

Development Targets
for
Early Literacy Skills

**A resource to assist programme planning
for children with
Special Educational Needs**

by

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Development Targets for Early Literacy Skills

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**** These resources may be freely copied for use with children. Other parts of the Programme are copyright.***

INTRODUCTION

Literacy skills are probably the most important aspect of learning in the early years of a child's education. Unless pupils can reach a reasonable level of attainment in reading, spelling and writing it is unlikely that they will be able to work independently in many areas of the curriculum. It is, therefore of critical importance that every child is helped to acquire basic literacy skills as soon as possible after starting school. Unfortunately not all children are able to make satisfactory progress with all areas of literacy development. For such children it is of paramount importance that a carefully planned and structured programme is drawn up at the earliest possible time in order to enable them to begin to develop their skills. Early intervention is important not just because of the effects of literacy difficulties across the whole curriculum, but equally because when a child is failing to make progress in an area so obvious and critical as literacy, low self esteem and a poor self image invariably follow. In the long term it is much easier to improve children's literacy skills than it is to change their perceptions of themselves as failures. The Code of Practice has highlighted the importance of identifying learning objectives for Individual Education Plans (IEPs), for children who have Special Educational Needs.

Individual Education Plans

Individual education plans are intended to enable the child with special educational needs to learn and progress. The Code of Practice indicates that as far as possible IEPs should be based on the curriculum being followed by the pupil alongside other pupils using the range of programmes, activities and resources normally available to the pupil's teacher. In the first instance therefore, IEPs should be focused on helping children to gain as much as possible from what can be made available within the classroom rather than recommending programmes which can only be followed outside the class. This may be achieved through:-

ORGANISATION - in terms of group times or practical arrangements within the classroom; the use of particular books, programmes or resources e.g. word processing, IT programs.

ADDITIONAL HELP IN THE CLASSROOM - welfare support, parents, support teachers.

TEACHER - give specifically targeted time to the child.

PARENTS - who should be involved as much as possible in drawing up and implementing the IEP.

The IEP should be seen as an action plan which describes in some detail the learning objectives for a particular child, the time scales involved and the methods by which the objectives will be achieved.

Record Keeping

One of the most important features of any intervention programme is record keeping. Effective record keeping means that it should be possible to find out quickly and easily exactly what the child has achieved and how long the process took to reach that level of attainment. It is only through having specific information of this kind that appropriate plans can be made for future goals and objectives.

Too much information can make it difficult to pinpoint the essential information required for planning and selecting targets. The record form included on the next page is designed to provide a quick and easy “at a glance” summary of what activities the child has worked on and the length of time taken. It provides a useful overview of the child’s work in each of the specific skill areas and can act as a useful reminder to ensure that all skill areas in literacy are being attended to, rather than an over emphasis being placed on any one area.

Equally important is that when recording work done, the “Checked “ column is given as much attention as the “Mastered” column. Children with literacy difficulties can often forget skills which are not being specifically targeted at any particular time. Because of this regular checking needs to be carried out to ensure that skill levels are being maintained. An individual end of term or year assessment could possibly include checking all of the targets that the child has worked on during the previous term. In this way, if some skills are not being maintained a quick “top-up” revision activity will yield better results than the child losing the ground made and then having to start all over again on a particular activity - a very demoralising situation for everyone.

Good record keeping can be quick thorough and motivating for child, teacher and parents.

Assessing Literacy Skills

Literacy skills can be assessed using any of the following methods or contexts.

- 1 Child working independently
- 2 Child working with support,
 - a) with another child
 - b) with an adult
- 3 Child working on a self selected activity
- 4 Child working on a directed activity
- 5 Child working on a highly structured task
- 6 Child working on an open ended task
- 7 Reading accuracy - own reading book
- 8 Reading accuracy - word recognition test
- 9 Reading accuracy - test of continuous reading
- 10 Reading comprehension - own reading book
- 11 Reading comprehension - test
- 12 Listening comprehension - verbal responses
- 13 Assessment of free writing
- 14 Standardised spelling test

KNOWLEDGE OF LETTER SOUNDS / SYMBOLS

- Objectives**
- 1.To identify correct symbol when given letter sound.
 - 2.To give correct sound when teacher points to symbol.

letter

Date Started	Mastered	Checked

Development Targets

1. Child to identify letters in own name when given individual sounds.
2. Child to identify individual sounds from an array of 6 consonants in random order.
3. Child to identify sounds from an array of 10 consonants in random order.
4. Child to identify sounds from an array of 15 consonants in random order.
5. Child to identify: b, d, p, u, n, m, w, l, q in random order.
6. Child to identify vowels in random order.
7. Child to identify any letter from complete alphabet in correct sequence.
8. Child to identify any letter from complete alphabet in random order.

Resources

Plastic/wooden letters, Mixed sequences of letters on cards, Alphabet Strip.
The Resource Sheets on pages 24-27 can be used for these targets.

HANDWRITING

Objective 1. Child to write his/her own first name independently.

Development Targets

1. Child to trace over name in dots/clear plastic covered card.
2. Child to copy name from name card immediately above paper.
3. Child to copy name from name card using a variety of pens, pencils, crayons.
4. Child to write name after looking at name card and then turning name card face down whilst writing.
5. Child to write name independently and use name card to self correct after name has been written.
6. Child to write name independently without reference to name card before or after writing.

Date Started	Mastered	Checked

Resources

These activities can be carried out using a joined script or print, in line with the particular school's handwriting policy. However, for many children who have difficulties with developing writing and spelling skills (or poor coordination skills), it is easier to work with print because they are able to see quite clearly how many letters they need to write. The use of entry and exit marks will ensure an easy transition to a joined script at an appropriate time.

Text for use with basic concepts about print.

Dumpy is a little dog.

He likes to run.

He likes to play.

He goes for walks in the woods.

One day Dumpy saw a rabbit.

He ran after it.

Dumpy lost his way in the woods.

He was very sad.

“I want to go home”, he said.

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