

Literacy in School Daycares in Montreal's Disadvantaged Areas

- The school plays an essential role in developing children's literacy skills.
- This work must also be done in the daycare setting.
- Children's family, cultural and social settings are sometimes far removed from the "school" culture, leaving a gap between the children's knowledge and the school's expectations.
- Given these observations, offering children every opportunity to develop their literacy skills in disadvantaged environments is even more critical.

Definition of literacy in a school daycare setting

- Literacy in the context of school daycare represents a child's ability to understand and communicate an opinion, emotions and information.
- Literacy is developed in a playful, non-formal context, using a variety of media (voice, print, digital, etc.).
- This literacy, an integral part of everyday life, enables children to understand the world around them, increase their power of influence over it, and participate actively in all areas of their lives, including school life.

Principles derived from this definition

It follows from this definition that children become the main actors in the development of their literacy, as they are specifically provided with:

- Varied and frequent opportunities to understand and communicate.
- Opportunities for formal and informal, planned and unplanned social interaction.
- A variety of reader, writer, and communicator models.

Implementation based on these principles

To promote the implementation of these principles, school daycare staff will:

- Foster a healthy climate conducive to children's development.
- Develop an inquisitive approach.
- Allow children to express themselves.
- Work with parents, the school team, and partners.
- Learn to know themselves and self-regulate in order to act as role models.
- Take into consideration the uniqueness of each child.
- Adapt their educational actions to the context (transition times, snack times, free time, planned activities, etc.).
- Encourage children by using positive, constructive, and rewarding feedback.
- Diversify the materials and resources offered.

Literacy Development in School Daycare ... *I'm doing my share!*

Oral Communication

Refers to formal or non-formal, planned, or spontaneous social interactions.

Encourage :

- Questioning.
- Thinking aloud.
- Interactions between children.

Speaking

- What activities can I use to encourage children to talk?
- How and when should I give children a chance to talk?
- For some children, how can I value what they say even when it represents a risk for them?
- Questions can be varied:
 - › Can you describe it?
 - › Can you explain this?
 - › Can you defend it?
 - › Can you tell us about it?
 - › Can you tell me more?
 - › Can you explain how it's done?

Spontaneous speech

The child experiences their own words at the same time as their listeners.

Exchanges are unprepared by the child, and they are not corrected by the educator.

In a nutshell

Daycare complements the classroom when it comes to literacy. When more importance is placed on developing literacy skills, it helps children understand the world around them and increases their power to influence it.

Questions to spark thinking

- What role does literacy play in the school daycare?
- What kinds of literacy support do educators offer children?
- What is offered to the children? How do they react to the suggestions? What motivates them?
- What is a lever or an obstacle to literacy development?
- What models of reader/writer/communicator does the school daycare offer children?
- How do school daycare activities encourage children to talk?
- How does the school daycare acknowledge the social and cultural diversity among the children?

Written culture

Refers to all forms of written material for both reading and writing.

Provides:

- A range of writing styles.
- Different models of readers and writers.
- Moments of interaction around the written word.

Reading

- How can I take advantage of different reading opportunities inside and outside of school?
- Which materials do I use?
- Why read? To relax, learn, act, play, etc.

Writing

- How do you set aside time for writing in a daycare setting?
- How do you put the children's ideas, activities, and experiences into writing?

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