-level vocabulary improves comprehension, and therefore the ability to speak, reflect, and communicate with ever-increasing complexity. The goal is always to achieve nuance and to expand a child's ability to listen, be understood, and respond appropriately.

Speaking requires a basic vocabulary. As literacy improves, the ability to capture ideas or emotions and express them with precision and clarity to achieve effective communication becomes possible.

If the goal of speaking is to express feelings and preferences, and to communicate effectively, it is appropriate then to include all oral traditions and practice speaking to enhance literacy development. We recognize singing, spoken word/poetry, and sign language as practices that naturally achieve this developmental marker.

Children can achieve higher levels of vocabulary by participating in fun, engaging, and creative activities

that grow word banks. A strong vocabulary impacts more than test scores—it also can lead to a child's success in life by improving one's ability to learn, consolidate information, and perform well. Vocabulary provides the tool (input), while speaking is the pathway (output).

Strong speaking and vocabulary skills encourage educational capabilities and benefit social emotional learning, cognitive behavioural development, and whole-child wellbeing. A student's ability to self-regulate first begins with their ability to check in with their thoughts and emotions, and to be able to put names and words to the feelings they are accessing. Their ability to communicate such experiences is fundamental to healthy development and well-being as whole learners. The developmental markers of speaking and vocabulary indicate general comprehension as it relates to a child's capacity to relate, reflect, and communicate effectively.

## It Begins with A and I am an Apple



	OBJECTIVES	SUPPORTING RESOURCES	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
<b>CREATING A BOOKLET</b>	Creating storyline (characters, setting, objects)	Big Book for teacher; small board books for children to work with for unstructured time and to build their familiarity. Children can sign out board books if working on this at home. Construction paper and crayons.	Parents if an at-home activity. Teachers if undertaken in the classroom
<b>MUSICAL CHAIRS</b>	Children express and represent what they observe, think, imagine, and feel through music  Children explore and respond to musical elements such as pitch (high, low), tempo (fast, slow), dynamics (loud, soft), and steady beat.	Chairs, phone, or radio	Teachers and directors
<b>FACTS ABOUT APPLES</b>	For a child to identify and express their likes and dislikes using full sentences, phrases, descriptors, and pictures in a simple and clear manner.	Big Book for classroom activities; small board books for at-home lending and individual time in class. Encyclopedias or resource books and/or phone/computer for internet resource. Paper, crayons.	Teacher and parent. Bridging classroom literacy with parent-led community activity.





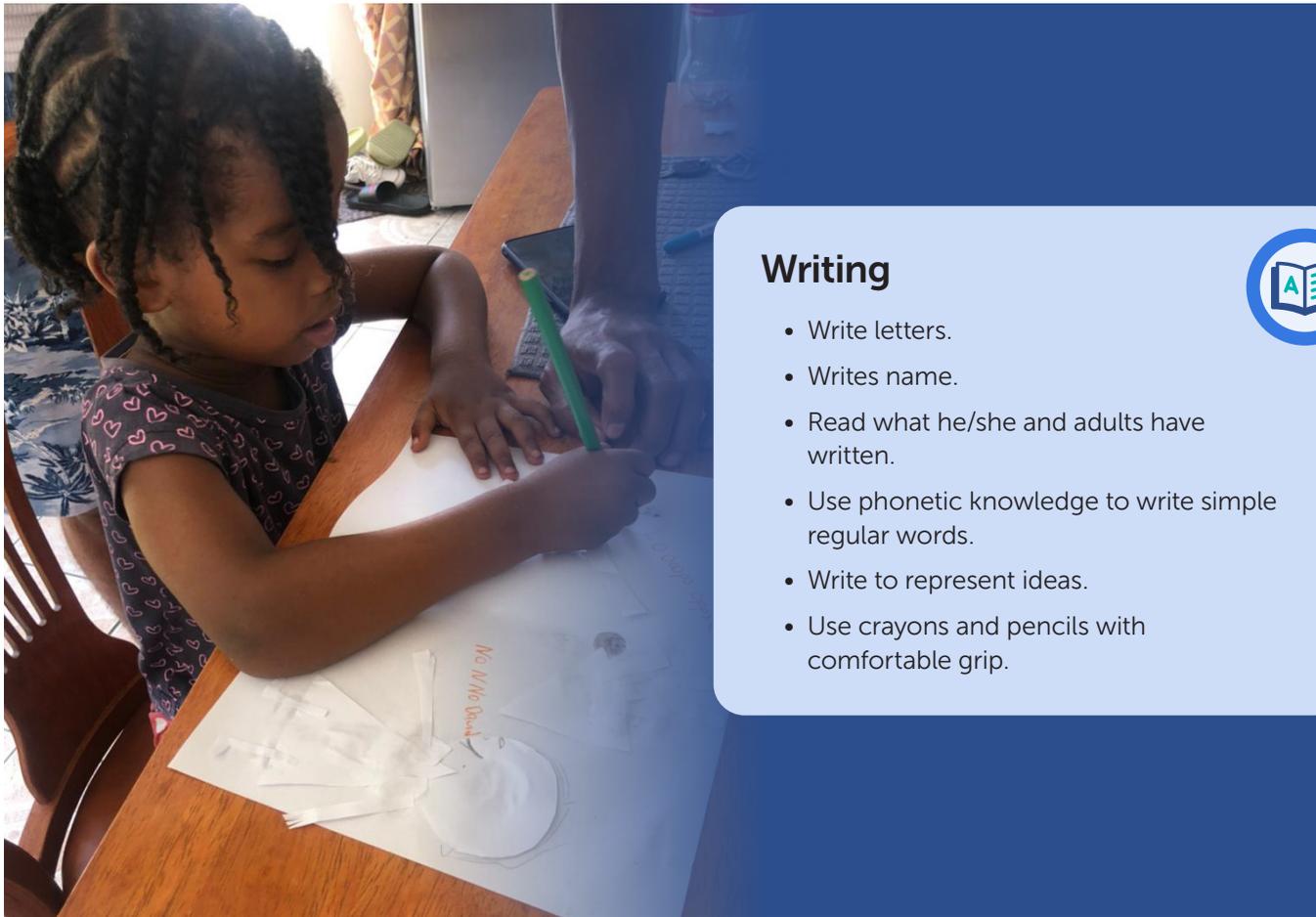
## The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear



	OBJECTIVES	SUPPORTING RESOURCES	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
<b>USE PICTURES TO MAKE SENTENCES</b>	Retelling and sequencing a familiar story using words and pictures.	Big Book for teachers; little books for children to bring home to re-read with families to prepare costumes for recitation and performance. Any clothing and materials that can be used for costumes (home and in school resources).	Teachers for in-class activities; parents and caregivers for at-home activities.
<b>RECITE RHYMES</b>	Recite poems relating to a familiar story.	Big books for teachers; little books for classroom reading and borrowing for at-home practice and preparation.	Teacher; parents if bridging the activity with at-home learning and assignments.
<b>VISIT THE SUPERMARKET</b>	Discussion on their fieldtrip to the supermarket to observe strawberries.	Access to a supermarket	Parent or caregiver

# UNIT FOUR

## Writing



### Writing

- Write letters.
- Writes name.
- Read what he/she and adults have written.
- Use phonetic knowledge to write simple regular words.
- Write to represent ideas.
- Use crayons and pencils with comfortable grip.

Writing is a developmental process that provides numerous opportunities to build the emergent literacy capacities of preschoolers. As a key literacy component, writing is important in supporting growth in reading. As was noted in 1998 by the clinical child psychologist Dame Marie Clay, Ph.D: "children are drawing and writing before they are reading."

Educators have emphasised reading aloud to preschoolers. We have observed less emphasis on writing in the preschools we have visited. However, reading and writing are interrelated and complementary processes. To advance a child's reading, educators should remember to incorporate writing in conjunction with reading initiatives in preschool environments.

Due to differences in literacy awareness, some preschoolers explore writing without connecting it to reading, as if it were a different code. Some children focus on different aspects of the complex activity, while some children do not explore the activity at all.

When working with preschoolers, many teachers are hesitant and at times intimidated by the challenges they face in helping young children with writing development. Introducing writing in the preschool environment should be a fun and encouraging exercise. Preschoolers can learn about many features of print as they explore the making of marks on paper, scribbly writing like their parents' cursive writing, drawings, and letter-like forms, all of which are the building blocks of writing.

Many preschool children have listened to stories and have looked at the pictures but are only vaguely aware that the words they are hearing are in the books. When Big Books are read to them over time and the words are pointed to, they come to associate pictures with the meanings of the stories. It becomes quite natural for them to create stories by drawing pictures, which are more concrete than letters and words.

Initially, some children cannot use pencils on paper either to produce writing or to copy it. However,

Children are encouraged to make marks and draw pictures with jumbo crayons. It is noticeable that the grip on the crayon is not firm.



Children are making marks and scribbly drawings intended to be writing; students are encouraged to use pencils to practice a light grip.



We see natural variation in practical writing skills, as some drawings are bold, while others are scribbly. One child has written her first name only with real letters showing alphabetic knowledge; another child is seemingly using letter-like forms to write both names with proper spacing between. These are all signals that the children are now realizing that there is a difference between pictures and writing, and that the words tell the story. Children are concentrating or paying attention to different areas and are consolidating their learning and skills through this practice.

The students have created marks and drawings representing writing, wavy scribbles, shapes, and letter-like forms. What each child generates or produces on his or her own tends to show us what aspects of print he/she has under his/her control. The task of copying can be highly revealing of where a student is, and can indicate opportunities for teachers to provide targeted support.



The student holding his pencil with an appropriately firm grip which is an important Movement and Motor indicator in childhood development. This should be demonstrated and will develop over time. Children should be given large sheets of paper to write on. Larger tools, such as jumbo crayons, brushes and markers help ensure that students use the proper muscles and hand-finger position for the activity. Through this practical approach, children are less likely to adopt incorrect grasps to control the tool.

With enough practice and exposure, children's drawings and shapes will advance into pictures and letters. Through their alphabetic knowledge they will begin to identify symbols. Working on writing letters and the alphabet involves prolonged and consistent exposure to tracing and writing as fine motor skills develop over time. All of this relies on a child's ability to grip their writing tools, which is a function of occupational therapy as well as literacy. Therefore, we present a wide variety of skills. Writing is a function of occupational therapy, so it cannot be implied that

a student's grasp of literacy is directly correlated to their ability or inability to write. Educators should remember that drawing and writing should be fun, and children should be encouraged as they explore marks on paper.

A classroom environment led under the assumption that children will write will be a classroom that fosters writers. We must encourage children to experiment and take risks. Once children receive opportunities and purposes for writing, they will flourish.

## UNIT FIVE

# English Language Learning



### English Language Learning

- Use English and their home language.
- Know there are different writing systems (alphabets).

English Language Learning (ELL), sometimes referred to as **Dual Language Acquisition**, is the practical early-childhood approach to working with children from birth to five years, so that they understand and use English and their home language as they learn two or more languages.

In many Eastern Caribbean countries, Standard British English is the official language at school, so English is used in curriculum and testing. However, since the West Indies is a melting pot, many children and households continue to practice their local languages and dialects. The most prevalent household languages in the EC are variations of Caribbean English and Caribbean French including English-Creole, French-Creole, and local Patois aka Kreyol (Creole).

Throughout the Eastern Caribbean, Dual Language Learners are faced not only with language acquisition,

but also with dialectic differentiation. Dialect shifting is one's ability to recognize and properly attune their use of language to the correct dialect for their purpose and environment. Two main concerns for early learners are directly associated with low dialect shifting. First, low dialect shifting is directly correlated with lower reading comprehension and is more heavily observed in communities with higher concentrated poverty. Conversely, greater dialect shifting skills are positively associated with reading comprehension, and literacy intervention has been successful in increasing predicted gains in reading comprehension for students who have achieved higher dialect shifting skills. The second matter is that of challenges faced by children struggling with dialectic changes and their grasp of spelling-sound mapping, or decoding, which can impact a child's reading and school achievement.



To support emergent and young learners in their Standard English, we must be intentional in how we use our books as opportunities to build greater dialect shifting skills to support long-term language development and achievement.

As preschoolers enter school, their language learning will continue to develop influenced by the school, home, and community. All teachers need to create and provide rich learning environments and opportunities for English Language Learning to occur, paying close attention to where each child is in their early literacy development.

Books help children to learn about language and to think about the language they are using. Reading aloud to students exposes them to good grammar referred to as: the Standard English of books.

All teachers need to develop warm and loving relationships with children, communicating that you care for each child. Teachers need to observe and follow each child along the pathway he or she takes. Good conversations with children are invaluable to helping teachers to learn what children are understanding and can help them to interact on their different

journeys. Tune in to the questions children ask about the stories which are read and as they play around with the oral language.

There are simple pathways to working with children on their English Language Learning. Some good tips and practices for educators are:

- Read books with children.
- Talk about the pictures together.
- Answer the questions children are asking.
- Have students join in repetitive parts of the story.
- Expose them to new words and their meanings.
- Talk about the sounds of words in the story, syllables, words and sentences,
- Rephrase, repeat, expand and extend children's language.
- Repeat children's incorrect utterances by simply modeling the correct pronunciation and grammar.
- Repeat and emphasize words you want children to learn.
- Use simplified language.
- Provide many opportunities for children to listen and respond to what they hear.
- Have direct and intentional communication with students.
- Provide for extended one-to-one conversations with teachers as well as peers encouraging children to think and talk.
- Encourage children to retell stories they have heard or learned. Have children become storytellers by telling stories of their own.
- Take students on excursions or field trips related to the stories.

Create many opportunities for preschoolers to hear and participate in conversations so that they learn higher dialect shifting skills.

English Language Learning should never compete nor displace any child's identity regardless of what their home language is. The goal of English Language Learning should be to support a child's long-term

capacity to navigate multiple languages on a global scale and to have a pathway for assessing English Language Development.

# LITERACY FOR ALL

## Community-Based Activities

When we first launched the preschool pilot, we knew that we needed to involve parents to have the most lasting impact. Additionally, we recognized the importance of building awareness and community support for children's literacy. If we were going to set out to build a movement around children's literacy and its foundation, we knew no programme would be complete without gaining the participation of families and community members. With this intentional approach, we believe families and communities can build healthy habits that view young learners as important members of society who need the support, love, time, and recognition of everyone around them.

The opportunity to leverage libraries and literacy as an opportunity for social infrastructure is built on sociological research, which has shown libraries to be one of the single most important spaces for social infrastructure. During the forced isolation brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, social needs shifted even further to the internet. To address this shift and its potentially negative consequences for socialization and learning, Hands Across the Sea created community engagement opportunities with libraries and literacy as the focal point.

In working with our pilot schools in Grenada, we drew inspiration from some community-based initiatives we observed in Nevis prior to the Covid-19 shutdowns. We worked under the hypothesis that, with an infusion of good resources and the support of Hands Across the Sea in partnership with the Early Childhood Education Unit, schools could devise community-focused grassroots programming that would engage families, entertain children, and create ripples in the community. We worked with our partner schools over the course of the pilot to continuously troubleshoot and refine the community programming. Below are some of the highlights, which we present as inspiration.

"Libraries...are essential not only for a neighborhood's vitality but also for buffering all kinds of personal problems- including isolation and loneliness"

– Eric Klinenberg, PhD

*Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* (2018)

The beauty and effectiveness of community-based programming is that it is tailored and unique. Preschool teachers and directors must build personal relationships with parents and families. By doing so, they will gain a good understanding of the opportunities and challenges families face with their different levels of access, abilities, and time availability. Community literacy programs can help to make literacy more inclusive and approachable while offering people meaningful opportunities to build connections and precious bonds in a meaningful way with lasting impacts.

When building your community programming, we encourage you to think outside of the box, take risks, and have fun. We also encourage you to reach out to colleagues and partners for their support and participation. If you work with Hands Across the Sea, reach out to your local Literacy Links if you need help fleshing out an idea. No opportunity is too small, but planning, consistency, and good communication are some of the great keys to success with community programs.

## Community-based Literacy Activities

### Friday Read-A-Thon

#### Planned by the Academic Committee

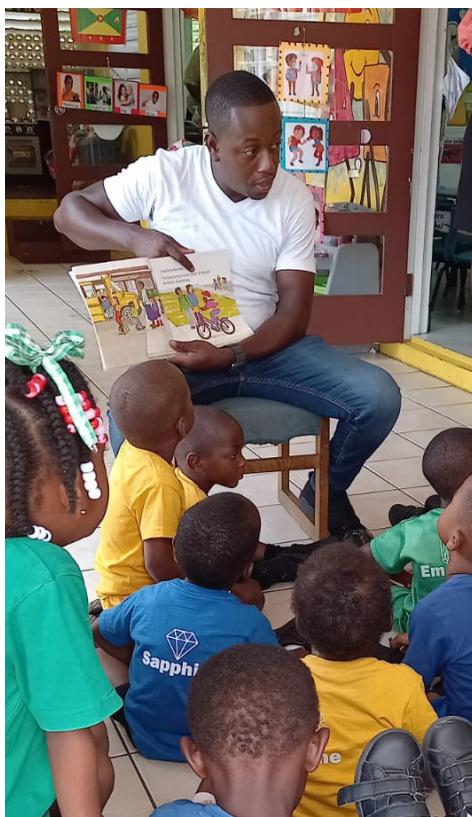
**Purpose:** to show the students that persons within the community are also excited about reading.

Every Friday someone from the community comes to the school to read to the students. The featured books are selected by the Academic Committee. Parents will come in person or invite a close family friend to come on their behalf. The guest reader presents for the whole school and asks questions at the end.

The impact on students is obvious as the children experience many community members modeling reading and support of literacy; they become more drawn to the books/stories read to them and are offered different styles, perspectives, and approaches.

#### Challenge/solution

At first it was a challenge to get parents to volunteer to come in on Fridays. The committee troubleshooted the issue and now have parents signing up far in advance on a schedule so that parents have a particular Friday. This has led to greater consistency, higher motivation, and a stronger program.





### **Blanket Night**

One night a year, each school invites a local gathering around an evening of community and learning. Students and community members are encouraged to bring a blanket and a snack/light fare and join together at a central location – often school grounds or the local park – for a picnic-style educational event. The evening’s festivities include Read Alouds, dramatizations, singalongs, and literacy performances. Families enjoy a personal picnic experience while participating and modeling good behaviour for their children in support of education while connecting with neighbors and friends. The goal is for schools to take turns hosting the event for their local community; with the infusion of Big Books and book collections made available at each preschool, schools can share responsibility by taking turns hosting Blanket Night, making the activity a national initiative with a grassroots approach that ensures accessibility for all.

### **Bi-Monthly Outdoor Nature Reading**

Twice per month, students would take a class trip into the community to gather under a tree close to the pasture in their area. Together with teachers, parents, and older students, children would engage with the stories and school library resources for Read Alouds, storytelling, and dramatizations during the special outing.

## **Class visits to community establishments**

In coordination with topics presented in children's stories, students are taken on scheduled, planned, guided visits to local community establishments to build on comprehension skills and topics introduced, presented, and covered in classroom books. Some examples include:

### **Activities inspired by *It Begins with an A*:**

Children visited the local bakery to look at baking equipment and ask the baker questions about tools, equipment, and the process of bread making. The baker demonstrated how flour is mixed, what equipment is used to make the bread mold, how he uses the cooling/resting rack and oven, different types of pastries, etc.

A visit to the local chocolate factory gave children the chance to observe all the local chocolate products made in the facility. The employees identified themselves and explained their role and answered questions about ingredients, the process used to make chocolate products, and the products themselves.

A visit to the village shops let students interact with the different shopkeepers, ask questions about their store, their merchandise, and their day, and to discover how retail works.

### **Activities inspired by *Itsy Bitsy Spider*; *The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear*; and *I am an Apple*:**

A visit to the National Water Authority treatment plant gave students the chance to observe the equipment, pipes, and the water. The group discussed the uses of the rain that flows into the treatment plant and the purification process.

At the St. James Natural waterspout, children learned the history of the waterspout from community personnel.

A visit to the supermarket, children discovered what happens to the imported apples when they reach the island. They also learned what supermarket staff and produce personnel must do to prepare for the apples to be displayed in the supermarket.

At a visit to local gardens, a nun and worker taught the children how to keep the garden neat and tidy; children also had an opportunity to observe the different plants that were growing in the garden.

A visit to a local farm kept by a female farmer gave the chance for students to observe the many animals there (e.g., ducks, cows, and chickens). The children listened to the animals and were allowed to gather eggs, feed the cows, pick fresh cucumbers, etc.

### **Activities inspired by *The Napping House*:**

A visit to the workshop in the village let the children observe a professional joiner at work. The gentleman explained the different types of tools and wood/boards used to build the house and other furniture in the house. The children were invited to use their senses (e.g., they smelled the wood, listened to the sound of the machines).

## Literacy Extravaganza

### Held Annually or Biennially

To close out the school year, a national event was held with a set of schools participating in the first cohort of the preschool pilot programme (phase one of Early Pages Programme). The event brought national awareness and important participation around children's literacy and library programming. Ministry officials, corporate leaders, and the broadcast media joined parents, children, teachers, school directors, and Hands Across the Sea for a showcase of children's art, student-led songs and performances, and teacher-led conversations about texts used. Similar to the national science fair, children's work was put on display tables as exhibitions. The event endeared those in attendance, but also raised the importance and commitment of stakeholders who all play a vital role in the future of the young learners.

As the programme's reach grows, plans for the second extravaganza include hosting smaller groups at different community locations, which may be necessary (as recommended by district or parish) to keep the event accessible.







## PRESCHOOL PARENT AGREEMENT

Parent / Guardian (full name)

I \_\_\_\_\_ promise to actively participate in my child's reading journey by being a positive role model. I will be an advocate for reading.

I will create time and space for reading at home. I will let my child see me reading and/or I will prioritize working with books with my child regularly.

I will read aloud to and with my child for 10-15 minutes each day and/or I will tell my child stories and listen to my child's stories.

I will let my child select books he or she is interested in. I will borrow books from the school library and other libraries. I will ask and listen to my child share stories about their day, the books they read, the lessons they learned, and the struggles/wins they experienced at school.

I will make myself available to show up for special activities whenever reasonably possible.

I will ask my child's teacher for help if I am struggling with my child's literacy and reading.

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Parent / Guardian Signature

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Date







## **EARLY PAGES PROGRAMME**

Hands Across the Sea is a US-based 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to raising children's literacy in the Eastern Caribbean since 2007. To learn more about how and where we serve, visit [handsacrossthesea.org](https://handsacrossthesea.org).