

PLAYING TO LEARN SEEL AT HOME & SCHOOL



An Approach to Developing Literate Children

SEEL: Systematic and Engaging Early Literacy

What is SEEL?

Systematic - Literacy skills are purposefully organized and explicitly taught.

Engaging - Children are motivated to learn by participating in playful, meaningful activities.

Early - Activities and lessons are consistent with developmental characteristics of young children, and are adapted according to individual needs.

Literacy - Children acquire foundational literacy skills that lead to later reading and writing success.

What Promotes Success in Literacy?

Researchers are finding that literacy success begins before children enter first grade. Many studies show that children entering kindergarten or first grade lacking early literacy skills are at risk for future difficulties in school.¹ However, research also shows that regardless of cultural background or income level, children with excellent early literacy support at home enter school with “high levels of reading and writing knowledge.”²

SEEL’s success at teaching the early literacy skills of reading, writing, and comprehension is due to teaching strategies utilized in your child’s classroom as *well as at home*. These strategies follow and enhance natural child development and reinforce essential skills that will remain with children for a lifetime.³

1 Justice, Invernizzi, & Meier, 2002; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Juel, 1988; Scarborough, 2001

2 Barone, 1999 in McGee and Richgels, 2002

3 Culatta, Aslett, Fife, & Setzer, 2004; Ukrainetz, Cooney, Kyer, Kysar, & Harris, 2000

Benefits of Using Playfulness for Long-Term Learning



- Allows for interactive, child-centered activities that encourage interest and participation
- Engages the total child—mind *and* body—in learning
- Presents children with opportunities to connect background knowledge with new information
- Adds meaning and purpose to skills development
- Provides opportunities for engaging conversations that enable individualized responses and increase comprehension

What are the Principles Behind SEEL?

The SEEL principles stem from the importance of

- giving children purposeful reasons for reading and writing,
- making instruction personally meaningful,
- actively engaging children in playful practice of literacy skills, and
- frequently exposing children to the sound patterns associated with letters and words.

What is the Parent Role in SEEL?

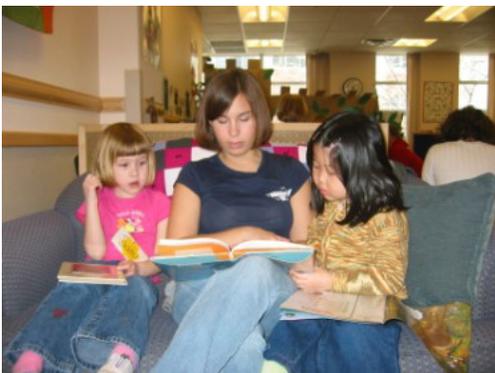
Parents and family members are critical to literacy learning success in kindergarten, and the SEEL curriculum offers them simple but powerful tools. SEEL provides opportunities for family involvement both in the classroom and at home.

SEEL in the Classroom—Parents can

- volunteer lead small groups of students in SEEL lessons and activities in the classroom,
- prepare or supply materials used in SEEL and SEEL at Home activities, and
- volunteer to help with special SEEL events.

SEEL at Home—Parents can

- participate in SEEL at Home activities in playful and interactive ways,
- ask children to share what they are learning from SEEL activities at school,
- read stories and further engage children by asking questions about what is being read, and
- review literacy targets with children as opportunities arise throughout the day.



SEEL in Action

Classroom Activity: The Black Backpack

In teaching children to read words that end in “ack,” the teacher and students pack a black backpack with “ack” objects, such as sacks and snacks that crack. During and after the activity, the teacher expresses reactions that highlight the “ack” words to comment on children’s actions, ask questions, express feelings, give options, and request actions or objects (e.g., “Oh no, a crack in the snack pack!” or “Do you want to eat your snack on the tracks?”)

After the playful experience, the teacher supports the children in reading and writing about what they did, responding to children’s contributions in ways that provide encouragement and reinforce knowledge of the literacy target.



SEEL at Home

“Cole told me all about how he learned to pack a black backpack with ‘ack’ things. We went through all of the ‘ack’ things in the paper backpack he made at school, and he told me his own stories about them.”

“Emily began bringing SEEL at Home projects home right at the first of kindergarten. She wore the paper cap she made at school, and we looked for things around the house that end in ‘ap.’ We found a snap, bottle caps of all kinds, a lap, and a map. I was ready for a nap!”

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