

Road to Reading

Supporting all TDSB Grade 1 students to be able to read with confidence, fluency, understanding and enjoyment

Ramping Up Read Alouds!

As students move through the early years, they develop important skills and strategies that help them to become proficient readers. In order to support the development of these skills, educators must create a purposeful, engaging and responsive reading program which includes opportunities for interactive read alouds, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading.

An interactive read aloud is an opportunity for educators to model the use of reading strategies and “think-alouds”, in addition to promoting a love of reading. An interactive read aloud also provides opportunities for students to be engaged in reading books that contain rich language and complex sentence structures.

During an interactive read aloud, it is important for educators to engage students in discussions about the text with a focus on building specific vocabulary, making predictions about what the text will be about, discussing pictures, making inferences, etc. ([A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading, K-3](#)).

One way to support these discussions is through a [See-Think-Wonder](#) thinking routine. As students observe the cover of the text and/or engage in a picture walk, they consider the following questions:

- What do you see?
- What do you think about that?
- What does it make you wonder?

As students engage in this thinking routine in either small or whole group discussions, the educator is encouraged to document student thinking and revisit this documentation following the read aloud. This thinking routine allows for multiple entry points as students can share their thinking in any or all of the three areas.

Please visit The [Learning Exchange](#) to access additional resources and to watch videos of interactive read alouds in action.

“Read aloud[s] and shared reading promotes children’s love of reading.” (Taberski, 2000, p. 82)

Access follow-up questions that can be used with the See-Think-Wonder Thinking Routine - [Read Aloud Follow-Up Questions](#)

Co-Creating an Effective Learning Environment in the Early Years

“A classroom that is functioning successfully as a third teacher will be responsive to the children’s interests, provide opportunities for children to make their thinking visible, and then foster further learning and engagement.” (Fraser, 2012, p. 67)

In the early years, the learning environment is often referred to as “the third teacher”. In order to create a space that functions as a “third teacher”, educators must engage in conversations and make decisions with students around time, space and materials. In doing so, educators gain input from students and co-construct spaces that honour student voice, are meaningful and reflect the multiple identities of the students in the classroom.

The use of rich texts and materials that reflect the diversity of students in the class, provoke critical thinking and foster a sense of belonging.

Early years classroom that is organized, clutter-free and provides children with opportunities to question, explore and collaborate with others.

Considerations for Creating an Effective Learning Environment in the Early Years

How do the materials and resources reflect the multiple identities of students in the classroom?

- How does the space foster a sense of belonging for all students?
- How is student voice honoured within the space?
- How do the space, materials and learning opportunities reflect the belief of children being competent and capable?
- How are materials organized and accessible to all students?
- How are educators reducing visual clutter within the space?
- What opportunities do students have throughout the day to engage in play and inquiry?
- What opportunities do children have to demonstrate their learning in different ways?
- How have educators incorporated literacy materials (e.g., mentor texts, pencils, paper, etc.) into various provocations/invitations for learning throughout the classroom?
- How has the educator incorporated open-ended materials, loose parts and tools for representing mathematical thinking into the space?

- How are classroom references (e.g., alphabet freeze, visual schedule, calming strategies visuals, etc.) co-constructed with students and displayed at student’s eye level?
- How do educators make thinking and learning visible throughout the space?

The 7 Fundamental Principles of Assessment

“The following seven fundamental principles lay the foundation for rich and challenging practice. When these principles are fully understood and observed by all teachers, they will guide the collection of meaningful information that will help inform instructional decisions, promote student engagement, and improve student learning.”

[From Growing Success](#) (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 6) / [Growing Success, The Kindergarten Addendum](#) (Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 4)

To ensure that assessment, evaluation, and reporting are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of learning for all students, teachers use practices and procedures that:

Fundamental Principles	Considerations for Early Years Educators in Kindergarten-Grade 2
are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What opportunities do students have to demonstrate their learning regardless of their socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, learning styles and/or special services? • How are educators recognizing how their own personal biases can affect their assessment practices?
support all students, including those with special education needs, those who are learning the language of instruction (English or French), and those who are First Nation, Métis, or Inuit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are educators taking into account the accommodations, modifications and alternative programs outlined in the IEP for English Language Learners and students with special education needs? • How are educators honouring Indigenous ways of knowing when assessing First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students?
are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals and, as much as possible, to the interests, learning styles and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are factors such as student identity, interests, preferred learning styles and prior knowledge/experiences considered when assessing student thinking and learning?

Fundamental Principles	Considerations for Early Years Educators in Kindergarten-Grade 2
preferences, needs, and experiences of all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What opportunities do educators have to learn about their student’s multiple identities? How does this impact assessment? • How are educators monitoring growth over time in relation to the overall expectations?
are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are educators engaging in conversations with students about their thinking and learning on a regular basis? • How are educators engaging in conversations with families about their child’s strengths, needs and interests on a regular basis? • How are educators building relationships with families to develop a deeper understanding of the whole child?
are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are educators gathering assessment data based on observations, conversations and demonstrations of learning? • How might educators gather assessment data when students engage in rich, open-ended and responsive learning experiences? • What opportunities do students have to demonstrate their thinking and learning in a variety of ways (e.g., oral discussions, dramatic play, building, gestures, etc.) on an ongoing basis?
provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What opportunities do educators have throughout the day to “notice and name the learning” with students? • How and how often are educators providing students with descriptive feedback and how is growth being monitored over time?
develop students’ self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What opportunities do students have to review and reflect upon documentation and engage in discussions with the educator around their learning and setting specific goals? • How are educators “noticing and naming the learning” and co-constructing learning goals during play and inquiry experiences?

Six Threads of Inclusive Design-Early Reading

Six Threads of Inclusive Design - Early Reading

- Considering these reflection questions will support early-years educators as they create an intentional, responsive and engaging literacy program that highlights the strengths of students, families and the community while supporting the achievement of all students.

Responding to Student Voice

- How do classroom texts (fiction and nonfiction), materials and learning experiences reflect the multiple identities of students and honour their lived experiences?
- How do classroom texts (fiction and nonfiction, materials and learning experiences reflect various worldviews and knowledge?
- What opportunities do students have to engage with texts that connect to real world issues?
- What opportunities do students have to choose what, where, when and how they read?
- How is student voice evident within the space?

Designing Instruction

- How are children engaged in a comprehensive reading program which includes read alouds, shared, guided and independent reading?
- How are educators engaging students in intentional small group instruction with groups of children with similar needs?
- How are children engaged in rich, authentic and open-ended learning experiences connected to reading?
- What are the multiple ways that children can demonstrate their thinking and learning (e.g., oral discussions, loose parts, building, gestures, etc.)?

Engaging Parents, Families and Community

- How might you create a welcoming learning environment where families are invited into the space to engage in reading experiences with their child(ren)?
- How might you connect your reading program to real world issues affecting families and the local community?
- How might you communicate each student's progress in reading with families?

Establishing the Environment as the Third Teacher

- How is the learning environment co-constructed with students?

- How are texts being intentionally embedded at learning centres and through play?
- How does the learning environment reflect the belief that children are capable and competent learners?
- How are home languages honoured within the space?

Analyzing Data

- How are you using multiple and varied assessment tools to understand the strengths, needs and interests of students?
- How are you using appropriate reading assessments (e.g., Observation Survey, Running Records, DRA, observations, etc.) to intentionally plan next steps for students and reduce gaps in student achievement?
- How are educators reflecting on their own biases and assumptions and developing an understanding around who is achieving/not achieving?

Building Leadership Capacity

- How might you build leadership skills in reading with students in your classroom?
- How might you work with other early years educators in your school/community to build capacity around effective reading strategies and assessment for, as and of learning in reading?

Additional Resources

Interactive Read Alouds:

- [A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading, Kindergarten to Grade 3](#)
- [The Learning Exchange](#)
- [TDSB Literacy Expected Practice](#)
- [Visible Thinking](#)

The Learning Environment:

- [The Kindergarten Program](#), Pg. 29-35
- [The Environment is a Teacher](#) by Karyn Callaghan
- [Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from research about young children-Learning Environments](#)
- [Capacity Building Series: The Third Teacher](#)
- [Self-Regulation Classroom Environment Checklist](#) (MEHRIT Centre)

Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting:

- [Growing Success-Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools, Grades 1 to 12](#)
- [Growing Success-The Kindergarten Addendum, 2016](#)
- [Assessment on EduGAINS](#) (videos, articles and guides related to assessment)

Inclusive Design:

- [Inclusive Design: Students, Families and Staff Working Together](#)