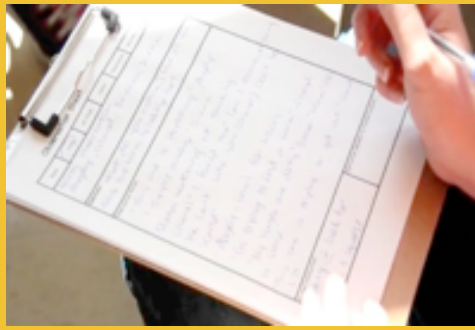




K for ME

(Focus on K2)



Department of
Early Childhood

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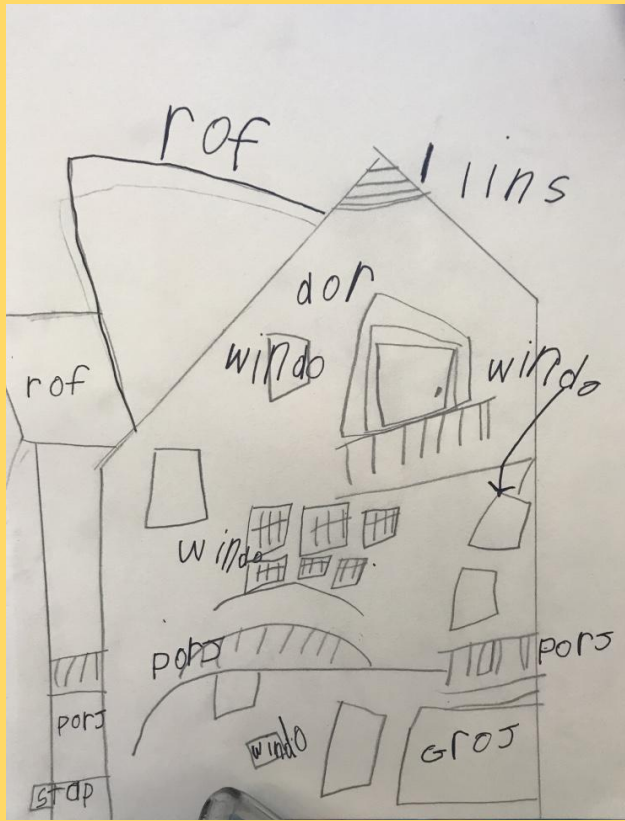
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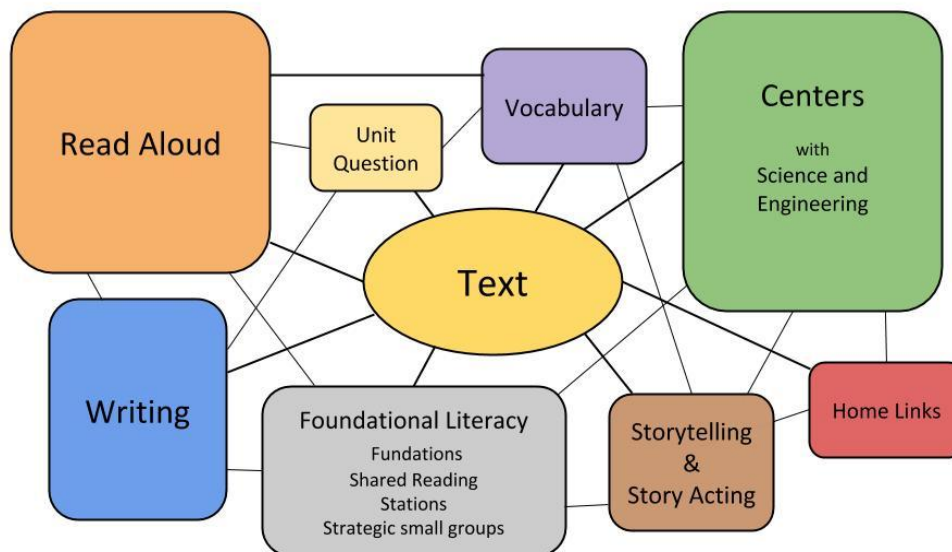
Part 1: Design

Design and Structure

The *Focus on K2* curriculum has evolved over several years, integrating pedagogy that supports the development and the agency of the whole child, research-based instructional practices, alignment to Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Common Core shifts, and the expertise of Boston Public Schools teachers. Five and six year old children are full of wonder, full of stories, ready to explore, to practice and take on new skills. Each of the activities of *Focus on K2 (FK2)* aim to support their developing independence as learners and citizens as well as to foster connectedness and collaboration with others.

In the design of *FK2*, all of the parts work in concert with each other. The components that support children’s learning and development in literacy and language, science and engineering, social studies, arts, and the social-emotional realms reference each other and connect to the topics of study. When visitors walk into an *FK2* classroom, it is immediately apparent what the children are learning about and learning to do; the curriculum is alive on the walls and shelves, in the meeting area and work spaces.

Text acts as the animating feature of each unit of study and each day’s experiences.



Fiction and informational texts promote conceptual learning, suggest vocabulary for further study, inspire work in Centers, and interact with writing lessons, all exploring the Big Ideas. Differently said, the learning is driven by content (the units of study), and all experiences are designed to reinforce that knowledge building.

Before and beyond decoding, **learning to read** requires that children understand contexts, relationships, experiences, environments, and feelings. It relies on our ability to connect what we find on the page to meaning in real life. In kindergarten, children build foundational conceptual understanding of how letters and sounds work at the same time that they interact with and dig deeply into texts more comprehensively. Of course, learning to read is a mandate of social justice: every child must have access to the world made possible through reading. In Kindergarten, through **Read Alouds** and **foundational literacy** lessons and practice, children continue to develop the tools required to successfully make meaning of printed text, including expanding their content knowledge and vocabularies.

Within each unit of study are distinct **Writing** units, with focus on a particular genre and contributing to children’s development, expansion, and communication of ideas.

Social Studies content and practice standards are embedded throughout the curriculum and over the course of the year.

Science and Engineering learning happens through projects during Centers, linked to and supported by STEM Investigations.

Mathematics teaching retains a separate block in the kindergarten day.

Focus on K2 and K for ME

Why a Curriculum for Kindergarten in Maine?

We are continually learning from other successful public school settings. One of these accomplished systems is that of the Boston Public Schools (BPS). The BPS Department of Early Childhood was created in 2005, operating on the premise that by providing early childhood classrooms with a scoped and sequenced curriculum, along with coaching and professional development for teachers, positive child outcomes would result. Studies continue to show that children who attend BPS Preschool classrooms outperform their 3rd and 5th grade peers who do not attend BPS Preschool.

The Early Learning Team at the Maine Department of Education submitted a grant proposal to the US Department of Education and were funded to adapt Boston’s *Focus on K1* curriculum (preschool) to fit Maine’s needs. This launch allowed districts across the state to collaborate and implement a fully integrated curriculum. PreK educators across multiple levels worked together to revise and create a curriculum with activities and lessons that address the individual needs of Maine’s children and align with Maine’s Early Learning & Development Standards (MELDS). This

adapted Preschool Curriculum is known as *PreK for ME*. Building on this work, Kindergarten teachers piloted Boston’s Kindergarten curriculum in the Fall of 2019. In the summer of 2020, a group of pilot teachers began some revision work of *K for ME*, to be further developed in the years to follow.

The curriculum will be referred to as *K for ME* and *Focus on K2* interchangeably; and that is not to denounce Boston’s *Focus on K2*. Their work is undeniably remarkable and has inspired us to provide this level playing field for our young learners. The *Focus on K2* writers and contributors are affecting the lives of not only the children of Boston, but the children within the state of Maine.

Units of Study

Four in-depth units of study structure *K for ME*. Each study builds on the concepts and skills developed in previous studies, allowing children to deepen their understanding and apply skills and concepts with creativity and innovation.

The first six weeks of school are devoted to building **Our Community**. This is a time for establishing a supportive community of learners, building relationships, fostering peer collaboration, and becoming confident with the routines and expectations of kindergarten while experiencing how individual needs can be met in a group setting. The lens of community and the concept of citizenship introduced in this unit permeate the year, with children first learning what it means to be a citizen in their own classroom communities and gradually applying this idea to broader contexts.

From October to January, **Animals and Habitats** focuses on caring for living things and learning about animals through investigation and research. Children engage in an author/illustrator study and in collaborative projects, and explore concepts of care and safety, responsibility, courage, and respect. Children embark, in turn, on three distinct studies: fish and frogs, owls, and wolves—animals that live both close by and far away. The unit ends with children and teachers organizing a Showcase of Learning that includes artifacts of learning from across the full 10 weeks of the unit.

Beginning in late January, **Construction** invites children to make physical science connections through construction of structures, measurement and comparison, and experimentation with materials. Children are introduced to a design process that involves envisioning, researching, planning, executing, and revising. The definition of construction expands to include constructing

buildings, songs, dances, plays, and stories. The unit culminates in the *Our Town* project, with children working as a class to build a model that answers a question: *How can we make our Town a more fair and interesting place for children?*

From April through June, **Our Earth** explores the natural world through investigations and research of the earth's properties and systems. Concepts of sustainability, urban renewal, economics, healthy lifestyles, authority, honesty, respect, courage, responsibility, and stewardship frame discussions and projects. The unit and year culminate in a project through which children choose a sustainable practice and write to persuade a local audience to adopt this practice.

Interdisciplinary Learning

Most obviously, reading standards are addressed through Read Aloud and Stations, writing standards are addressed through Writing lessons, science and engineering standards are addressed through Science and Engineering projects, and so on. However, teaching and learning in each content area are not siloed. Attention is paid to all the disciplines across components in order to promote connections and deeper thinking and to match learning to our integrated experiences interpreting, communicating in, and taking action in the real world. For this reason, it is critical that paper and pencils and unit texts are equally present across Centers and Stations. The social and emotional learning standards are at play in Centers, during Thinking and Feedback and Storytelling and Story Acting, in Read Aloud lessons, and in morning meeting routines. Communicating through drawing/writing is a critical component of science learning; writing requires reading; and children consider interpersonal relationships and characteristics of self through books. Both Centers and Storytelling and Story Acting are critical times for children to consolidate and communicate about their developing ideas across contents.

As defined by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, arts integration is “an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both.” For example, in Unit 3: Construction, children simultaneously explore engineering, qualities of cities and social justice (social studies), creating two- and three-dimensional works of art (visual arts), and passionate exchange and expression of ideas (speaking and listening). Regularly throughout the year, using artwork to think about the topic of study supports this toggling between the arts and other content areas, expanding both.

Routines

Each component of the day and all activities are bolstered by routines that keep learning moving smoothly. Some routines, such as Thinking and Feedback, guide whole group conversations and connect one part of the day and learning to another, and should be followed with particular care. Other routines, such as Think, Pair, Share, are quick, specific opportunities to distribute participation, practice collaborative talk, move around a bit, and hear multiple perspectives. Of course, teachers have established routines according to their school and classroom cultures and personal teaching styles; the routines suggested here are meant to support purposeful and productive work and can be seen as a resource. Please see the Routines document for specific information and guidance on *K for ME* routines.

Social-Emotional Learning

With the goal of developing the whole child, *K for ME* is grounded in practices that naturally support social emotional learning (SEL). SEL is intentionally embedded into the components, routines, and content of *K for ME* to support children in building cognitive regulation, understanding their emotional processes, and strengthening social/interpersonal skills¹. With positive relationships, children are more likely to be successful learners.

Centers time is a primary opportunity for SEL. During Centers, children are provided many choices to express their ideas: with whom to work, with which materials, and for how long. The opportunity to explore and manipulate various media allows children to practice cognitive flexibility, self-regulation, and emotional expression.

In creating a predictable routine, children learn to trust the learning environment. Children experience ownership of their space and are empowered to self-regulate. With routines that promote dialogue, children learn not only to articulate their ideas, but to listen thoughtfully and ask questions. During Thinking and Feedback sessions, children hear the ideas of others, provide suggestions, and challenge thinking, thus, developing practice with self-regulation and social and emotional awareness.

In any group of vibrant young learners, some social discord is inevitable. Part of building a community of learners is integrating these conflicts or dilemmas into class dialogue. Seize these

¹ Jones, S., Brush, K., Bailey, R., Brion-Meisels, G., McIntyre, J., Kahn, J., Nelson, B., & Stickle, L. (2017). "Navigating from the inside out: Looking inside & across 25 Leading SEL Programs: A practical resource for schools and OST providers." Harvard Graduate School of Education, 12-20.

learning opportunities, as they further develop children’s prosocial behavior, building empathy and perspective taking. Engage in small- or whole-group meetings where problems are presented and solutions are suggested by both adults and children. Rely on routines and discussion prompts to ensure that these conversations are productivity. Allow emerging ideas to inform classroom agreements, revising them as needed throughout the year.

Any SEL curriculum already at work in schools will buoy and be buoyed by the SEL children are already doing throughout *K for ME*. In addition, a list of community meeting resources is available to extend this learning.

Accessibility

K for ME is designed with the intention of supporting the learning of every child in our schools. Throughout the *K for ME* experience, children are telling their own stories, bringing the cultural and linguistic resources of their home and community lives into the classroom— enriching the learning community while asserting their most complete selves. Their stories appear in their writing, their storytelling, their works of art, and their conversations. Home Links ask families directly to participate in the life and learning of kindergarten. Every asset a child brings to school must be not only recognized but amplified. Every challenge a child faces is an opportunity for teachers, classmates, and the school community to devise on-ramps for success.

School populations and identities are unique. The curriculum is written with diverse learners in mind, including English Learners, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, and early childhood practices (NAEYC). The amount and depth of conversation embedded in *K for ME* will be challenging for some children—and we know that it is through supported conversation that both language *and* conceptual understanding develop.

Teachers are experts in getting to know the children in front of them and coming up with new approaches to meet those children in response to their resources and needs. Schools adapt and develop a variety of frameworks to shape the habits of learning in their buildings. The early childhood team of curriculum developers and coaches work enthusiastically with teachers and instructional leaders to illuminate the possibilities of this curriculum within the particular contexts of their schools.

A final note

This curriculum is presented as a vehicle for vigorous and joyful learning. The suggested scripts, lessons, and activities offer a roadmap for enrichment. In a classroom in which *K for ME* is enlivened with thoughtful, intentional, and creative teaching, children spend their days developing foundational skills toward reading and also “reading” works of art, the natural world, their own emotions and the social environment, mathematical scenarios and symbols, and engineering challenges. This comprehensive “reading” develops children’s capacity as citizens. Still, for children to become people full of confidence and agency, much more needs to happen outside these pages. When teachers talk to each other about their practice and about children’s work, when school leaders embrace a cohesive and celebratory approach to teaching and learning, when the topics we present to children are meaningful to them, when families are included, school can be transformative.

Note to Additional Supporting Adults

During the year, children explore four units of study: **Community, Animals and Habitats, Construction, and Our Earth**. Each day children learn by listening to and discussing books, telling and acting out stories, and writing and drawing. During Centers children learn through **play**. For example, as they build with different kinds of blocks, they learn about shapes and counting (math) and how to make stable buildings (science). As they pretend in Dramatization, they use their imaginations to become different characters and create scenes from the Read Aloud books; they also use new information to construct habitats for different animals and create a dance studio. As they paint in the Art Studio, they carefully use brushes to make lines (fine motor skills), they mix paints to make new colors (science), and they describe their artwork (language development).

In all these activities children practice asking questions, making choices, working together, and solving problems. After Centers, the learning continues as children talk about their ideas, work, and discoveries during the Thinking and Feedback meeting.

You can help children learn during **Centers** in the following important ways.

1. Ask children questions about what they are working on.

Make these questions “open ended”—questions that do not have a single or simple answer.

What is your plan?

How can you work together? How will you decide who does what part?

Tell me about what you are trying to do?

What’s your next step?

What materials will you need/use?

What inspired you?

How will you represent that?

Please tell me about your block structure/painting/drawing/etc. What story is happening here?

Where did you get this idea?

What research do you need to do to continue working?

2. Observe and take notes about what children are doing.

Taking notes and recording what you notice the children doing is very important. Share these notes with other teaching adults. When children ask why you are taking notes, you can tell them that you are interested in their ideas and that you want to remember their work and share it with others. This communicates to the children that their work is important and helps them return to their work later; this extends their learning.

3. Take photographs and videos of what children are making and doing.

A cell phone is a good tool for taking pictures and video that are easy to share. Like notes, photographs and video help children remember what they have done and allows for children's work to be easily shared with families.

4. Write down what children say about their work.

Ask, "What's going on here?" Carry a clipboard and use sticky notes, a class list, separate pieces of paper, or whatever system is set up in your classroom.

5. Bring literacy into all kinds of activities.

When children construct with blocks, suggest they label their buildings or parts of buildings so others will know what kind of buildings they are. When children pretend to cook or go shopping, provide them with paper and writing tools to write shopping lists.

6. Provide support when children ask for help, but allow them to solve their own problems.

For example, if a child is upset because her block tower keeps falling over, rather than fixing the building, you can ask, "How do you think you can make the tower stronger?" Or say, "Mayra builds lots of towers. Maybe you can ask her for an idea of how to keep your tower from falling down."

7. During Thinking and Feedback, you can help the children learn by taking notes about children's suggestions and inspirations that can be shared back with them for the purpose of revisions. You can also participate in the meeting by offering an observation, question, or suggestion. Make sure, though, that children do most of the talking during the Thinking and Feedback meeting.

You can help the children learn any time children are **writing**.

- Ask children to explain their pictures and writing, and communicate that all ideas they put on paper are important ones.
- Honor children’s beginning attempts at writing, encouraging them to try writing letters and words and celebrating their efforts. It is important to not cross out or erase their writing or judge their mistakes harshly.

Children learn best when they are part of a caring classroom community where everyone is interested in everyone else’s ideas. You are part of this community. You bring life experiences and expertise that contribute to children’s understanding of their world. When you listen carefully to children’s ideas and share your own, you are building the classroom community that helps children grow and learn.

Take time to read the *K for ME* guide (particularly the Centers activities) to see how you can help children learn.

Setting Up the Classroom

The *K for ME* classroom is lively, serious, and multi-layered. In considering the particular needs of the children in any classroom, teachers design spaces and arrange furniture in ways that support intellectual exploration, physical stamina, and interaction. Generally, classroom areas are well-defined, materials are organized and accessible, text is everywhere, and children's work is visible. This document can help guide classroom set up for the kinds of learning that *K for ME* promotes.

Furniture and Arrangement

- **The meeting area** comfortably accommodates the whole group, with enough space for children to arrange themselves in different configurations (circle, pairs, everyone facing forward). This space will be used for Read Aloud (viewing books, slides, or images), Thinking and Feedback (viewing classmates' work and making eye contact in discussion), Story Acting (audience at the perimeter and action in the center), and other whole group lessons (Writing, Foundations, and Shared Reading).
- In the whole group meeting area, a projector is set up for regular use.
- **Centers** are defined by shelving and furniture. (see below)
- The teacher has a space for working with small groups from which the rest of the classroom is visible.
- Various kinds of seating and work surfaces are provided throughout the classroom, including standing, sitting, and lying on the floor with clipboards.
- Shelves are available for storing tools and materials within easy reach of children.
- Clear spaces exist for children to store their work, completed and in progress.
- Work spaces are uncluttered.
- Book shelves are full, inviting, and organized. Titles are relevant and rotate regularly.
- A small, quiet getaway space is provided and open for all children to use as needed.

Walls

- Children's identities are reflected and celebrated.
- In the meeting area, at least one large easel or wall space is clear and visible by the whole group for jointly constructing writing, projecting images, and other activities requiring whole group focus.
- The topic of study is apparent: about one-third of the wall space is reserved for unit-specific work such as images, unit question chart, and other anchor charts. Children's work dominates.




- Visuals support and offer reminders of classroom systems, routines, and schedules.
- Walls are uncluttered. Extraneous or out-of-date charts are removed and stored for later use.

Children’s supplies

- Clear systems are in place for children to manage their own supplies, including Stations and other folders, notebooks and journals, writing and drawing tools.

Component-by-Component Considerations
Vocabulary

Vocabulary cards with images are provided for each Read Aloud text and should be visible on a chart or pocket chart so that they are accessible for adult use during the Read Aloud and the Vocabulary lessons and for children’s use throughout the day, especially in Stations and Centers. Sliding the cards into sheet protectors will help them stay in good shape and differentiate them from other words, such as high frequency (or “trick”) words. Additionally, a chart with the Grow a Definition Routine should be kept up in the classroom for ongoing use. The Grow a Definition Routine images and educator prompts are provided as slides, but can be printed by educators if desired.

Grow a Definition	
1. Learn the new word and its meaning. Listen to and say the sounds in the word.	
2. Practice the new word by talking about an image.	
3. Say the new word and clap its syllables.	

Read Aloud Lessons

In setting up the classroom, the following will make Read Alouds an enjoyable and productive experience.

- a projector and screen
- whiteboard space
- chart paper
- drawing and writing paper and tools

Children's seating should be arranged so that they can see the text and attend to whole group discussions, as well as interact with partners.

- Children must be able to see the text: projected on a screen, written on a chart, or held by the teacher.
- Many lessons call for writing a question, conversation prompt, or sentence starter on the whiteboard. These can be written on chart paper or projected, as well.

Centers

Arrangement of the centers, as well as arrangement of materials within each Center, are critical to children's productive engagement and flow of movement. The following are important considerations for setting up each area. The centers will require ongoing preparation, replenishment, and reflection to sustain the learning progression over the course of the year.

Art Studio

- Furnishings:
 - easel
 - two tables: a smaller one for use as a work station (e.g., color mixing), and a larger one for individual and collaborative projects
 - shelves for materials: at least two shelves, depending on the size of the space
- Basic materials:
 - clear plastic containers for holding materials (such as recycled containers)
 - paper of different sizes, shapes, colors and weights
 - crayons of various thicknesses
 - colored pencils
 - pencils
 - markers
 - thin black markers or pens

Introduction: Classroom Environment

- glue (sticks and liquid)
- tissue paper
- small containers with lids for mixing paint
- tempera paint, including various shades of brown for skin colors
- watercolor paint
- paintbrushes of various types and sizes
- recycled and natural materials such as tiles, fabric pieces, buttons, toilet paper rolls, lids, rocks, shells (see the Beautiful Stuff Guide)
- scissors
- tape
- clay and clay tools
- playdough

Blocks

- Furnishings:
 - rug, if space permits, separate from that in the meeting area
 - shelves to store blocks and props
- Basic materials:
 - variety of blocks: unit, hollow, Kapla, foam, nature blocks
 - tiles, felt squares, and other recycled materials from the Art Studio
 - props such as animals, vehicles, road signs, people
 - materials for constructing ramps, such as wood molding
 - writing basket stocked with clipboards, paper, writing and drawing tools, tape, index cards, measuring tape, scrap paper and/or sticky notes
 - books related to the topic of study

Dramatization

- Furnishings:
 - child-sized table and chairs
 - low shelves to store props and to define the space
 - full-length mirror
- Basic materials:
 - fabric and scarves of various lengths and textures
 - simple fasteners, such as clothespins, napkin rings, or food clips
 - materials to make props, such as paper and construction paper, pencils, markers, tape, cardboard boxes (from the Art Studio and/or Writing and Drawing Center)
 - props related to topics of study, provided or child-made

Library & Listening

- Furnishings:
 - soft pillows, rugs, small couch or comfortable chairs
 - shelves and baskets for displaying books
 - technology for listening to audio books
- Basic materials:
 - Books related to the topic of study and of other interest: literature and informational texts, alphabet and counting books, and class-made books
 - writing basket or caddy stocked with clipboards, paper, writing and drawing tools, scrap paper and/or sticky notes for research
 - pointers for shared reading of poems and songs on charts
 - audio books

Discovery Table

- Furnishings:
 - sensory table(s), or tubs to use on top of tables
- Basic materials:
 - sand
 - water
 - buckets, shovels, water wheel, strainer, small containers

Science & Engineering

Consider a space that is easily accessible to water and not on a carpeted floor, if possible.

- Furnishings:
 - table and chairs
 - shelf
- Basic materials:
 - storage baskets, bins, or other containers
 - tubs
 - clipboards
 - paper
 - writing and drawing tools
 - science journals, 1 for each child
 - natural materials
 - magnifiers
 - chart paper
 - live animals (e.g. fish) and/or plants

Writing & Drawing

- Furnishings:
 - table and chairs
 - shelf
- Basic materials:
 - variety of writing and drawing tools (pencils, markers, colored pencils, crayons)
 - variety of papers (lined, unlined, different sizes, colors)
 - simple blank books
 - envelopes
 - tape and glue sticks
 - scissors
 - hole punches
 - clipboards
 - children’s names on a list or on cards on a ring
 - alphabet letter charts
 - “reuse tray” for paper

Writing

At the beginning of the year, the class begins a Why We Write chart, keeping track of different purposes for writing. While learning about each genre, the class creates a chart to record genre features. Space for two charts should be available at all times. Genre charts should remain up throughout the unit and preserved for use in revisiting genres later in the year.

Sufficient and varied writing materials should be available to children at all times, including pencils, colored pencils, and crayons. Children should have a place to keep their writing folders and notebooks, and access to different types of paper.

Clear systems serve to:

- allow access to mentor texts and jointly constructed texts;
- track who has shared work;
- assign writing partners;
- support children in choosing where to write, how to get writing tools, how to take out and put away folders, etc.;
- indicate pencils that need sharpening;
- support use of writing notebooks (e.g. how to store notebooks and keep track of pages).

Stations

- A designated bin for each station includes any needed visual directions, sheets, writing and drawing tools, and other supplies children need to accomplish the intended tasks. Papers are organized in folders. Bins are labeled.
- Systems for organizing work are apparent and easily managed by children.

Reading

- Children have access to a wide variety of texts that are of interest to them, range in complexity, and are culturally and linguistically sustaining.
- Children have comfortable places to sit, with partners or alone.

Pocket Chart

- The pocket chart accommodates sentence strips and individual word cards.
- Pointers, sticky notes, highlighter tape or transparent, colored squares allow children to work with the text.
- A tray or other surface allows children to set text aside when not in use.

Listening and Speaking

- The Listening and Speaking bin for **Talk Time** includes rotating images and conversation prompts.
- Beginning in Unit 1, Week 4, children listen and respond to recorded texts. Appropriate technology that children can operate independently is in place, with visual cues for its use.

Writing

- A variety of writing and drawing tools are readily available from which children can choose.
- Writing sheets specific to each week's prompts are well organized.

Word Work

- Foundations charts, letter/sound cards, and other resources are visible.
- Foundations materials, such as dry erase boards, markers and letter tiles, are well organized and in good condition.
- Word Work activity sheets specific to each week's tasks are clearly accessible.
- Previous weeks' activities and materials are clearly labeled and accessible for children who continue to work with them.
- Extraneous materials are removed.

Notes for our classroom

Routines

Unit Question Chart

Used during Read Aloud on Day 5 of each week and incidentally throughout the week; also used for a unit synthesis lesson in the last week of each unit.

This routine keeps the development of conceptual understanding at the center of classroom life. Teachers and children create and contribute to a fluid document that captures connected ideas throughout each unit.

Materials:

- chart paper, 1 sheet
- markers

Process:

On Day 5 of Week 1, create a chart that will be used during Read Aloud and then posted in a place and at a height accessible to children. Across the top, write the overarching question of the unit. Below this, leave a large space for ideas that emerge over the course of each week. Use the same chart across weeks until the space becomes filled, adding new pages as needed. Make sure to save all charts for reference.

Launch the chart on Week 1, Day 5: read the Unit Question and model adding one idea to the chart. At the end of Read Aloud on Day 5 of subsequent weeks, facilitate a short discussion that includes revisiting ideas written on the chart, adding new ideas suggested by children, and marking sentences to identify themes that emerge (perhaps with color-coded dots or other symbols). These themes will be important on the final day of the unit, when the class engages in a Unit Synthesis lesson.

Remind children that over the course of the unit everyone will be looking for and adding ideas that connect to the question; these ideas might also connect to each other. Ideas will emerge from Read Alouds, community meetings, Centers, recess, and other instructional components.

Introduction: Routines

As the year progresses, children might be invited to do some of the writing. See example below.

What does it mean to be a member of a community?

- *People in communities care about each other.*
 - *People in communities listen to each other.*
 - *Community members solve problems together.*
 - *In communities, people can make decisions together.*
- A community can be a family or a school or a city or another group.*
- *Community members help each other get what they need.*

Thinking and Feedback

Used several times per week at the end of Centers time

Thinking and Feedback is a time for children to learn from and with one another as they reflect on their work. These conversations help to build a supportive, intellectually engaged, and dynamic classroom community. Through the process of observing, listening, and asking and answering provocative questions, children deepen their understanding of content. As they consider works in progress, children generate new ideas, integrate different perspectives, contribute to each other's learning, and build group knowledge. Finally, the Thinking and Feedback routine encourages children to create excellent products.

Materials:

- Thinking and Feedback visuals
- children's work
- paper or notebook to record children's ideas

Process:

During Centers time, identify one piece of work from a child or group of children to bring to the Thinking and Feedback meeting. When selecting work, consider:

- a discovery that might inspire others;
- a child who is struggling with her work and who would benefit from feedback;

Introduction: Routines

- a piece of work that might contribute to furthering the topic of study;
- a child experiencing success whose expertise is not typically recognized by peers;
- a novel process that can help others proceed with their work.

After Centers, the class sits in a circle with the presenting child(ren) at the focal point. Place the work or artifact in the center of the circle or on an easel so everyone can see it.

During the first Thinking and Feedback meeting, establish some guidelines for giving and receiving feedback. These might include:

- Feedback must be kind, specific, and helpful.
- Feedback should be received as caring and constructive.
- Those who created the piece of work choose whether to follow up on suggestions.

Use the Thinking and Feedback protocol to structure the conversation. Hold up the visuals to move through each step.

Looking	The whole group silently looks at the work.
Noticing	Children describe what they see in the work; presenter(s) remains quiet.
Listening	Presenting child(ren) describes the work and might describe a dilemma and/or request specific feedback from the group.
Wondering	Children ask questions to the presenter(s) about the work.
Suggesting and Inspiring	Children provide feedback and share how the work gives them new ideas.

Take notes on the feedback provided (especially during the ‘Suggesting and Inspiring’ phase).

The following day as children plan for their work in Studios, remind them of important feedback offered during the previous Thinking and Feedback session.

Guidelines:

- Highlight only one activity or piece of work each day to allow for deep conversation.
- Invite groups, rather than individuals, to share collaborative work, when possible.
- Focus on works in progress so that feedback can be used to revise or continue work.
- Invite adults to model how to provide kind, helpful, and specific feedback, but allow the majority of feedback to come from children. Modeling can also include asking

Introduction: Routines

open-ended questions during the ‘Wondering’ phase of the protocol (How did you construct that? Why did you choose to use those materials?).

- Allow children to lead the protocol as much as possible, with a gradual release of responsibility for facilitation as the year progresses.
- Use systems for equitable participation during the meeting.
- Use documentation and artifacts to ground the conversation. For projects that cannot easily be moved to the meeting area (such as a block structure or mural), gather in that area of the classroom or take a picture to bring to the group.
- All children should have opportunities to share work over time. Consider the particular capacities and needs of the children when devising a system for keeping track of who has shared.

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

Used occasionally, with images as texts during Read Aloud, beginning in Unit 2

VTS began in art settings and has been adopted by educators for its possibilities in supporting language and vocabulary development, analytical thinking, perspective taking, conceptual comprehension, meaningful class discussions, and writing. In short, VTS involves thinking, looking, and sharing ideas. To learn about Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), please watch:

[Introduction to VTS](https://vimeo.com/9827533) (Boston, 7 minutes) (<https://vimeo.com/9827533>)

[SPS teachers apply VTS to art and beyond](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rw65hjgeWA) (3.5 minutes)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rw65hjgeWA>)

[Philip Yenawine, developer of VTS](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnyfHTJVzh8) (22 minutes); demonstration at the halfway point (at 12:45), explanations of step (at 20:45)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnyfHTJVzh8>)

Materials:

- an image to look at
- image projection

Process:

Project the image. This will best allow all participants to look carefully at the image together. If projection is not possible, make sure each pair of children has a printed copy to look at closely. Note that in doing it this way, it will be more difficult to establish shared reference points as children describe what they see.

The discussion is facilitated by asking three questions, one at a time:

Introduction: Routines

What's going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What more can we find?

At each step, *listen* to what the children say. Then, *paraphrase* what children say to make sure that all understand their intended meaning. Offer precise vocabulary to allow children to feel that they are being helped to express their important ideas (rather than being corrected). Synthesize children's ideas.

Draw attention to information that is provided with an image (artist, title, caption, context) in order to further the discussion. Be sure not to simply confirm or counter children's impressions. That is, follow an observation with, *You see writing; let's see what it tells us*. This is very different from, *You said this is what is happening now, but look: the date is one hundred years ago*. The goal here is not to finish the discussion with a definitive, shared interpretation of the image, but rather to surface as many ideas as possible toward possible new paths of understanding.

Pair, Small Group, and Whole Group Discussion Routines

Throughout the day, children benefit from engaging in various discussion routines, taking opportunities to think quietly, to talk to just one person at a time or to the entire group, and to communicate non-verbally. Using the following discussion routines helps to promote equity in the classroom by ensuring that all children have the opportunity to express their thinking.

A Word about Discourse:

Oral discourse is essential to literacy, language, and conceptual learning. However, talking by itself does not necessarily lead to this kind of learning. Rather, in *Focus on K2*, discussions aim to produce discourse that is accountable to the learning community, to accurate knowledge, and to rigorous thinking. (Accountable Talk Sourcebook, 2010). All children are given the opportunity to participate in these kinds of discussions throughout the day, during all of the components of the curriculum. By engaging in rigorous, accountable discourse, children are engaging with the Speaking and Listening Standards as well as the Vocabulary Acquisition Standards of the *Massachusetts ELA and Literacy Frameworks*. Focused discourse supports the development of children's oral language. Language objectives in lessons target the four functions of language as outlined by WIDA: recount, explain, argue, discuss.

Think, Pair, Share: an opportunity to think quietly, talk with a partner, and share ideas with the whole group; allows for a shift in attentional focus.

Introduction: Routines

Process:

When the teacher poses a question or set of questions, children have up to one minute to think individually. When directed to “Pair,” children turn to a designated partner and discuss the prompt(s) with their partners. When directed to “Share,” children return their attention to the whole group and the teacher elicits comments from individuals and partners about ideas generated in their conversations.

“Me, too” signal: a way for children to indicate a connection to something that is said or read without creating interruptions in the flow of a discussion or read aloud.

Introduction example:

When we are in a large group, we don’t always have time to hear every person’s idea—otherwise we might sit here all day! But when someone is speaking or reading, you might hear something that you agree with, and you want to say so. You might hear someone ask the same question you are wondering. You might make a connection to a character in a story we are reading. When that happens, you can make this silent signal that means “Me, too.”

Demonstrate a signal, such as this one in American Sign Language, with the thumb pointing to your chest and the pinky pointing out:

You can use this signal any time someone is speaking or reading aloud. Other people will notice that you are making a connection. And you can tell your idea at another time.



Back to Back, Face to Face: a way of talking with different partners for paired conversations during whole group meetings; includes movement and allows children to hear various perspectives in response to one prompt.

Material:

- Chart paper with the steps of the protocol outlined with visual cues

Process:

The routine works on a series of signals. At the first signal, children get up and move carefully around a designated space (meeting area or classroom).

At any time, the teacher announces “Back to back!” Children find a partner close by, and the pairs stand back to back to listen to a question or discussion prompt posed by the teacher.

After a moment of thinking time, the teacher announces “Face to face!” Children turn to their partners and discuss the prompt.

Introduction: Routines

The next signal directs children to finish their conversations and begin moving around the space for a second round.

If the goal of using the routine is to hear different perspectives about one prompt, then children discuss the same prompt with their new partners. If the goal is to provide broader discourse on a topic, then the second round might include a new prompt.

Think, Triad, Share: an opportunity to think quietly, talk in a triad, and share ideas with the whole group; allows for rotating “reporters” who synthesize and share their triad’s discussion for the whole group. Also allows for children in early stages of English language acquisition to be immersed in the discourse of two more proficient speakers of English.

Process:

Each child in the triad is assigned a number or letter (1, 2, 3; A, B, C). The teacher selects one number to be the day’s Reporter: that child will be responsible for sharing key ideas from their triad’s discussion. As with Think, Pair, Share, children have a minute to think individually in response to a question(s). When directed to “Triad,” children turn to their designated small groups and talk together about the question. When directed to “Share,” the children return their attention to the whole group; the teacher invites each Reporter to share important ideas on behalf of their groups.

Prompts for Whole Group Discussion

Sentence frames are useful for establishing habits of accountable talk. They require explicit practice until they become part of the conversational norms of the classroom community. Make a chart with a few simple sentence frames, and add to it as these become fluid and children’s discourse evolves.

Sentence Frames for Discussion
I think ____ because (in the book) ____.
I agree with you about ____, and I also think ____.
I disagree with you about ____, because I think ____.
_____. I know this because (in the book) ____.
I heard you say ____, and I want to add ____.
What did you mean when you said ____?

Introduction: Routines

Introduction example:

Now we are going to have a group discussion about an important question. We can use these sentence frames.

Read the frames aloud. Model using the sentence frames with this prompt: *Do you believe the Wolf in The True Story of the Three Little Pigs is cruel? Why or why not?*

I think the Wolf is not cruel, because I believe his side of the story—that the house fell down because he sneezed.

Does anyone agree or disagree? Use the sentence frames to respond.

Invite a couple of children to respond, referring to and supporting their use of the sentence frames.

As the initial discussions unfold, take notes about how children are using the sentence frames and what reinforcement will be most helpful. Identify opportunities to integrate the language of the sentence frames during other parts of the day, such as in small groups or in supporting conversations between children during Centers.

Introduction: Routines

K for ME

Suggested Pacing Calendar, 2021-22

The following is a *suggested pacing* schedule; Individual pacing will be dependent on contexts.

September						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

October						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

November						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

December						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
17	18	19	26	27	28	29
30	31					

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

March						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

April						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

- Unit 1 :Our Community
- Unit 2 Animals and Habitats
- Unit 3:Construction
- Unit 4:Our Earth

Note: one extra week per Unit to allow for flexibility

Instructional Time and Sample Schedule

K for ME is designed to encompass approximately **three hours** of classroom work each day. The following are the major components and expected number of instructional minutes.

Vocabulary (5 minutes/day)

Introduction of Weekly Words through the Grow a Definition routine

Read Aloud (20 minutes/day)

Multiple reads of fictional and informational books (or slides) and text-centered discussions

Centers

Intro to Centers (10 minutes/day)

Modeling and relaunching new and ongoing activities

Centers (50-60 minutes/day)

Exploration of unit Big Ideas and Read Aloud texts through a variety of media in the Art Studio (Table and Easel), Blocks, Dramatization, Library & Listening, Discovery Table, STEM, Writing & Drawing

Thinking and Feedback (10 minutes/day)

Exchanging ideas and offering feedback about each other's works in progress

Writing (30 minutes/day)

Writing in various genres for specific audiences, in the context of the unit content, grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Foundational Literacy

Explicit Literacy Program (such as Jolly Phonics) (20 minutes/day)

Systematic teaching of foundational skills in reading and spelling, emphasizing phonemic awareness, phonics, word study, high-frequency words, fluency, vocabulary and handwriting

Stations and Strategic Small Group Instruction (30 minutes/day)

Responsive, data-driven literacy instruction, including independent and collaborative practice of foundational literacy skills: Shared Reading, Word Work, Writing, Listening & Speaking, Partner and Independent Reading; convening of small groups for strategic instruction

Shared Reading (10 minutes/day)

Whole group lesson with poem or song, following scope and sequence of Foundations, connected to unit content

Storytelling/Story Acting (10 minutes/day)

Telling and acting out children's personal stories

Daily Schedule

The following is only a suggested sequence. Teachers are encouraged to create individual daily routines based on unique school schedules .

Time	Minutes	Component
8:30 - 8:45	15	Morning Routines Community Building/Social Emotional curriculum; Storytelling/Acting: Gathering children’s stories, adults tell stories (1x/week)
8:45 - 8:50	5	Vocabulary
8:50 - 9:10	20	Read Aloud
9:10 - 9:15	5	movement break
9:15 - 10:30	1h 15	Centers Intro to Centers, Centers, Thinking & Feedback
10:30 - 11:00	30	Writing
11:00 - 11:20	20	Explicit Literacy Program (e.g., Jolly Phonics)
11:25 - 12:10	45	Lunch and Recess
12:10 - 12:40	30	Stations and Small Groups
12:40 - 12:50	10	Shared Reading
12:55 - 1:40	45	Special (Common Planning Time)
1:45 - 2:45	60	Math Core Curriculum
2:45 - 3:00	15	Story Acting , Closing and Dismissal

Anatomy of a Lesson

All lessons follow the same basic order and format.

Each lesson begins on a new, right-hand page, so that lessons can be pulled out of the binder as needed without disruption.

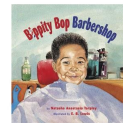
Centers lessons are less teacher-directed. Therefore, they do not list objectives. They are structured with Intro to Centers, During Centers, and Facilitation sections.

Writing lessons do not include Big Ideas or Guiding Questions. Each lesson is identified by the lesson's topic as well as its action (Deconstruction, Joint and/or Individual Construction).

*orientation: unit and title,
week and day*

Unit 1: Our Community

WEEK 4 Day 2



*image(s) of relevant text(s)
appear here for quick
reference*

*component, text, and
relevant context correspond
to weekly At a Glance.*

Read Aloud
Bippity Bop Barbershop
Read 2 of 2, pages 16-29

*Guiding Question(s) most
relevant to the lesson; may
or may not be directly
addressed in the lesson*

Big Idea	Individuals, or citizens, come together to work, live, learn, and relate to each other in communities.
Unit Question	What does it mean to be a member of a community?
Guiding Question	Who and what makes a community?
Content Objective	I can use key details from the illustrations and words to describe the characters and setting in <i>Bippity Bop Barbershop</i> . (RL.K.3, RL.K.7)
Language Objective	I can describe the characters and setting in the story. (SL.K.4)
SEL Objective	I can demonstrate awareness that people are members of a family, culture, and community. (SA.5.1)
Vocabulary	brave: not afraid, showing courage crowded: filled with a lot of things or a lot of people
Materials and Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bippity Bop Barbershop</i>, Natasha Anastasia Tarpley • <i>Bippity Bop Barbershop</i> vocabulary cards • <i>Bippity Bop Barbershop</i> slides for close reading • projector and screen • Think, Pair, Share chart <p>On the whiteboard write: Why is the barbershop an important place in Miles' community?</p>
Opening 1 minute	Introduce the text. <i>Yesterday we read the first half of Bippity Bop Barbershop. How was Miles feeling where we left off?</i>

*Big Idea(s) most relevant to
the lesson*

*Unit Question keeps focus
on unit's overarching idea*

*Content, Language, and
SEL objectives link to
Standards and Ongoing
Assessment, below.*

*vocabulary pulled from the
text, with child-friendly
definitions*

*A lesson may require
background reading,
technology set up, materials
preparation, and/or
materials used previously.
Examples of charts are
included. Any needed sheets
and slides are provided in
the week's folder.*

Read Aloud U1 W4 D2

*pages coded for
component, unit, week,
and day, allowing for
organizational preferences*

Introduction: Anatomy of a Lesson

purpose of the lesson

	<p>Set a purpose for reading.</p> <p><i>Today we'll continue reading to find out what happens with Miles at the barbershop. We'll continue to use details from the illustrations and words to describe the characters, and we'll also describe the setting. We'll discuss this question: Why is the barbershop an important place in Miles' community?</i> [Refer to the whiteboard.]</p>
<p>Text and Discussion 8 minutes</p> <p>page 18</p>	<p>Reread page 16 from the previous session, and then continue.</p> <p><i>Thumbs up if you predicted that Miles would pick a hairstyle just like his Daddy!</i></p>
<p>page 19</p>	<p><i>How is Miles feeling here? How do you know?</i> Harvest a few ideas, directing children's attention to the line, "My heart starts beating fast again."</p>
<p>page 21</p>	<p><i>What does this illustration tell you about how Miles is feeling?</i> Harvest a few ideas.</p>
<p>page 26</p>	<p><i>How is Miles feeling now? How do you know? Look at the illustration and use the words in the story.</i> Harvest a few ideas.</p>
<p>Key Discussion and Activity 10 minutes</p> <p>Slides</p>	<p>Show slide 1 (cover). <i>Let's look back at some important illustrations of the community in the barbershop.</i></p> <p>Show slide 2, but do not read the full text. <i>The text says that the barbershop is crowded, or has a lot of people in it. What do you notice about who is at this barbershop?</i></p>
	<p>Show slide 4, reread the text, and invite children to Think, Pair, Share. Refer to the question on the whiteboard. <i>Why is the barbershop an important place in Miles' community?</i> [Miles can spend special time with his dad; Miles can be around other Black men and boys; community members enjoy each other's company; Miles gets cared for by Mr. Seymour; Miles learns how to be brave.]</p>

Interacting with the text, building content knowledge, using vocabulary, making meaning

Key Discussions and Activities address lesson objectives.

Page numbers signal stops and specific teaching moves.

Read Aloud U1 W4 D2

bringing the lesson to a close, previewing what's next

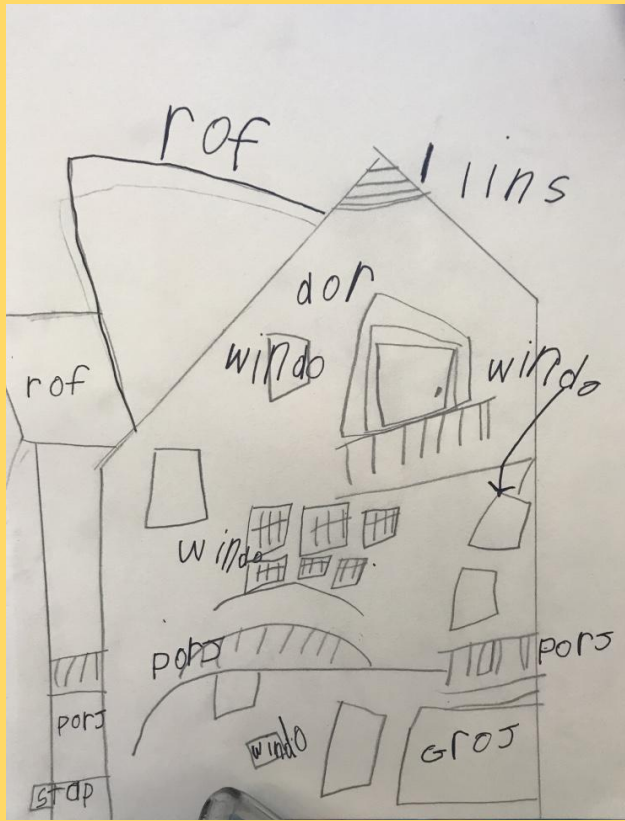
<p>Closing 1 minute</p>	<p><i>The characters in our stories have special people and places in their communities. We'll think about the special people and places in our own communities during _____. [Open Circle, other community meeting time].</i></p> <p>Create a time to facilitate children's connections to and awareness of their own community resources and supports.</p>
<p>Standards</p>	<p>RL.K.3. With prompting and support, identify characters, setting, and major events in a story.</p> <p>RL.K.7. With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).</p> <p>SL.K.4. Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional details.</p> <p>SA 5.1. Demonstrate awareness of self as a member of a family, culture, and community. Identify systems of support.</p>
<p>Ongoing assessment</p>	<p>Listen to children's responses during whole group conversation and Think, Pair, Share.</p> <p>Do children use key details when answering questions about the story? How do children describe the barbershop? Do children use details from the text to connect the story to the unit topic of community?</p>

what to look for during and after the lesson, linked to objectives above

those standards explicitly addressed in the lesson, connected to objectives

space for notes in preparing for or following the lesson

<p>Notes</p>



Part 2: Components

Community Meeting Resources

It is important for children to feel connected to each other as they prepare for the day. Community games, songs, participatory stories, and interacting around a morning message acclimate children to the day and allow them to engage with each other prior to more formal learning experiences. This important community building time honors and values each class member. Together, the community acknowledges any absent children and/or adults and welcomes those present. The community meeting sets the tone for how the class learns with and from each other.

Procedure

1. Sit in a circle. This gathering fosters a sense of community and sets the tone for other whole group times.
2. Greet each other. Use a playful song or movement game. See below for some suggestions.
3. Review the Attendance or Feelings Chart together. Count children who are present, and make note of any who are absent. If a child is out sick, model empathy by saying, "I hope she feels better soon."

Community Building Activities (one per day, repeating children's favorites)

Welcome Waves*

Children lie on their bellies in a circle. They look around the circle, making eye contact. Then everyone waves to each other and shares greetings in turn: *"Good morning, Ms. Lin; Hi, Keshawn; Buenos dias, Linda..."*

Name Ball*

The group sits in a circle. Introduce any soft ball as the Name Ball. The ball is tossed gently from one child to another. When a child has the Name Ball in her hands, she says her name in any manner, according to her mood (in an upbeat or happy way, with a yawn, etc.). The group echoes the name in the same manner.

Name Movements

Everyone stands in a circle. Each class member greets the class, "Hello, friends!" while making a whole-body movement, such as jumping, waving arms, wiggling hips, turning around. The class responds by repeating the movement and greeting that child, "Hello, Amber!"

Feelings Ball*

Write several feelings with icons on a soft ball. Children and adults take turns passing the ball. When the ball is in someone's hands, he turns the ball to find a feeling he identifies with, names the feeling, and talks about a time when he felt that way.

News Ball*

The group sits in a circle. Like the Name Ball, children toss a soft ball gently from one to another. When a child has the News Ball in her hands, she can share any kind of personal news. Before she does, the teacher asks, "How would you like us to respond to your news?" The child chooses a desired response to her news, such as a silent cheer, an expression of surprise, "Oh, no!" or "It's okay." The child then shares her news, and the group responds as requested. News Ball might include a few children or the entire group.

Name songs

Sing a song into which each child's name can be inserted. Possibilities include "We're All a Family Under One Sky," "The More We Get Together," and "The Name Game."

Participatory stories

Tell a story in which the children, as a group or as individuals, are the main characters/heroes and have opportunities to shape the story with their input.

Favorite Share

Choose a topic (food, color, game, animal). Like the Name Ball, as a child receives the ball, he calls out a favorite item in that category. Use the responses to note connections and shared interests among children.

I'm Thinking of a Person Who

This routine should be modeled several times by adults before children take it on. The leader silently chooses a classroom community member and offers clues to identify that person. The child begins, "I'm thinking of a person who... (has a younger brother, likes soccer, loves to draw, is wearing blue)." Others guess until the identity is revealed.

Collective, guided imagery

Tell a story that engages the children in physical participation and leads toward achieving a goal. Choose activities and stories based on the interests and expertise of classroom adults, and gradually integrate the children's interests and experiences.

For example:

"Let's go watch our friends basketball. First, we have to drive to the court at the park.

Let's get on our bikes and ride." Act out putting on helmets and climbing onto bikes.

Act out riding bikes down a city street: "OK, it's a green light, let's pedal. Watch out for that pothole!"

Park the bicycles, and act out going to the court, finding a spot, and watching the game. *“Let’s get on to the court to help. Remember, they need five baskets to win.”* Act out running to the court. *“OK, pass the ball. Now shoot. [Model passing and shooting the ball.] It’s a basket!”* ... *“Now they only need one more basket, and there are only 10 seconds left in the game... Can we do it?”*

Morning Message

This highly motivating routine engages children in interactive writing and builds community. Each day the teacher writes a message on a large surface (whiteboard, chart paper), asking a question or telling the class about something happening that day. Model decoding an already written message. Highlight concepts of print by pointing at the text, indicating directionality, and making letter-sound connections.

From this shared experience and over time, children begin to participate in composing the message themselves. As the year progresses and children’s familiarity with print advances, omit letters or words for children to fill in. Eventually the group will write an entire message together. Make sure the message is of interest to the children and consists of only a few sentences; the practice should be short and lively and offer opportunities for children at different levels of literacy development to participate.

* activities from *Life is Good Playmakers*

Songs for transitions throughout the day:

- [Jambo](#), Ella Jenkins
- [You’ll Sing a Song and I’ll Sing a Song](#), Ella Jenkins
- [Three Little Birds](#), Bob Marley
- [Getting to Know You](#), James Taylor version
- [Deiz deditos](#), Jose’-Luis Orozco
- [Chocolate](#), Jose’-Luis Orozco

Vocabulary

Goals:

- Children develop vocabulary and word knowledge through explicit and embedded instruction.
- Children develop facility with using context to determine unfamiliar word meanings.
- Children develop and apply their understanding of new vocabulary by practicing it in structured and authentic contexts.
- Children appreciate the complexity of language and strive to use it with delight and precision.

Vocabulary and Language activities in *K for ME* are designed to help children develop powerful vocabularies and accurately use language to make statements, ask questions, and offer opinions. Throughout the day, children have opportunities to engage with words in ways that allow them to increase their knowledge and use of vocabulary and to better understand how word choice affects the meaning of texts.

Children are introduced to 3 to 6 academic words a week through Read Alouds, and to several more through Centers. Words introduced in the context of Read Aloud, are practiced explicitly during the daily vocabulary routine called Grow a Definition (see below). Although suggested words and corresponding images are provided, teachers might substitute words based on needs revealed through observation and other assessments.

Vocabulary cards with images are provided and should be visible on a chart or pocket chart so that they are accessible for adult use during the Read Aloud and the Vocabulary lessons and for children's use throughout the day, especially in Stations and Centers. Sliding the cards into sheet protectors will help them stay in good shape and differentiate them from other words, such as high frequency (or "trick") words. Additionally, a chart with the Grow a Definition Routine, as outlined below, should be kept up in the classroom for ongoing use. The Grow a Definition Routine images and educator prompts are provided as slides, but can be printed by educators if desired.

Opportunities for expanding vocabulary

Each **Read Aloud** lesson includes a list of words from the relevant text(s) and their child-friendly definitions. Some of these are specifically referenced in the lesson; others are listed to support discussion and comprehension.

During **Centers** children stretch their growing vocabulary and language by talking together about their work in centers and connecting it to topics and ideas from texts. A list of vocabulary connected to the materials, processes, and activities in centers is provided with child-friendly definitions; adults use this vocabulary while facilitating conversations and connecting to the Big Ideas in the unit. The Intro to Centers and Thinking and Feedback meetings provide whole group opportunities for adults to intentionally use and define sophisticated and discipline-specific words.

In the Listening and Speaking: Talk Time Station children can apply their growing vocabularies through conversations with partners. Children look at a topic-related image and orally respond to a prompt.

In **STEM**, content-specific vocabulary is central to understanding and working through Investigations. Children are encouraged to use precise vocabulary to describe their observations and findings.

In **Writing**, children develop domain-specific vocabulary to talk about their own writing and the writing of others with precision and clarity.

In a classroom rich with conversation about meaningful topics, teachers note words that children use frequently and accurately, words that reveal misconceptions, and words of high interest. These are words to teach, along with the words provided in the curriculum.

English Learners

K for ME has been created with linguistically diverse groups of children in mind. Vocabulary and Language lessons should be scaffolded to meet the needs of children with various levels of linguistic acquisition and proficiency. For example, foundational tier 1 words may be added, along with visual supports. Additional and in some cases alternate word choices give ELs at early stages of English language acquisition an opportunity to work independently and can be used by educators who deliver small-group language lessons for newcomers. Providing translations and cognates in children's home languages are additional scaffolds that will support vocabulary development for ELs.

Grow a Definition Routine

This Vocabulary routine allows children to practice words introduced through the Read Alouds. Designed to require no more than five minutes of daily, explicit practice in the whole group, the routine addresses Language standards.




Introduction: Vocabulary

How it works

Three to six words are selected from Read Aloud texts for explicit teaching each week. Vocabulary cards with images are provided for these highlighted words.



Led by a teacher, children hear and practice a word's pronunciation, learn its definition, and are provided an example with an image as visual support. To extend their understanding, children are shown an additional image that represents its meaning, and they practice using the word in the context of a sentence.

Create the following Grow a Definition chart for ongoing reference, and use each Read Aloud's Grow a Definition slides to introduce the words.

Grow a Definition	
1. Learn the new word and its meaning. Listen to the word and say its sounds.	
2. Practice the new word by talking about an image.	
3. Say the new word and clap its syllables.	

In advance of the routine, strategically group children in pairs or triads. Triads are recommended as a support for children at earlier stages of English language acquisition so that they can be immersed in the talk of two other children with greater language proficiency.

Example

Teacher directions	Script
1. Say the word. Optional: Say the word in children's home language(s).	<i>Our word today is depend. Depend is a cognate in Spanish: depender.</i>
2. Ask children to echo the word. Identify the sounds in the word.	<i>Say the word after me: depend What sound is at the beginning of the word? [/d/]</i>
3. Show image #1. Provide a definition. Use the word in a sentence.	<p><i>Depend means to rely on, or need, someone or something for help or support.</i></p>  <p><i>Here, this person depends on his seeing-eye dog to help him get places.</i></p>
4. Show a second image.	 <p><i>Take a close look at this picture.</i></p>
5. Think, Pair (triad), Share: <i>How does the picture show the meaning of the word, _____?</i>	<p><i>How does this picture show the meaning of the word depend? Turn and talk with your partner (triad).</i> [The woman depends on her friends to catch her in the sheet when she falls.]</p>
6. Ask children to echo the word.	<p><i>Let's say the word again! The word is depend. Now you say it!</i></p>
7. Clap the syllables in the word.	<p><i>How many syllables are in the word depend? Let's clap it out! [2 syllables]</i></p>

Read Aloud

Goals:

- Children develop collectively as a community of readers.
- Children learn how to analyze a variety of texts in multiple ways.
- Children build knowledge on a topic and draw on funds of knowledge to collectively construct meaning of new texts.
- Through discussion with teachers and peers, children flexibly use academic and content-related vocabulary.
- Children access culturally-sustaining texts at grade level and above.
- Children discuss, draw, and write about text, grounding both conversation and drawn and written response in the text itself.
- Children encounter different media, expanding their understanding of the word *text*.
- Children engage with grade level literature and informational standards.

Through daily Read Aloud, teachers and children form a community of readers. Children engage with texts grouped by topics that are more complex than they could read independently. Using dialogic and interactive read aloud practices, children think and discuss vigorously about key sections of the text, vocabulary, and content while simultaneously building knowledge and reading comprehension skills. Discussion routines facilitate collaborative meaning making and oral language development. During Read Aloud lessons, there are several opportunities for oral and written formative assessment. Beyond the Read Aloud lesson, children make connections, build on, and extend texts' big ideas, topics and language through projects and play in Centers.

Design of Read Aloud

Children build content knowledge and reading acuity through multiple reads of both narrative and informational text. Occasionally, photographs, their captions, videos, and other texts enrich and deepen exploration of a topic and expand children's experiences with literacy, perspective-taking, and communication. Like the forms these texts take, the ways they are presented and discussed are varied.

Lessons are designed to build deep comprehension; this is accomplished through targeted work with standards, talking, drawing, and writing about reading, and attention to vocabulary. In some Read Aloud lessons, the focus is on an entire text; in others, teachers and children pause to deeply analyze one section of a complex text.

Read Aloud lessons align with the *Maine Learning Results English Language Arts Standards*. For example, during read alouds, children may:

Introduction: Read Aloud

- identify and explain character development and story structure in narrative text;
- identify and fluidly use text features of informational text;
- ask and answer questions that demonstrate understanding of key details of the text;
- discuss words with multiple meanings;
- speak and listen to peers, building on each other's ideas; and
- encounter and discuss text that is culturally and linguistically sustaining.

Unit Question Chart

K for ME units of study are built on Big Ideas and Guiding Questions. On Day 5 of each week, children's emerging knowledge and ideas in response to the overarching Unit Question are recorded and preserved on the Unit Question Chart. On Day 5 of the last week of a unit, the class works to synthesize ideas from the Unit Question Chart in a whole group discussion.

For a detailed description of how to implement the Unit Question Chart, refer to the Routines Document (Introduction Part 1: Design).

Centers

Goals for Intro to Centers:

- Children purposefully plan their Centers work for the day.
- Children practice unit-based and discipline-specific vocabulary.

Goals during Centers:

- Children experience and develop agency and autonomy.
- Children grapple with and expand conceptual knowledge.
- Children use a variety of media and processes to express their understandings.
- Children use discrete skills in authentic ways.
- Children engage in collaborative projects.

Art Studio

- Children explore two- and three-dimensional visual art media.
- Children experiment with various techniques used by visual artists.

Blocks

- Children explore different types and sizes of blocks in order to build their understanding of stability and balance.
- Children develop math skills, such as counting, estimating, measuring, and adding, and research symmetry, size, and weight.

Dramatization

- Children use their imagination to represent their own experiences and stories.
- Children use dramatization as symbolic representation.
- Children collaborate, solve problems, and negotiate.

Library & Listening

- Children cultivate a love of books and reading.
- Children strengthen concepts of print.
- Children engage in independent and shared research about topics of interest.

Discovery Table

- Children explore varied sensory materials through hands-on experiences.
- Children develop small motor control and coordination.

STEM

- Children investigate phenomena through use of hands-on materials.
- Children apply science concepts to real life situations.

Writing & Drawing

- Children represent and communicate ideas through writing and illustrations.
- Children practice and apply foundational literacy skills.
- Children communicate their understandings of the Read Alouds through

writing and drawing.

Goals for Thinking and Feedback:

- Children develop critical thinking skills such as self-reflection and problem solving.
- Children use oral language and academic vocabulary to reflect on and describe their work.
- In discussing ongoing work, children respect multiple viewpoints, give and receive constructive feedback, and support each other to consider new ideas.

To prepare for productive work in Centers, teachers facilitate a short, whole group meeting, the **Intro to Centers**. Here, teachers introduce novel materials and processes and model activities; refer to texts; reinforce important vocabulary; and relaunch activities or work that might have been abandoned or might be approached in a different way. They may reference children’s comments from a previous Thinking and Feedback session. Children think and talk together to plan their work, identifying materials, spaces, and collaborators, before moving into the Centers.

Adults support the transition from the whole group to **Centers** by dismissing children based on their indicated interests, considering group dynamics and the needs and curiosities of individual children. A classroom is likely to have working agreements about how many children comfortably work in a given Center, and these will help determine where children begin their work. (Dismissing children one at a time takes up precious time and should be avoided.) Once Centers time begins, children move freely between areas, fostering executive functioning skills such as planning and decision making. During Centers, over the course of the week, children should have a range of experiences by visiting different centers to use varied materials and props with a variety of collaborating peers.

Clear, predictable **systems and routines** provide structure and support as children move among centers:

- *Number Limit Signs* indicate how many children can use a given center at one time.
- *Turns Lists* allow children to put themselves in queue for when a space opens up at a desired center. Children sign up on the list, and children who leave the center refer to the list and alert waiting children that a space has opened. Over time, children take over the responsibility of reminding each other to use the Turns Lists for equitable access to the centers.
- *“I will be right back” signs* act as placeholders for a child who has had to leave a Center but is still in the process of working there and plans to return shortly. Not to be used to hold a space while working at another center, a child might post *I will be right back* (or a similar signal, such as a “Save” card with her name and photo) in order to use the bathroom, have a snack, or check in briefly with a teacher.

Introduction: Centers

Exploration of materials is essential for young children’s development in all domains. As children engage in self-directed Centers activities, they might identify new materials to enhance and extend their work. While curriculum Centers activities are intentionally designed to foster the development of particular competencies and to do so in ways that are engaging and motivating, children’s organic engagement with materials, the environment, and each other’s ideas often leads them to take activities in new directions. When children veer from the planned activity, adults listen and observe closely to determine whether and how the children’s new direction meets the objective and Big Ideas of the original activity or project; adults can then celebrate children’s ingenuity and use it to steer them toward and reinforce the intended understandings.

Centers invite active learning, collaborative inquiry, and sustained exploration. Children develop self-regulatory skills as they create, converse, and negotiate. Some children may tend to move quickly from one center to another. Adults can encourage them to develop persistence and stamina to solve problems and complete projects. Most of the adults’ time during Centers is spent observing, listening, documenting, and scaffolding and extending learning. This facilitation supports children to settle into their efforts and reach satisfying outcomes.

At the beginning of the year, Centers may be opened all at once, or gradually, over the first couple of weeks of school.

- **Gradual Launch:** one center is introduced each day with a guided exploration. During Centers time, all children explore materials from that one center simultaneously. After all centers have been introduced this way, systems for moving between centers are explained and practiced. After this process, all centers are opened for a full Centers experience.
 - Set up: Each day, prepare small kits of materials from a single center and set them up at tables around the room. Children explore these materials simultaneously in small groups. For example, to launch the Art Studio - Art Table, prepare one set of playdough and playdough tools for each available table (or “center”). Four or five children sit at each table to work with the playdough and tools.
- **Simultaneous Launch:** all centers are introduced and opened at one time. Children choose a center and explore those materials; they may report to classmates at a short, whole group meeting, and then try a new center. Transition routines are introduced and practiced. Once all children have had a chance to explore the various centers, children are released to centers with more autonomy.

- Set up: On the first day, prepare each center with a limited set of materials and simple, open-ended activities. Make sure each center allows for multiple children to explore, and encourage each small group to talk about what they are discovering. On the next day, encourage children to try a new center, with the goal of becoming familiar with each of the centers over the course of the launch period.

Thinking and Feedback is a time for children to learn from and with one another, discussing and reflecting on their work. The conversations during this time help build a supportive, intellectually engaged, and dynamic classroom community. Through the process of observing, listening, asking and answering questions, children deepen their understanding of content. As they consider works in progress, children generate new ideas, integrate different perspectives, contribute to each other’s learning, and build group knowledge. Finally, the Thinking and Feedback routine encourages children to create excellent products.

During Center time, adults identify one piece of work from a child or group of children to highlight for the Thinking and Feedback session and plan with the child(ren) who will be sharing their work. Together, adult and child(ren) identify specific questions they have or challenges children are experiencing and any specific feedback that will be helpful to elicit from the whole group.

During the Thinking and Feedback session, children sit in a circle or other arrangement that allows them to see each other and the work or documentation.

Establish and maintain “Agreements for Feedback” such as:

- Feedback is kind, specific and helpful.
- Feedback should be received as caring and constructive.
- Those who created the piece of work choose whether to follow up on suggestions.

Use the Thinking and Feedback protocol to structure the conversation. Hold up the visuals to move through each step. Take notes on the feedback provided (especially during the ‘Suggesting and Inspiring’ phase).

Looking	The whole group silently looks at the work.
Noticing	Children describe what they see in the work; presenter(s) is quiet.
Listening	Presenting child(ren) describes the work and might describe a dilemma and/or request specific feedback from the group.

Wondering	Children ask questions to the presenter(s) about the work.
Suggesting and Inspiring	Children provide feedback and share how the work gives them new ideas.

The following day, during the Intro to Centers, remind children of any feedback that has been offered. Invite children to revise their work and/or engage new collaborators based on those suggestions.

Guidelines

- Highlight only one activity or piece of work each day to allow for deep conversation.
- Invite groups, rather than individuals, to share collaborative work, when possible.
- Focus on works in progress so that feedback can be used to revise or continue work.
- Invite adults to model how to provide kind, helpful, and specific feedback, but allow the majority of feedback to come from children. Modeling can also include asking open-ended questions during the ‘Wondering’ phase of the protocol (How did you construct that? Why did you choose to use those materials?).
- Allow children to lead the protocol as much as possible, with a gradual release of responsibility for facilitation as the year progresses.
- Use systems for equitable participation during the meeting.
- Use documentation and artifacts to ground the conversation. For projects that cannot easily be moved to the meeting area (such as a block structure or mural), gather in that area of the classroom or take a picture to bring to the group.
- All children should have opportunities to share work over time. Consider the particular capacities and needs of the children when devising a system for keeping track of who has shared.

Beautiful Stuff

To a young child, the world is full of materials to touch, discover, and explore. To find, collect, sort, and use materials is to embark on a special kind of adventure. For adults, gathering materials means rediscovering the richness and beauty in natural, unexpected, and recyclable objects that are all around us, but not often noticed.¹

Topal and Gandini, Introduction



Beautiful Stuff provides children with the opportunity to gather, explore, and build understandings about various **recycled and natural materials**. Children then use these materials to inspire and support their ideas across units of study, in the Art Studio, and beyond. “The goal is to allow children to become fluent with materials—as if materials were a language” (Topal & Gandini, introduction), in order to widen the possibilities of media that can effectively communicate ideas.

Some children will already have had experience with Beautiful Stuff in PreK. The materials you present at the beginning of the year will act as a suggestion for the kinds of materials children might collect from home to add to the classroom supply during Unit 1. Make sure to send home a letter to families inviting them to contribute to the classroom collection. Partway through Unit 2, children begin to use Beautiful Stuff to add dimension to their Centers work.

Logistics

In preparation, identify a space in the Art Studio (open shelves are ideal) to accommodate materials and works in progress. Beautiful Stuff will be available throughout the year for children to access with other materials as they determine the best media to communicate their ideas. Children should be involved in maintaining the space and materials, which can be

¹ Topal, C.W. and Gandini, L. (1999). *Beautiful stuff!: Learning with found materials*. Worcester (Massachusetts): Davis Publications.

replenished and reorganized as needed. Families can be a constant source of materials, and collecting Beautiful Stuff is a concrete way that every family can contribute to classroom learning.

Aside from the Beautiful Stuff materials themselves, you will find it helpful to have:

- containers for sorting and storing, such as recycled trays, plastic containers, cups, jars
- materials to use as **bases**, such as cardboard squares
- trays, to define work space, organize materials, and transport works in progress
- images for inspiration, unit-related, if possible
- adhesives (scotch and/or masking tape, liquid glue) and attachers (paper clips, string, rubber bands)

Introducing the materials

Begin with materials you have collected. When you introduce them to the children, model how you might sort them and organize them in labeled containers.

Leave the task of sorting and organizing for the children. As children sort, they consider the various attributes of each object and make decisions about what categories to create. Is a cap from a water bottle sorted with other things that are round, made of plastic, red, or small? Is a piece of yarn wiggly, soft, something to hold things together?

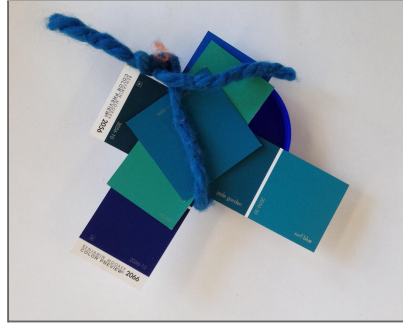
Have the children label containers with words that describe the materials in each one.



Exploration

Make sure that children have ample time to explore the materials without the use of adhesive to start—understanding their properties and entertaining possibilities for their use—before assigning something in particular to accomplish with them. With exploration, trying out different ways to use various objects, children are more likely to make intentional decisions about which materials will be most effective for a specific purpose. Children might explore materials individually or in small groups, or in a guided whole group conversation.

Document how children are using materials with notes and/or photographs. Take note of the language children use as they talk about materials, and support children with descriptive and precise vocabulary.



Maintaining a robust and exciting stock

You'll become frustrated to be constantly collecting materials and then have them disappear.

- Periodically throughout the year, send a letter to families asking them to participate in collecting Beautiful Stuff for the classroom.
- Children who are not able to bring materials from home might be invited to collect recycled materials from around the school (bottle caps from teachers in the office) or natural materials in the school yard or during a walk (acorns, pinecones, sticks).
- Keep a bag or box in your own home to gather materials.
- Be conservative with **adhesives**, offering them only when a piece of work needs to be saved. As long as materials are not glued or taped together, they can be deconstructed and used over and over again, as blocks are. You might take a photo of a finished piece of work to include in a child's portfolio, to share during Thinking and Feedback, or to send home. A community conversation might begin with, *I have noticed that we are running out of Beautiful Stuff. Where do you think it is going?* This can lead into a conversation about use of adhesives and re-use of Beautiful Stuff.
- Keep materials organized in the classroom. This will signal to children that these materials are as important as the others they use and encourage them to use Beautiful Stuff judiciously.

Supporting and facilitating learning

As in other moments, as children work with Beautiful Stuff, talk with them about their intentions, challenges, ideas, and questions. Some guiding questions include:

- What words can describe this material?
- Why did you choose this material? How is it working?
- What is similar about these objects? What's different?
- How does this feel?
- Is there another material you can use to communicate your idea?
- What do you think this material might have been used for before?
- Which adhesive is best for this particular part?
- Have you looked at anyone else's work to see how they solved that problem?



Beautiful Stuff is inspired by the Boston Public Schools work and based on the book *Beautiful Stuff! Learning with Found Materials* and inspired by the pre-primary schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy.

Writing

Goals:

- Children learn the purpose, structure, and language of various genres of writing.
- Children write to authentic audiences for authentic purposes.
- Children write using a variety of media.

Throughout the *K for ME* day, children communicate through writing. Children write during Read Aloud, Centers, Stations, and during the dedicated Writing block.

The *K for ME* Writing block is grounded in the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory and based on the work of Dr. María Brisk.¹ Throughout the year children become experts in writing in various genres through deconstructing mentor texts and jointly and individually constructing text. Children write for specific audiences, in the context of the content they are exploring during the unit.

Through foundational lessons in the first weeks of Kindergarten, children begin to understand that writing is a means of communication and that authors write for specific purposes, to specific audiences. With repetition and practice, children learn about the tools, routines, and rituals that will be a part of their writing block throughout the year. Children begin by communicating through storytelling and drawing. As the year progresses, they encode sounds, words, and sentences, while continuing to develop skills in storytelling and drawing.

Over the course of the year, children write across genres that fit into the three major categories of writing: opinion (argument), informational, and narrative. **Genres** in SFL are defined by their purposes and structural and language features. More detailed introductions to each genre can be found in the unit introductions.

In addition to writing in different genres, children produce work in different **media**, such as books and posters. It is important to note that in SFL, poetry is a medium, rather than a genre, because a poem is a form through which any genre can be expressed. For example, both a personal recount and an argument can be written in the form of a poem.

The Teaching and Learning Cycle

The Writing block takes place for 30 minutes each day. Through a teaching and learning cycle that includes **negotiation of the field, deconstruction, joint construction, and individual**

¹ Brisk, M.E. (2015). *Engaging students in academic literacies*. New York, NY: Routledge.

construction, children are apprenticed in the **purpose** of each genre, as well as its **structure** and **language** features. Lesson titles direct teachers to the stage(s) of the cycle addressed in each lesson.

All writing in *K for ME* exists within the context of the content knowledge developed throughout the unit. Most of the content knowledge development—or, **negotiation of the field**—occurs throughout the day, including Read Aloud and Centers. So while negotiation of the field is not explicitly named with children or identified in the titles of writing lessons, it is embedded within other components of the *K for ME* day.

Children learn about the features of genres through the **deconstruction of mentor texts**. Together with the teacher and classmates, children listen to and analyze mentor texts to uncover their purposes, structures, and language features. Several mentor texts are used for each genre.

During **joint construction**, the teacher and children compose text together in the given genre. This stage allows children to practice the aspects of the genre uncovered during deconstruction before they are sent to write individually.

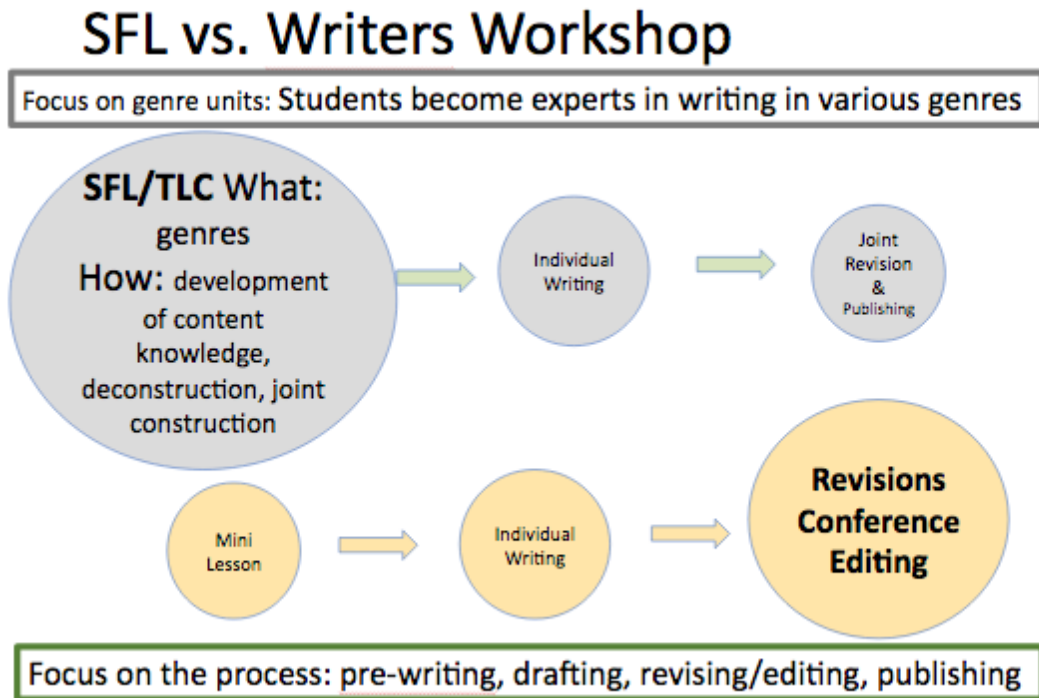
After exploring a genre through deconstruction and joint construction, children move into **individual construction**. During this stage children write from what they have learned, with support from their classmates and the teacher. Conferences with teachers and feedback from teachers and classmates focus on the aspects of the genre they have learned, including its purpose, structure, and language, as well as the audience children are writing to and the topic they are writing about. Children then make revisions based on this focused feedback.

As its name indicates, the teaching and learning cycle is not a linear process. Units jump back and forth through the three stages to provide a supportive, coherent experience for children.

Although children do engage in the various stages of the writing process—as in Writer’s Workshop—the focus of instruction is on the development of knowledge about the genre, rather than on the steps of the writing process. The practice of apprenticing children in a genre before sending them to write addresses the concern presented by Lisa Delpit in *Other People’s Children*: “Although the problem is not necessarily inherent in the method, in some instances adherents of process approaches to writing create situations in which students ultimately find themselves held accountable for knowing a set of rules about which no one has ever directly informed them.”²

² Delpit, L. (2006). *Other people’s children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: The New Press, 31.

As evidenced in the following graphic, the bulk of instruction in SFL occurs at the beginning of the unit—with the development of content knowledge and through deconstruction and joint construction of text—before children are sent to write independently. In contrast, the bulk of instruction in Writer’s Workshop occurs at the end of the unit, with conferences that lead to children revising and editing their work.



Brisk, 2017

Conventions

Because the focus of writing in *K for ME* revolves around the purpose, structure, and language features of genres, explicit instruction in conventions occurs during the writing block only in the context of features that relate to the genre or medium. Teachers will, of course, continue to model proper writing conventions when writing with young children.

Regular, explicit instruction in conventions occurs during Foundations, and children should be held accountable to the rules learned in Foundations as they edit their writing. In addition, flexible time is built into each unit, during which teachers plan instruction responsive to children’s needs. They may choose to reinforce genre elements, conventions, or writing behaviors.

Glossary

audience: the person/people for whom the text is written

deconstruction: analyzing mentor texts for genre features, such as purpose, structure, and language

genre: a type of writing defined by its purpose, structure, and language

individual construction: composing text individually

joint construction: composing text together with the teacher and classmates

medium: the form used to produce the writing, such as a book, poster, or poem

mentor text: a text that illustrates the features of a genre

negotiation of the field: the stage of the teaching and learning cycle in which children develop the content knowledge necessary for writing

purpose: the reason a particular genre of writing is produced

stage: the (structural) part of a piece of writing; for example, the title, orientation, or conclusion

Stations

Goals:

Children practice and apply foundational literacy skills explored during whole group instruction.

Children develop knowledge on a topic through talking, drawing, and writing.

Kindergarten is a critical year for children to develop the skills that will enable them to later grow into fluent readers. Foundational literacy instruction in *K for ME* is informed by evidence-based best practices, current research, and the perspectives of teachers. Multiple components of the curriculum support these goals.

Stations provide opportunities for children to practice literacy skills in developmentally appropriate, cognitively demanding, targeted, and engaging ways. This 30-minute component includes time for strategic, teacher-led **small groups**, and for the **Reading, Pocket Chart, Listening and Speaking, Writing, and Word Work Stations**. Activities build language and literacy through small group work and conversation. Connections to each unit's content are critical, as children are more likely to learn academic skills when applied to things that make sense to them. The Listening and Speaking and Word Work Stations activities use resources from the current week, while the Pocket Chart and Writing Stations use texts from the previous weeks. Some teachers may choose to move the Listening and Speaking and Word Work Stations activities to the following week so that children have more exposure before being asked to practice independently. As children engage in this teacher-identified but independent and collaborative work, they build confidence and mastery in learning and applying developing skills.

The work during Stations will be meaningful only to the extent that it is **responsive**. Thus, careful observation of children's literacy behaviors and skills is required in order to meaningfully differentiate instruction. The provided activities should be seen as the beginning of a library of resources for targeted practice from which teachers can draw as appropriate for the needs of the children in any given classroom. Where more than one activity is available at a station, teachers plan whether to offer children the opportunity to choose or whether to direct specific children to specific activities, depending on their needs. (One of these needs may well be the development of self-regulation, in which case offering a choice is particularly beneficial.)

Facilitation

In order for children to work independently and productively during Stations over the course of the year, special attention must be paid to setting up **routines and expectations** in the early weeks. These routines will include identifying which stations to attend to, moving from one station to another, finding needed supplies, storing individual work, and cleaning up.

At the beginning of the week, teachers provide a brief **introduction** to new activities; demonstrations will sometimes be helpful. However, all activities will repeat over time, so simply naming the activities will likely suffice once activities have become familiar.

Occasionally during the Stations time, the class will engage in Community Conversations. These conversations offer the opportunity to debrief and troubleshoot the Stations experience, thus supporting children's independence and investment in the work. Community Conversations serve as a place for the group to check in about process and content. They can occur at the beginning, middle, or end of the Stations time.

During Stations, children should work in **heterogeneous groups** that allow for children with various language and literacy needs to work together. Think strategically about which children will work together.

The **schedule** is flexible. Once children are settled, teachers begin to pull small groups, and children transition to activities in the Reading, Pocket Chart, Listening and Speaking, Writing, and Work Work stations. Through careful planning, teachers direct children to spend this time appropriately; some children will need more time in Word Work, while others will benefit from more opportunities to listen to and talk about unit texts, for example. That said, it will be important to regularly set schedules in order to be intentional about supporting children as they practice and to determine the frequency of work with each teacher-led group.

Organization in the environment will support children's learning and independence. Each station's activity sheets can be housed in a clearly-labeled bin with needed instructions and supplies. Keeping each station in a regular, designated space will ease transitions among them.

Finally, set up **spaces** around the classroom **that invite reading**, such as a reading corner with pillows and a rug. Allow children to decide where and how they will be most comfortable and successful. Some children prefer the rug, others like to sit in a tight space such as in a corner or under a table; others prefer lying on their bellies or backs, sitting in a chair, or even standing at a shelf or counter.

Shared Reading

Goals:

- Children develop as a joyful community of readers.
- Children develop as fluent readers through practices as echo, choral and paired reading.
- Children practice and apply knowledge and skills in print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, and word recognition.
- Children engage in explicit instruction in phonological awareness

Shared Reading is a critical component of foundational literacy development. Engaging children’s natural playfulness and enjoyment of rhymes, songs, and poetry, shared reading builds a community of joyful readers. With teacher support, children engage in echo and choral reading of texts for direct practice of phonetic and phonemic concepts, as well as development of automaticity, accuracy, and expression. *K for ME* provides one Shared Reading text each week and reinforces the knowledge-building units of study.

Lesson guides are provided for three sessions each week with one text, with flexibility for teachers to make decisions about text selection and the focus of shared reading on the remaining two days.

In addition to the text provided weekly, teachers may use the provided Rhymes, Poems, and Songs packet. Simple, repetitive rhymes and songs are especially important in the early weeks of kindergarten as children develop into a community of readers and learn the routines of Shared Reading.

Shared Reading Best Practices

- Ensure that **all children can see the text**. In whole group settings, the text should be projected or written in large print on a chart.
- Provide **repeated exposure**. Each text is revisited for intentional instructional purposes over at least three sessions. Repeated exposure also builds fluency.
- Provide opportunities for children to “share” the reading using **echo, choral, and partner** (or triad) reading routines.

Introduction: Shared Reading

- During all encounters with the shared text, **track print** with a large pointer. This will draw the children’s gaze to the print and support them in chiming along. Use a gesture to signal echo reading, so it is clear to children when they should read and when they should listen and track.
- Use **formative assessment** to inform Shared Reading instruction. Although lessons are provided, instruction should be responsive to children’s particular foundational literacy needs.
- While the Shared Reading texts are designed to reinforce phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency, **comprehension** should always be the goal when reading. Vocabulary visuals and body gestures can be used to support comprehension.

Materials

- projector and screen for Shared Reading slides (optional)
- Shared Reading texts (provided)
- chart paper and markers
- pointer
- highlighters and/or highlighting tape
- sticky notes
- Shared Reading child copies for independent and partner reading

Storytelling and Story Acting

Goals:

- Children’s voices are recognized and stories are honored.
- Children develop skills in language and literacy, creativity, communication, and social and emotional development.
- Children understand themselves as part of a larger community of storytellers and understand that storytelling enriches our world.
- Children understand that storytelling is one way families and communities around the world share stories and pass on knowledge.

At the heart of Storytelling/Story Acting (ST/SA) is **listening**—adults listening to children, children listening to their classmates, and children listening to adults—all in service of better understanding each other and getting inside of each other’s stories.

ST/SA promotes **language and literacy skills** as children develop narrative structure and conventions, practice and consolidate emerging vocabulary, and travel the bridge between the contextualized language of early childhood speech (telling about the here and now of personal experiences) and the decontextualized language of formalized, printed language. When adults tell stories, they offer models of narrative and rich vocabulary on which children can build.

ST/SA gives children an outlet for **creativity and communication**. They tell their own stories, remembered or invented, and tell them in their own way. Even a story a child has heard before becomes her own when she adds details, assigns feelings, and uses facial expressions and gestures in the telling.

ST/SA supports **social development**. While children can write down or tell an individual and personal story quietly to their teacher or peers, story acting enlivens opportunities for the development of these language and thinking skills alongside the demands of collaboration. Children work together to create the experience and develop story characters, events, and resolutions.

ST/SA fosters **emotional development**. Children practice self-regulation and negotiate their responses in relation to their peers’ ideas. Through stories, children encounter and recognize their own and others’ emotions. ST/SA fosters a strong classroom community in which each child feels an integral part.

Introduction: Storytelling & Story Acting

The guide (found in Part 2) identifies and explains specific components that make for successful ST/SA. You and your children will discover others. In the words of Vivian Paley, “A teacher’s own observations will inform her best about all these details.”

Support materials (videos of practice, explanations of the approach) are available on the BPS Early Childhood website.

Logistics

Materials

- Storytelling Books (small notebooks, one for each child)
- masking tape (optional)

Preparation

Read the Storytelling and Story Acting Guide in Part 2.

Identify times during the day when children may dictate stories to an adult (1-2 children/stories per day), such as during arrival, snack, Centers, or transitions.

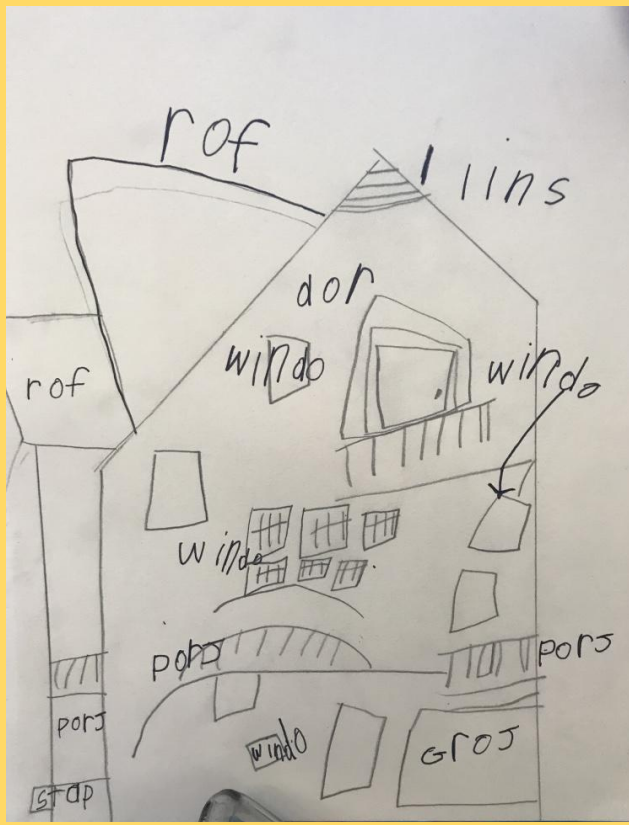
Create a calendar or other system for letting children know when they will be dictating stories that will then be acted.

Designate time in the day and week for story acting (10 minutes per day).

Prepare a notebook for each child.

Physical Space

- Any place in the classroom where an adult and child(ren) can sit together and hear each other well, for dictation
- whole group meeting area, for Story Acting



Part 3: Tools



Art Easel



Art Table

Introduction: Centers Signs



Blocks



Discovery Table

Introduction: Centers Signs



Dramatization



Library & Listening

Introduction: Centers Signs



Science & Engineering



Writing & Drawing

Introduction: Centers Signs

Open-ended Prompts to support children's work in Centers

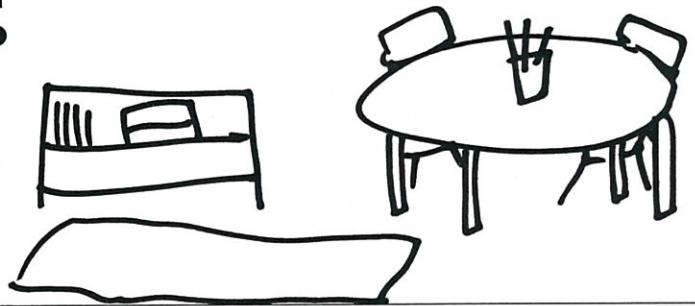
- What inspired you?
- What is your plan?
- How can you work together? How will you decide who does what part?
- What will you do next?
- What other materials might you use?
- How will you show your idea(s)?
- Tell me about your _____.
- What is your story about?
- What additional information do you need? What research do you need to do?
- I notice _____. I wonder _____ (for example, I notice you are using rectangular blocks. I wonder what you will do to make your structure stronger).

Open-ended Prompts to support children's work in Centers

- What inspired you?
- What is your plan?
- How can you work together? How will you decide who does what part?
- What will you do next?
- What other materials might you use?
- How will you show your idea(s)?
- Tell me about your _____.
- What is your story about?
- What additional information do you need? What research do you need to do?
- I notice _____. I wonder _____ (for example, I notice you are using rectangular blocks. I wonder what you will do to make your structure stronger).

Where?

Where will you work?



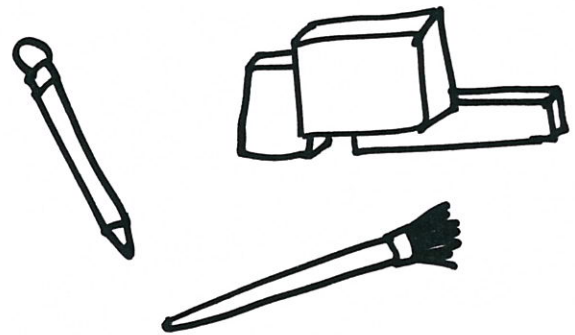
What?

What will you do there?



Which?

Which tools will you use?



Who?

Who will you work with?



Turns List

Turns List

Turns List

Turns List

I will be
right back



I will be
right back



Two

2



Five

5



Four

4



Three

3





Looking



Noticing

I see...

I notice that...



Listening



Wondering

How did you...?

Why did you...?



Suggesting & Inspiring

You might try...

You could think about...

I am inspired to...

I might try...

Thinking and Feedback visuals

Make two copies:

Cut one set to half page size to use one step at a time during the Thinking & Feedback session;

Post one set so that all steps are visible.

Dear Families,

We are collecting recycled things for our Art Studio! We call these things “Beautiful Stuff” because we can use them to create and build. Please help us by sending in any of the following:

- empty tissue boxes
- paper towel tubes
- small cardboard boxes (such as jewelry boxes)
- small plastic containers
- interesting pieces of hard plastic packaging
- small sticks
- small pieces of wood
- beads
- yarn/ribbon/bows
- corks and bottle caps
- twist ties and plastic closures from bread bags
- cardboard
- wrapping paper
- feathers
- shells
- small pieces of wood
- pieces of bark
- small rocks

We can also use baskets, clear plastic containers and jars to store things in.

SAFETY NOTE: Please use good judgment when collecting with young children. Make sure items are not sharp, toxic, or harmful. Also, make sure items are **clean**. Thank you.

Please send us some Beautiful Stuff by _____.

After this date, continue to send in interesting things that children might like to use.

We appreciate your help,

_____ (Teacher name here)

Estimadas Familias,

Estamos juntando materiales para nuestro taller de arte. A esos objetos los llamamos “Cosas hermosas” porque las usamos para crear y construir. Por favor ayúdenos a armar nuestro taller enviando algunas de las cosas en la lista que tienen en sus casas y que ya no usan más.

- Cajas vacías de pañuelos descartables (tissues)
- Tubos de cartón de las toallas descartables de cocina
- Cajas pequeñas de cartón (ej: cajas de joyas)
- Recipientes de plástico transparente (limpios)
- Material de embalaje interesante (packaging material)
- Palitos pequeños
- Cuentas de madera
- Mostacillas o cuentas para hacer collares
- Moños y cintas de regalo o para el cabello
- Cinta adhesiva (tape)
- Tapones, corchos y tapas de botellas
- Cestas
- Cartón
- Papel de regalo
- Plumas
- Caracolas, conchas de caracol
- Trozos de madera pequeños
- Trozos de corteza de árboles
- Piedras pequeñas

NOTA DE SEGURIDAD: Por favor tenga cuidado cuando colecciona artículos con niños pequeños. Los padres deben decidir cuidadosamente que los artículos no pinchen, ni sean muy pesados, ni tóxicos, ni perjudiciales para la salud.

Por favor, envíen los materiales limpios antes del _____.
Pueden continuar enviando cosas que les parezcan interesantes y que los niños puedan usar en cualquier otro momento.

Gracias por ayudarnos,

_____ (Teacher name here)

Chè Fanmi,

N ap kolekte atik resiklaj pou Estidyo Atizay nou an! Nou rele bagay sa yo: “Bèl Bagay” (Beautiful Stuff) poutèt nou kapab sèvi ak yo pou kreye epi bati. Tanpri souple voye nenpòt nan bagay sa yo ba nou pou ka ede nou:

- Bwat esui papye vid
- Katon ki kenbe sèvyèt an papye yo
- Ti bwat katon piti (tankou bwat bijou)
- Bokal plastik
- Mòso plastik yo sèvi pou anbwate
- Ti bout bwa long fen
- Ti mòso bwa
- Grenn maldyòk
- Fil/riban/ne
- Bouchon lyèj ak bouchon boutèy
- Atach pou marande ak tèt yo mare sache pen ki fèt an plastik yo
- Mòso katon
- Papye anbalaj yo sèvi pou vlope
- Ti bwa fen long
- Plim zwazo
- koki
- ti mòso bwa
- mòso ekòs bwa
- ti grenn wòch

Nou kapab sèvi ak panye tou, resipyan an plastik ki transparan ak bokal pou konsève bagay.

NÒT SEKIRITE: Tanpri souple itilize bonjan jijman an lè w ap kolekte ak jenn timoun. Asire w atik yo pa gen pwent fen, yo pa toksik epi yo pa danjre. Epitou, asire atik yo **pwòp**. Mèsi.

Tanpri souple voye kèk Bèl Bagay disi _____.

Aprè dat sa a, kontinye voye bagay ki enteresan timoun ta ka renmen itilize.

Nou apresye èd ou,

_____ [Teacher name here]

Phụ huynh học sinh thân mến,

Chúng tôi đang thu thập những thứ tái chế cho phòng hội họa của chúng tôi! Chúng tôi đặc tên cho nó là "Những đồ vật kỳ diệu" (Beautiful Stuff) bởi vì chúng ta có thể sử dụng chúng để tạo và xây dựng. Hãy giúp chúng tôi bằng cách gửi bất kỳ những đồ sau đây:

- hộp giấy rỗng
- ống khăn giấy
- hộp các tông nhỏ (như hộp đồ trang sức)
- hộp nhựa nhỏ
- bao bì nhựa cứng
- que nhỏ
- gỗ nhỏ
- hạt chuỗi
- dây dãi/ giấy băng /giấy nơ
- nút chai và nắp chai
- dây xoắn và nhựa từ túi bánh mì
- cạt tông
- giấy gói
- que nhỏ
- lông chim
- vỏ ốc
- mẫu gỗ nhỏ
- mảnh vỏ cây
- đá nhỏ

Chúng tôi cũng có thể sử dụng giỏ, hộp nhựa trong và lọ để lưu trữ đồ.

LƯU Ý AN TOÀN: Xin vui lòng làm việc cùng với trẻ khi thu nhặt những dụng cụ này. Lưu ý nhớ các mặt hàng không sắc bén, chất độc, hoặc có hại. Ngoài ra, **xin rửa sạch trước khi đem đến**. Chân Thành Cảm Ơn.

Xin gửi đến vào ngày _____.
Sau ngày này chúng tôi sẽ gửi đến cho các em sử dụng.

Chân thành cảm ơn sự giúp đỡ của quý vị,

_____ [Teacher name here]

親愛的家庭,

我們正在為我們的藝術工作室收集回收的物件!我們稱這些東西“美麗的東西”(Beautiful Stuff),因為我們可以用它們來創造和建設。請幫助我們發送以下任何一項:

- 空紙巾盒
- 紙巾筒
- 小紙箱(如首飾盒)
- 小塑料容器
- 小棒
- 小木塊
- 珠
- 紗線/緞帶/蝶型結
- 瓶塞和瓶蓋
- 麵包袋的紮帶和塑料瓶蓋
- 紙板
- 包裝紙
- 小棒
- 羽毛
- 貝殼
- 小木塊
- 片樹皮
- 小石頭

我們也可以用筐,透明的塑料容器和罐子來儲存的東西研究。

安全注意事項:有年幼子女的收集時,請使用良好的判斷力。確保項目不鋒利,有毒,有害。另外,確保項目是乾淨的。謝謝。

通過請給我們一些美麗的東西_____。
在此日期之後,繼續發在孩子可能會想用有趣的事情。

我們感謝您的幫助,

[Teacher name here]

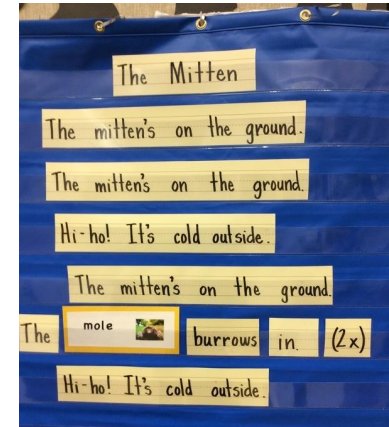
Stations icons



Teacher Group



Reading



Pocket Chart



Listening & Speaking



Writing



Word Work

Guide to Storytelling and Story Acting

Logistics

Materials: Each child will have her or his own storytelling notebook. Masking tape may be used to delineate the stage.

Physical Space: For storytelling, stories can be written down or dictated anywhere in the classroom. It may be helpful to designate a “storytelling corner” or chair for adults to take dictation side-by-side with children.

For story acting, you will need an area where the whole group can comfortably sit in a circle with space in the middle for acting. It is very helpful to delineate the acting area—the stage—with tape.

Who tells stories: Any adult can model storytelling: teachers, classroom volunteers, administrators, family members, community members, and even older students in your school all can share stories. ST/SA is a great way for administrators to connect with the children and an important tool for collaborating with families. Including a range of storytellers helps ensure that children will hear stories from different perspectives and cultural backgrounds.

Taking dictation of children’s stories provides a regular opportunity for adults to have engaging, fun, one-on-one interactions with each child in the room.

When: Children’s storytelling (dictation) can occur during arrival, Centers, snack, or any other time when the class is not engaged in whole group activities. Story acting (dramatization) is designated for one 10-minute period per day which can occur at the end of the day, during morning meeting, or during a transition between other activities. To provide predictability for children (helping them wait for their chance to tell a story), *it is essential that story acting be included in the classroom schedule* and that children know when it will be their turn to dictate their stories. To build successful routines and get the most benefit from the practice, ST/SA should happen reliably every day of the week.

Adult stories can be told at any time throughout the day, including during transitions.

Modeling Storytelling

Adults’ stories provide models for children to draw upon—ideas for how to organize stories, characters to include, and plot lines to spin out. Children will rarely copy these models directly, but rather mine them for inspiration. Hearing adults tell stories helps create a culture of

storytelling, inspiring children to share their stories with their classmates. Thus, children need to hear adults telling stories on a regular, even daily, basis.

You and your colleagues can draw from a wide variety of sources to find stories to tell children. These include personal experiences, folk tales, imaginary tales, children’s stories from previous years, and stories connected to curriculum.

Note: A beginning adult storyteller may worry about remembering all the parts of the story they intend to tell. It is perfectly acceptable to use notes.

Stories are compelling—perfect for attracting and keeping the attention of groups of children. Here are some tips:

- Use a ritual opening. Rituals might include turning on a special light, ringing a bell or chimes, or reciting a chant. Rituals can be tied to cultural practices. Some teachers introduce the “Crik-Crak” call and response ritual: “On the island of Haiti in the Caribbean, storytellers often start their stories by saying *Crik*. Now you say, *Crak*. I say, *Crik*. Now you say, *Crak*.” Inviting children’s input in creating rituals can be part of building and maintaining a healthy, democratic classroom community.
- Connect stories to the children, including them as the protagonists.
- Mine children’s interests for story themes and characters.
- Tell stories that respond to ideas and counteract stereotypes children are expressing.
- Use puppets and props; this can be especially helpful for children who are learning English.
- Give the audience (children) a role such as participating in call and response or contributing motions and gestures.
- Include songs and chants. Stories such as “Abiyoyo” have songs embedded in them.
- Repeat familiar stories. Children love hearing stories they enjoy multiple times; repetition helps children understand stories and practice vocabulary.
- Tell some short stories, 1-minute-stories, as all stories do not need to be long and complex.
- Modulate pacing, voice and gesture. Slow down; alternate volume and tempo; incorporate gestures.

Storytelling: Listening to and Collecting Children’s Stories

Supporting children as storytellers involves careful listening and gentle scaffolding. Listening to children’s stories provides an opportunity for building relationships and getting to know children deeply. Over time, children’s comfort with storytelling and their narrative abilities will grow. During story dictation, “teacherly moments” will arise—times when, because a child shows interest, we can support children’s specific literacy and language skills. However, it is critical that ST/SA not be turned into a phonics lesson. The adults’ primary roles in dictation are as listener and recorder.

Guidelines for Dictation

- Begin the year by taking dictation yourself or invite another adult in the classroom to take it, so that you have a couple of stories from each of the children.
- Aim to collect and act out one story from each child about every two weeks (two stories per month will result in each child having a significant story collection by the end of the year). A calendar will help children know and anticipate their storytelling days.
- For stories that will be acted out, limit each story to one page. Lengthy stories take a long time to copy down (robbing other children of the opportunity to tell stories) and can be very difficult to act out. Let children know at the beginning of the year that their stories can be as short as they like, but no longer than one page.
- Write down stories verbatim. There will likely be some conversation throughout the storytelling session. Modeling this method will help children when they are scribing for each other.
- Read the story back to the storyteller. When a child has finished telling his or her story, ask, “Is there anything you want to add or change in your story?” At this point, also ask for a title. Treating the story as a text increases print awareness and provides an opportunity for more sophisticated narratives.

Issues that may arise in children’s stories

Some stories may be inappropriate for sharing with the whole group because they concern private matters. We recommend that you listen to and scribe these stories and invite children to tell alternative stories to act out.

Some children are exposed to violence through the media or in their personal experiences. Grappling with issues of power and control, many children are drawn to stories involving superheroes and fighting. Whether or not to censor stories with violent themes is a controversial issue. Because stories are a way children make sense of the world, we recommend that they be allowed to tell and act out stories involving superheroes and fighting.

Supporting all children as storytellers

While some children will begin the year confident in their storytelling abilities, others will have trouble getting started. The challenge is to provide just the right amount of support that aids children’s development without taking away their ownership of the story (and thus decreasing their motivation to participate in storytelling). Variability in children’s language and communication styles will emerge as children tell their stories. Very short stories—even one-word stories—should be celebrated.

Some children who are not immediately comfortable expressing themselves in spoken English will benefit from certain kinds of supports. These include adults modeling storytelling, visual prompts (such as story cards or dice), verbal prompts (“Where does the story begin?” “How did

you/the character feel when that happened?”), and co-construction (teachers or peers giving suggestions to help children start their stories or providing a word). Children can certainly tell stories in their home languages; they might then try telling the story again in English. Fortunate classrooms will include an adult who can transcribe these stories in their original languages. Others may look to other children, family members, or other members of the school community for assistance.

Not all children will want to tell a story at the start of the year. Storytelling should *always* be a choice. Experience shows that, over time, almost all children choose to tell stories.

Supporting literacy skills

During dictation, kindergarteners may read familiar words and recognize features of print. Without making it a formal reading lesson, teachers can support children’s encoding, decoding, and understanding of printed language conventions. Many Reading Foundational standards can be addressed fluidly and in context. For example, while writing a particular word, some children may be able to sound it out or, after the story is completed, some children may be able to decode some of the words they just dictated.

Promoting language development

During dictation adults have opportunities to supply new vocabulary words. Dictation is also an opportunity to discuss elements of stories, such as characters, setting, and action.

Grammatical errors will appear in children’s stories.

- Write down exactly what a child says, staying true to his or her words.
- If a child is making a grammatical error, and you feel that they are able to learn the standard grammar or that the mistake will make it difficult for others to understand the story, offer an option—“I can write this as you told me, or I can write it as it would be in a book. In a book it would go like this: ‘_____.’ How does that sound?”

Note: In reading stories to the whole class, some teachers with a high proportion of children learning English will correct grammar in order for children to hear the stories in standard English.

Story Acting (Dramatization)

Story acting brings children’s ideas to the group. It gives a compelling reason for children’s storytelling, celebrates children’s ideas, and provides an opportunity for the class to create meaning around a text of great interest. Conversations about stories and dramatizations extend children’s literacy learning.

Getting Started

Many but not all of the children in your class will have become familiar with ST/SA in K1. To help children learn the routines of story acting you can act out stories and books, work with small groups of actors, and act out scenes more than once with different actors.

Stage rules

Stage rules create a safe environment for story acting. Two simple rules are usually sufficient:

1. Stay one arm- or leg-length from one another when pretend fighting.
2. Stay off the stage while you are a member of the audience; come onto the stage if you are acting.

Acting out the story/choosing the actors

Begin the dramatization by reading the first words of the story. When you come to a role (character or inanimate object), turn to the child next to you and ask, “Can I see you be the ___?” Likely she or he will come onto the stage and start acting the part. Of course, a child may always decline the role. Continue reading the story fluidly, going around the circle to invite actors to come on stage as parts appear in the story. You and the children can be expansive in your definition of characters; a house, a forest, wind, or rain can be acted out, as well as people and animals. Including inanimate objects allows more children to participate in the dramatization. In stories with many characters, have actors sit down when their parts are finished to make room on the stage for others.

Avoid negotiating with children about roles they want to play—it should not be an option to say, “I don’t want to be the princess, but I do want to be the knight.” Going around the stage in the manner described here is fast and efficient, allowing many children to participate in dramatization and many stories to be heard.

Notes:

1. Let the author of the story choose the role he or she wants: to act, narrate or watch the dramatization. This can be determined when the story is dictated.
2. Some children may be hesitant to take on gender-specific roles (a boy being reluctant to play the mother). You might say, “In acting, boys can pretend to be anything: girls, flowers, dinosaurs, anything.”
3. Early in her career, Vivian Paley had the story author choose the entire cast. She changed this practice out of considerations of fairness (some children were asked to be actors far more than others).

Supporting the actors

New actors may be shy about performing on stage and use only small body movements and facial gestures. If needed, teachers can also offer prompts (“show me how a turtle crawls” or “remember how you pretended to be a baby in the dramatization center?”). Over time, children will expand their repertoire of movement. Some teachers read a story twice, so that during the first reading the class can discuss and practice different ways to act out particular roles. When acting is happening, read slowly so actors have time to perform. You can encourage the actors to take a bow at the end of the performance.

Supporting the audience

Focusing the audience's attention on the actors, rather than spending time trying to manage the audience's behavior, helps everyone attend to the acting on stage. In addition, the audience can become involved in the dramatization (singing a song that is part of the story), and the audience might applaud at the end of stories.

Conversations to extend learning after dramatizations

Invite children to offer compliments and suggestions immediately after story acting, taking time at the beginning of the year to define compliments and suggestions, teach some parameters, and practice as a group. These group conversations about storytelling and acting can produce high-level conversation and sophisticated acting. Teachers can also draw connections among stories, share their impressions, and ask children their impressions about individual stories and emerging themes across stories. Terms such as characters, setting, plot, and mood can be included in such conversations. Important concepts in writing can be reinforced, such as purpose, language, and audience. Over time, you and your children will establish your own way of dramatizations. Occasionally, you may want to discuss how your rules and rituals are working.

Communication

After stories have been told and enacted, teachers can provide additional opportunities for children to enjoy the stories and communicate their ideas. These opportunities can be offered during Centers as well as at other times of the day. Teachers are encouraged to provide individual notebooks to collect stories. Children may want to illustrate stories in notebooks and/or with diverse materials at the Art Studio; build in the Block Center, or act out the story again in the Dramatization Center.

Family Involvement

Many families have intrinsic knowledge and deep traditions about the value of storytelling. It may also be helpful for families to understand how stories support children's success in school by enlarging vocabulary, learning about sequencing of events, developing creativity, and learning to express and regulate, along with the strong ties to literacy development. Teachers can also:

- share children's stories at conferences with parents/families;
- encourage families to tell stories and listen to the stories their children tell;
- invite families to share stories in school;
- learn from families what stories are important to them and share these in class;
- share stories from school with families;
- share video of story enactments, via email or during parent-teacher conferences;
- request stories from home; or hold a family story event at school.

Acknowledgements

The original version of this guide was written by Ben Mardell (Lesley University) and Marina Boni (Boston Public Schools) with input from the teachers in the BPS Storytelling and Making Learning Visible Seminars, as well as by BPS colleagues Jason Sachs, Ben Russell, Nicole St. Victor, and Hua He, and by Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Gillian McNamee, Trish Lee, and Patsy Cooper. Theresa Vilcapoma, Brian Gold, Carmen Lico and Lily Holland offered input for the current version.

Revised by Marina Boni and Melissa Tonachel, 2017. Updated 2020.

Our gratitude to Vivian Paley for her wisdom and deep faith in children.

Appendix: Developmental expectations about children’s stories

It is valuable to know what to expect when collecting children’s stories, as children’s abilities to tell stories expand over the course of the early childhood years.

age	description	example
3 year olds	“Leap Frog” stories While connected in the child’s mind, to adults they seem to hop from one event to another.	“I went to the doctors. Sarah came over. I had cake for breakfast.”
4 year olds	Chronologies, also referred to as “and then and then and then stories.” These stories are connected temporally, but do not have a well-articulated beginning or end. Can continue for a long time.	“I had cake for breakfast. And then I went to the doctors. And I got a shot. And then we went home. Sarah came over. We played with my dolls.”
5 and 6 year olds	“Classic Narratives” with a beginning, middle and end; a story with a problem that is resolved	“One night my brother and I heard a knock. We thought it was something getting knocked down. So we grabbed hockey sticks, and my brother said, ‘If you see anyone, stab it with this hockey stick.’ We went downstairs to see what the knock was. We looked in the living room. In the family room. We looked in the kitchen. We looked downstairs. It was just my cat. The end.”
7 and up	Over time, children’s ideas, use of language, and vocabulary in stories become more complex, as they continue to emulate and integrate, ever more smoothly, the language of print.	

These characterizations do not constitute hard and fast rules, as children’s narrative abilities develop at different rates, and older children may tell stories reminiscent of an early stage of development.

Children may also choose to tell poetic stories, developing a mood rather than describing an event (“Sometimes when you catch wind, snow comes down. I caught the wind and then it flew out of my hands.”). Children’s cultural backgrounds influence how they tell stories. (see McCabe, A. (1997). Cultural background and storytelling: A review and implications for schooling. *The Elementary School Journal*, 97 (5), 453-473)