

# Reading Environmental Print

*Reading Environmental Print offers teachers suggestions as to the types of environmental print to display and how it can be used as part of an effective Kindergarten program.*

Supporting Kindergarten

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Environmental print is the written text that is found in the everyday environment. Environmental print can be road signs, labels on food containers, signs on stores, newspapers, or words printed on t-shirts. Children and teachers explore print and its many functions using materials that are readily available in the immediate environment. Children should be encouraged to add to collections and classroom displays of environmental print. These displays should change and expand to include materials related to specific inquiries, children's interests and experiences, and community events.

Examples of print which would interest children and provide relevant material for them to practice reading include:

- labels on classroom objects
  - chalkboard
  - chair
  - clock
  - desk
  - door
  - gerbil or other classroom pet
  - library corner
  - light
  - locker
  - mirror
  - paint
  - shelf
  - sink

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- table
- wall
- waste basket
- window
- posted instructions
  - “Scissors go here.”
  - “Please keep this door closed.”
- printed resources from home and the community
  - advertisements and flyers
  - catalogues
  - coupons
  - greeting cards
  - instructions for toy assembly
  - labels from canned foods
  - menus
  - milk and juice cartons
  - newspapers, magazines
  - recipes
  - replicas of street signs
  - toy labels, packages, and price tags
  - telephone books
  - television guides
  - travel brochures.

## Purposes

- to interest children in print and in reading.
- to emphasize the functional nature of print to beginning readers and writers – like talk, printed symbols convey meaning and often affect the actions and choices of people.
- to build children’s sight word vocabularies.
- to assist word and letter recognition.

## Procedure

- Label items in the classroom.
- Read and discuss environmental print samples as the child’s interest arises.

- Encourage children to scan the environmental print display frequently.
- Encourage children to use illustrations or the surrounding context to determine the words for the print samples that they cannot read.
- If children ask how to spell a word that is displayed around the classroom, ask students if they have seen that word around the classroom or draw their attention to it.

### **Assessment**

- Observe children's interest in contributing examples and their response to environmental print to note which materials convey meaning to children. Document the child's use of displayed words, letter combinations, and letter formations in their emergent writing.
- Keep a record of children who contribute to the display and those who read the samples.

### **Teacher's Role**

- Realize that literacy begins in preschool years when children recognize and respond to logos and signs in their environment.
- Realize individual name tags are important labels.
- Print labels in upper and lower case letters.
- Arrange a basic classroom display of environmental print, comprised of printed materials found in most households, and in the immediate community.
- When changing an invitation, change the corresponding labels as needed.