



Supporting Writing in Various Learning Centers in Preschool Classrooms: Research Findings

Overview

Early writing is foundational for later reading and writing development. Children need multiple daily opportunities to write in various contexts to develop early writing skills.

Researchers observed preschool classrooms across many US states to identify effective writing opportunities happening at preschool classrooms. Here is what they learned:



Finding 01

Teachers Often Support Writing at Art and Writing Centers.

Art Centers



- In art centers, teachers support writing by helping children write their names or spell words to add to their artwork.
- Expert teachers also support composing and writing concepts by maximizing children's interest and creativity in the art area.

For example:

(1) when children talk about their artwork, teachers can demonstrate that writing is meaningful by taking dictation to children's depiction.

(2) teachers and children can create artwork titles or labels together and post it near to post near the artwork.

Writing Centers

- Preschool classrooms should include a writing center where children have a specific area to write.
- Writing centers are the second main area where writing interactions take place in preschool classrooms, where word writing and idea generation support happen.
- Teachers with a high level of writing support engaged children individually and maintained sustained interaction with a child, such as providing various supports at the writing center on a worksheet.



Finding 02

Teachers' writing support at play time is of high quality.

- Writing was not happening a lot in play, but when writing happened, they showed high quality.
- During play, teachers provided writing support on various writing components, including idea generation, composing, and spelling.



At the block area, teachers showed writing by dictating children's labels of blocks they built.



During dramatic play, teachers could support composing and spelling processes by helping children write a to-do list for household chores.

Finding 03

Good teachers provide more writing supports.



High quality classroom includes a wide range of materials for writing. **Writing tools** (markers, crayons, colored pencils) and **surfaces** (post-its, card stocks, papers) should be accessible at various areas, including writing center, art center, science center, block area, and dramatic play areas.



Children mostly write independently at writing center and art center, where writing resources are available. Good teachers take advantage of where children write and provide **in-the-moment support**, such as:



- Talking about letter forms and letter sounds;
- Helping students hear individual sounds as they spell;
- Encouraging children to draw about their ideas.

Finding 04

Children write independently where they are supported.

- Children's independent writing mainly focused on name writing and word copying, happening in art center and writing center.
- It is possible that teachers' instructional focus followed children's interest in these activities, or children wrote independently in ways they were instructed.



SUMMARY CREATED BY:
Jialin Lai

TO READ THE FULL ARTICLE:

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