



SCRIBBLES preschool

Promoting Literacy in Preschool

By Mimi Lyons, Director

Why? Both the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) adopted a joint position

statement on literacy back in 1998, after determining that *the early childhood years are the most important period for literacy development*. Extensive scientific research conducted by the National Early Literacy Panel has since documented the paramount importance of early literacy skills being introduced and nurtured during these early years because of their direct correlation to later literacy achievements. The Panel's studies also determined which instructional practices relate to future success in reading. At Scribbles, we base our literacy program on all these major contributions to the early literacy knowledge base.

How? We strive to maintain environments that are print rich, having items that are labeled, signs and symbols that are posted, and writing centers for the children. A wide variety of print material is available that includes magazines, newspapers, brochures, picture books, books without words and interactive books that stimulate the children to do something with or in response to the book. Children who are ready are encouraged to dictate their own version of the story, as well as to create their own original art to accompany it. Reading aloud to the children is emphasized, as it is considered to be *the single most important activity for building the skills essential for reading success*.

Nurturing literacy also means having the children share their reactions to print material and to language being introduced via

poems, songs, finger-plays and stories. Teachers ask questions to gauge the children's comprehension. This leads to an enriched vocabulary, which is considered an excellent way of ensuring that children will become successful readers. Our "Book Nook" enrichment program is designed to enhance language development and emerging literacy by focusing on several prominent children's authors and illustrators. Each month culminates with the children creating their own books based on the inspiration received from the authors and illustrators studied. Our "Creative Drama" enrichment program provides an opportunity for dramatic interpretation of literature using props, costume and scenery.

Literacy is also promoted as the children participate in various activity centers. A part of the classroom becomes the doctor's office. "Prescriptions" are written. A restaurant is opened, menus are made, and "orders" are taken. A field trip to a real post office leads to the creation of one in the classroom. "Mail" is delivered, and names are written and matched. The items on the science table are labeled and categorized. The connection is made between spoken and written language as they occur in authentic activities that the children experience.

Knowing what early literacy skills are essential enable us to play a major role in helping children achieve developmental milestones. We support both the National Institute for Literacy and the National Early Literacy Panel for conducting this rigorous research, because of the effect it has on improving early childhood education.

For more information contact Mimi Lyons at 973-334-1877 or visit our website at www.scribblespreschoolinc.com