



HAWAI'I STATE



LITERACY PLAN 2024

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

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*‘Ike i ke au nui, me ke au iki.
Know the big currents and the little currents.
– ‘Olelo no’eau # 325*

The Hawai‘i State Early Literacy Plan is grounded in the following philosophical principles, which are underpinned by both practical and scientific knowledge about high-quality early childhood literacy education.

Philosophy of Children, Families, and Place

Children have a powerful, central hold on our collective work. Children must be the first priority in all early literacy practices, with a critical focus on each individual child as unique members of their classroom, home, and sociocultural communities. Therefore, children have the right to: (a) develop at their own pace, (b) experience individualized, responsive instruction that considers their needs and interests, and (c) enjoy genuine appreciation and consideration for their individual identities.

Children have strong grips on the hearts of their families and communities. Children’s families must be considered their first teachers, and early literacy practices must uplift the central role that families play in children’s lives. Therefore, children have the right to: (a) socially, culturally, and linguistically just literacy experiences, (b) inclusive literacy classrooms, practices, texts, and attitudes, (c) opportunities to experience diverse perspectives, ideas, and ways of knowing through literacy, and (d) literacy experiences that create opportunities for family engagement and participation.

Philosophy of Literacy and Language Learning

All children, at all developmental stages, are ready for rich, varied language and literacy experiences. Though they are small, their capacity to learn is large, and teachers have the responsibility to examine their beliefs about oral language and literacy instruction in order to best serve each child. Therefore, children have the right to: (a) respectful, developmentally appropriate assessments that provide information about strengths and next steps in language and literacy, (b) opportunities to learn needed skills/knowledge without judgment, and (c) access to extended resources and supports based on individual strengths and needs.

Small literacy events about small literacy skills build up to long-term literacy outcomes for young children. We know that early literacy is composed of multiple skill and knowledge strands, and that each deserves attention in order for children to grow; we also know that small bursts of contextualized, play-driven teaching is most meaningful for big literacy learning. Therefore, children have the right to: (a) developmentally appropriate language

EXPERIENCING PICTURE BOOKS TOGETHER

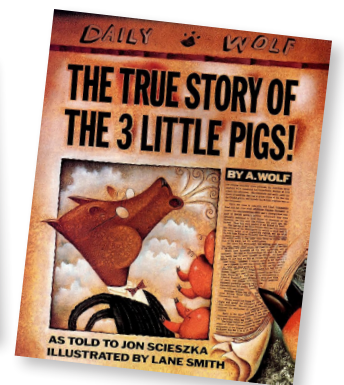
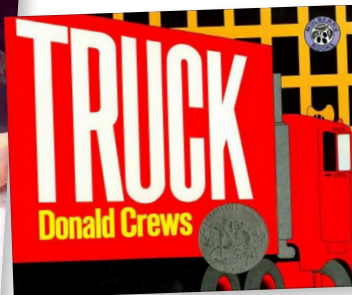
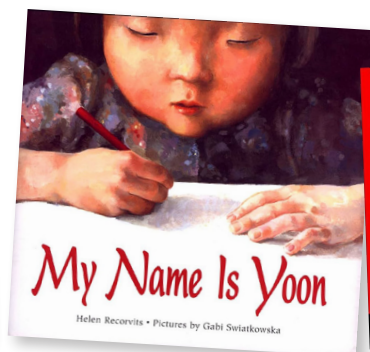
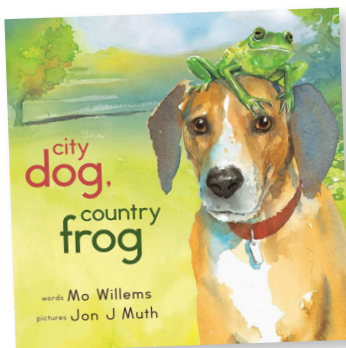
Author: Coleen Momohara

Picture books, at first, are novel objects for young children that gradually evolve into intriguing forms of print and art media. As such, quality picture books capture children’s curiosity and imaginations, inviting them to play with words, ideas, information, and stories created by authors and illustrators.

Reading aloud to and with children and engaging together during the read-aloud is highly valued when promoting language and literacy learning. The focus is generally on its value for young children. Yet there is something magical about picture books when children experience with adults the interactive processes embedded within read-alouds and conversations. Reading (and re-reading) picture books with young children allows adults to

A Shared Literature Experience

When children and adults are “present” in the moment with each other, they are sharing the experience of interacting with the contents of the picture book (e.g., the words and pictures; the story line and its characters; information, big ideas, and key details within the words



personally connect with literature in ways that move beyond the reading aloud of words. Quality picture books embody literature that speaks to all, not only to young children. They are not only venues for language and literacy learning; literature paints a social-cultural context for children and adults to situate themselves within as they engage in a shared literary experience.

and illustrations). Their conversations extend beyond the contents to the author’s and illustrator’s purpose, craft, and perspectives. They flow through interchanges sharing their connections, interpretations, and insights. In addition to individually connecting with picture books, they are connecting with each other through picture books. These shared experiences invite children and adults

to co-construct their understanding and appreciation for the literature that lives within the picture books, especially through ongoing re-readings. They are able to look at the text and illustrations through each other's eyes thereby expanding their own understanding and perspective. Although their individual backgrounds, experiences, and presence shape the way they experience the literature, their collective experience influences their individual experiences as they make sense of what they are reading.

Of importance within these literature experiences is sharing their thinking with each other – how they are trying to make sense of things, what resonates with them, what they are being led to think, what they notice and how it influences their thinking, and what they are learning. The opportunities to take part in and contribute to such rich and meaningful conversations position children to not only engage in back-and-forth dialogue with adults (while also building their language skills), but to collaborate in revisiting and reflecting on the literary experience as they move towards a shared understanding of the picture book. Together, they put forth relevant information, respond to and build on what each other says, examine similarities and differences, and analyze and synthesize ideas. They both, children and adults alike, experience gradual changes and shifts in what and how they think.

Children and Adults as Collaborators

Thinking and learning together creates spaces for children to share their observations, wonderings, and meaning-making strategies. Children's strengths as thinkers with their unique experiential background and expertise are recognized. This enables children to see

themselves as literary artists – storytellers; holders and translators of knowledge; readers and writers of literature. Furthermore, by infusing their ideas, perspectives, and insights into the ebb and flow of the experience, children make possible what adults could not have encountered on their own. Children's participation changes the experience for adults; their voices matter.

Through others we become ourselves – Lev Vygotsky

For adults, sharing in the experience with children can be both humbling and empowering as they realize how amazing children's capacities are and recognize their own capacities to provoke and nurture learning opportunities for children through quality interactions. Drawn into these processes as models and facilitators, adults reap the benefits of learning more about children as individuals as well as furthering language and literacy learning for children. Adults model, provide specific feedback, pause and listen attentively, paraphrase, ask thoughtful and thought-provoking questions, and engage in multiple perspective thinking. They share in curiosities, including their curiosity behind children's thinking. They inspire through their words and actions, while appreciating what children bring into the experience.

At the core of language and literacy learning are the human connections that are formed through respectful, responsive, reciprocal relationships, see Figure. Fond memories of stories and books emerge through the meaningful and nurturing interactions surrounding the experiences with literacy and books. They define the quality and content of child-adult relationships with regard to

literacy. They provide children with the “feel” and “culture” of reading. Together, children and adults create shared experiences as they live within the pages of quality picture books. Picture books are the venue; engaging together within, around, and beyond the literature

through multiple readings and interactive conversations enable children and adults to learn and grow from, with, and through each other.

