



OBSERVE	<p>OBSERVE</p> <p>Observe what children are writing and consider the extent to which knowledge of print rules, knowledge of letters, and knowledge of how to break words into sounds is coming together within their writing. Are words represented by letters? Do the letters represent key sounds within the words, or even beginning/ending sounds of words? See Additional Resources for further information on the stages and observational examples.</p>
FOCUS	<p>Label and Narrate Your Writing</p> <p>Make the act and purpose of writing visible to children as you reflect on your own writing in the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “I’m writing down all of your suggestions here on this paper so we can remember everyone’s ideas.” ◆ “I’m writing your name, A-d-e-l-e, on your paper so we know this is your work.” <p>Discuss the Form and Function of Different Types of Writing</p> <p>Discuss the form and function of different <i>types</i> of writing such as signs, lists, and letters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Signs: “Today we are going to have a visitor. Let’s make a welcome sign! With a sign, we don’t have to start at the top of the page. We may put the words right in the middle to get everyone’s attention.” ◆ Lists: “Each line in this list represents one thing we need to find outside.” ◆ Letters: “Here at the top is where you write who your letter is for, so I am writing, ‘Dear Ms. Baker.’ Down here at the bottom is where we sign who it’s from, so I’m writing our class name.” ◆ “I traced my hand. Now I am going to write my five favorite foods, one on each finger. This tells 5 things about me, just like I have 5 fingers!”
SCAFFOLD I	<p>Take Dictation</p> <p>Help children connect their ideas and words by writing down what they say and explicitly connecting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “Oh yes, I can see that this is a huge rocket going to the moon! Can I write down what you said so everyone can read about your drawing? Now let’s hang it!” ◆ “Let’s write our schedule down to help us with our morning. First, we will sing our... Yes, our song! I will write ‘song’ (<i>write the word ‘song’ as you say it</i>). Then we will...”
SCAFFOLD II	<p>Encourage Children’s Writing</p> <p>Encourage children’s independent writing. This can include writing their names, writing letters or individual words, and writing longer pieces (that may include some nonsense letters or scribble but that’s okay). When possible, make their writing products visible, commenting on the value of their effort, and prompting continued exploration of writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “Will you sign your work?” ◆ “Write your name on the sign in sheet. Put an ‘L’ in the box if you brought a lunchbox. Put a ‘B’ in the box if you will buy your lunch.” ◆ “You may use your journals during centers. Today’s journal question is: What is my favorite place to visit? It can be a real place or an imaginary place.”
KEEP IT GOING	<p>Consider what you learned from observing children on Monday as well as their reaction to your Focus and Scaffolds. Find ways to build the activities in the Setting the Stage into your regular routines.</p>

Additional Resources

Phases of early writing literacy development:

1. Scribbling and drawing: Children can show left to right directionality or word spacing and top to down orientation, but no real letters.
2. Letter and letter-like forms: Children move from using a few isolated letters over and over, such as those from their names, to more varied 'strings of letters' (even if it's nonsense).
3. Phonological Awareness and Print Knowledge start to combine: Children might use initial sounds or other 'loud' sounds in the word to represent a full word (e.g., writing M for mama).
4. More full blending of Phonological Awareness and Print Knowledge, where multiple sounds (usually first and last, and eventually some middle sounds and vowel sounds) are represented by letters. This is usually not until kindergarten or even first grade for some kids.

A young child's early writing shows us that they know something about how print works. Very young children scribble and draw. However, as children develop print knowledge, their awareness of letters shows in their writing. At first, the child may infuse letters into drawings. Over time, a child will begin to write strings of letters. These strings represent words, but the letters have no connection to the sounds within the words.



As children begin to merge their alphabet knowledge with their phonological awareness (i.e., ability to hear and manipulate sounds in words), their writing also shows this connection. Here, a girl represents key sounds within the words "I love Pennsylvania." A more sophisticated level of integrating letter knowledge and phonological awareness in writing can be seen as children start representing beginning and ending sounds of words and, eventually, beginning and end sounds as well as a middle vowel.

