Making a Menu

Print Knowledge
BEGINNING: Functions of Print

What You Need:
- paper
- glue stick
- pictures of food cut out from magazines
- crayons or markers
- names of different foods clearly written on index cards

What You Do:
1. Discuss with your child the purpose and use of a menu.
2. Choose a real or pretend meal for your child to put on the menu.
3. Lay out the pictures of food.
4. Have your child pick out a few pictures. Discuss good choices and favorites.
5. Write “MENU” at the top of the paper. Help your child, if he or she is ready, write the word on his or her own.
6. Have your child glue the pictures of the selected foods down the left side of the paper.
7. Help your child find the names of the selected foods on the cards. They can either glue the name next to the food or copy it directly onto the paper.
8. Your child can read the menu back to you or share it with a sibling or friend.

Why?
Your child becomes familiar with one of the many functions of print.


My Favorite Book

Print Knowledge
BEGINNING: Functions of Print

What You Need:
- construction paper
- pictures cut from magazines and newspapers
- markers
- glue
- stapler

What You Do:
1. Fold two sheets of construction paper and staple them along the crease to make a book.
2. Have your child pick a title for the book, such as “My Favorite Toys,” “My Favorite Animals” or “My Favorite Foods.” Write the title and your child’s name on the front of the book.
3. Help your child pick pictures that have to do with the chosen title and glue them into the book.
4. Encourage your child to share his or her book with a sibling or friend.

Why?
Your child learns that pictures and print carry messages and have many uses.
Your child also learns about how books work.

**Print Knowledge**

**BEGINNING: Matching Letters**

What You Need:
- plastic 3-D letters
- paper
- markers
- shallow basket

What You Do:
1. Using the plastic letters, spell the child’s name on the paper.
2. Trace the letters with the marker so that the child’s name is written on the paper. Color in the letters all the same color.
3. Place the plastic letters that are in the child’s name in the shallow basket.
4. Have the child pick letters from the basket and match them, one by one, to the corresponding letters on the paper. Continue until the child’s name is spelled.

Why?
The child learns that his or her name is made up of letters and what those letters look like.


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**Print Knowledge**

**BEGINNING: Book Rules**

What You Need:
- puppet or stuffed animal
- picture book

What You Do:
1. Place the book upside-down where you and your child can see it.
2. Bring out the puppet and introduce it to your child. Explain that the puppet is going to read the book, but will need some help. Encourage your child to interact with the puppet.
3. Begin the activity by having the puppet look for the title, author and illustrator of the book. Since the book is upside-down, the puppet should ask for help from your child. For example, "I want to read this book, but first I need to tell you the title. I can’t find it! The book is upside down. There’s the title. What does ‘title’ mean?"
4. Continue the activity with the puppet asking for your child’s help reading the book. For example:
   - "What should I do first if I want to read the book?"
   - "Where should I start reading?"
   - "Help me turn the page."
   - "Can you help me find the picture of ________?"

Why?
Your child learns about how books work.

**Draw to the Music**

**Emergent Writing**

**BEGINNING: Scribbling/Drawing**

**What You Need:**
- music with different styles and tempos
- paper
- crayons

**What You Do:**
1. Give your child paper and crayons. You can use construction paper or tape large mural paper on the wall or floor.
2. Tell your child to draw when the music is on and stop drawing when the music is off.
3. Turn on the music.
4. Let your child draw for a few minutes. Turn the music off and remind your child to stop drawing.
5. Repeat several times, changing the music after a few minutes to a different style or tempo.

**Why?**
Your child learns to connect arm and hand movements with the marks he or she makes on paper. Your child also practices controlling a crayon.

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**Draw Your Day**

**Emergent Writing**

**BEGINNING: Drawing**

**What You Need:**
- a variety of drawing materials (crayons, markers, pencils)
- paper

**What You Do:**
1. As your child watches you, write at the top of the paper, “Today in school, I will…” or “Today at home, we will…”
2. Ask your child to finish the sentence with a drawing of something that will happen that day in school or at home. You can write your child’s description of the drawing at the bottom of the page.

**Why?**
Your child learns that drawing a picture can tell a story or describe an event.

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**Emergent Writing**

**BEGINNING: Printing Letters**

What You Need:
- sandpaper
- baking sheet with sand spread out on it
- large squares of carpet

What You Do:
1. Stand side by side with your child.
2. With your index finger, “write” the letter that you would like to practice in the air in front of you. This should be done in a large and exaggerated way. Say the name of the letter out loud as you “write” it in the air. Do this several times along with your child.
3. Encourage your child to experiment with “writing” the letter with his or her index finger on sandpaper, in sand on a baking sheet and on carpet. Encourage all of your child’s attempts and help him or her as necessary.

Why?
Your child will practice the muscle movements involved in writing letter shapes, which will help him or her to learn how to write letters.

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**Emergent Writing**

**BEGINNING: Drawing**

What You Need:
- drawing paper
- crayons
- black marker

What You Do:
1. Give your child drawing paper and crayons. Tell your child to draw a picture of an activity that he or she has done recently. For example, the drawing can be about something your child did in school, at home or with a friend.
2. Ask your child to describe to you what he or she has drawn. Write, in clear print with the black marker, what your child says on the picture. Be sure to read the description out loud to your child after it is written.

Why?
Your child learns that pictures and words can be used to describe experiences.
**Walk on a Letter**

*Emergent Writing*

**BEGINNING: Printing Letters**

What You Need:
- masking tape

What You Do:
1. Make a large letter on the floor with the masking tape.
2. Talk with your child about the name of the letter and a word that begins with that letter.
3. Have your child walk or jump on the masking tape in the shape of the letter. He or she can say the name of the letter while walking or jumping.
4. Help your child think of a few other words that start with the letter.

Why?
Your child becomes familiar with the names and shapes of the letters of the alphabet.

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**Be an Expert Listener**

*Linguistic Awareness*

**BEGINNING: Active Listening**

What You Need:
- cassette tape with common sounds recorded on it
- cassette tape player

What You Do:
1. Introduce the activity by talking to your child about the different sounds that are heard in the house and around the neighborhood. Help your child think of a few sounds and discuss them.
2. Encourage your child to close his or her eyes and listen carefully to the sounds that are heard. Talk about the sounds with your child.
3. Try this activity with sounds recorded on a cassette tape or on a “listening walk” outside.

Why?
Your child learns to listen carefully for sounds. This helps him or her to be a more active listener to the sounds in language.
Find the Rhymes

**Linguistic Awareness**

**BEGINNING: Rhyming Words**

**What You Need:**
- pictures of rhyming word pairs

**What You Do:**
1. Begin with any two pairs of pictures displaying rhyming words.
2. Spread the pictures out on the table or floor.
3. Explain to your child that words that rhyme end with the same sounds. Give a few examples, such as fat/rat or sing/ring.
4. Let your child choose one of the pictures. Find the picture that rhymes with the chosen picture and ask your child to determine if the words rhyme. Say the words together to emphasize the rhyming parts of the words. Do the same with the other rhyming pair.
5. Spread out more pictures and have your child find the rhyming pairs.

**Why?**
Your child begins to recognize that some words rhyme because they share common sounds.

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How Many Words?

**Linguistic Awareness**

**BEGINNING: Segmenting Sentences**

**What You Need:**
- several plastic counters (buttons, paperclips, etc.) or other small game pieces

**What You Do:**
1. Give your child a pile of counters. Tell your child that sentences are made up of words, and that you are going to help him or her count the words in some sentences.
2. Say a simple sentence such as, “I have three books.”
3. Help your child put down a counter for each word in the sentence.
4. Say the sentence again, having your child touch a counter for each word that is heard.
5. Continue with a few different sentences, using longer sentences when your child is ready.

**Why?**
Your child learns that sentences are made up of words. He or she also practices listening for small segments of language.
Linguistic Awareness
BEGINNING: Active Listening

What You Need:
• 8-10 empty black film canisters with tops
• noisemakers: e.g., salt, beads, water, rice, metal keys, chalk, pebbles

What You Do:
1. Fill two canisters with the same item, e.g., a key. Do this for a total of eight canisters (four pairs).
2. Model the activity for your child: Shake one canister and describe what it sounds like. Shake another canister and describe it.
3. Repeat until you find two canisters that make the same sound. Describe the sound to your child.
4. Ask your child to try the activity. Encourage him or her to describe what is heard as the canisters are shaken.

Why?
Your child will learn to listen carefully for sounds. This will help your child to be a more active listener to the sounds in language.