

Playing To Learn

The Importance of Playfulness in Systematic and Engaging Early Literacy

Play is the “work” of young children. SEEL activities incorporate song, dance, drama, and games in order to attract children’s attention, motivate them to participate, hold their interest, and help them remember what they’ve learned. There is a place in SEEL for all children’s talents, strengths, and preferences.



A Few Guidelines for Playful Instruction

Intonation

- Use intonation to express emotions.
- Use your voice to bring the text to life.

SHARED LAUGHTER

- Encourage children to laugh.
- Smile and laugh with them.

Exaggerated Interactions (Spectacles)

- Create interesting actions to comment on.
- Offer options for ways to use the materials.

Facial Expressions

- Come alive for the children.
- Engage in a little showmanship when appropriate.

Teacher-Student Conversations

- Make comments, express emotion, and offer choices or options.
- Invite the children to talk about what they are thinking and feeling.

Emotional Connection

- Create an emotional appeal, make positive statements, and utilize a range of “played” emotions.
- Mirror the emotions of the children (surprise, confusion, delight, etc).
- Encourage children as they participate and interact with each other.

Responsiveness

- Respond to children’s expressions of emotion.
- Acknowledge and elaborate on their contributions to the conversation or activity.

SEEL Principles

The following components are central to an effective and enjoyable SEEL learning experience:

Playfulness

Be as lively and playful as possible. Join in with the play, involve family and friends, and have fun!

Meaningfulness

Remind children of real-life experiences that relate to SEEL activities. Take opportunities to reinforce target sounds during daily routines.

Clear Target

Ask children to tell you about which target sounds they’ve been learning about at school. Make sure it’s clear which target is the focus of each activity.

Target Use

Think of words that incorporate the target and use them as much as possible. Initiate and encourage conversation centered around target sounds.

SEEL: Systematic and Engaging Early Literacy

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