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Early Literacy Connections©

Early Literacy Connections© is a professionally developed early literacy curriculum designed specifically for multi-age child care settings. It provides full lesson plans, teach tips, plus accompanying materials and cross-disciplinary activities. Because Early Literacy Connections© was developed by a Head Start curriculum specialist based on Head Start Child Outcomes Framework and practices, the curriculum empowers child care programs to deliver an early literacy learning experience to the children in their care that is on par with what is provided in Head Start. It also aligns with New York State Early Learning Guidelines.

Early Literacy Connections© is an easy to use curriculum with all the materials included. It's unique in that it supports children in multi-age program with a multitude of engaging and developmentally leveled activities. Although literacy is the overarching theme throughout the curriculum, children are engaged in other subjects and work on skills in areas such as Mathematics, Science, Gross and Fine Motor, Arts, Social Studies, and Social/Emotional Development. This allows for children's individual interests to foster their early education and development.

We hear about kindergarten readiness, district reading programs and kindergarten screening and feel the need to push the academics in our programs. However, "while understanding where the finish line is is important," it's also important we not "lose sight of the "whole child"." It is with that understanding that Early Literacy Connections© focuses on play based, child centered learning. The activities in the curriculum allow children to express their creativity and nurture a sense of independence while exploring new concepts.

Child Care Programs using the Early Literacy Connections© receive training and ongoing program mentoring and coaching that is required to guarantee child care providers are using the curriculum with fidelity so there is continuity for children and the delivery strengthens children's ability to be school ready and achieve on track reading levels by third grade. Coaching and mentoring also targets customizing the use of the curriculum in individual programs so that providers feel empowered to deliver quality care and instruction. The curriculum is designed to be used with the Environmental Rating Scales which are used to measure the richness and appropriateness of learning environments. Although Early Literacy Connections© is designed to support a teacher/child relationship, child care providers using the curriculum will also become experienced and knowledgeable in providing supplemental activities and resources to go home with families, supporting learning that is taking place in the child care program.

In the last three years over 200 Child Care Programs of varying modalities, across Steuben and Schuyler County have been trained in using this comprehensive early learning curriculum. In addition, 939 children, ages 2 months to 5 years, have been served, through the Early Literacy Connections'© supplemental screening tools. Providers have said things like "The curriculum has really helped me get organized with my program," and "The children love the curriculum and have begun to make connections between the lessons and things they learn outside of day care."

Families and caregivers should ask their registered or licensed child care providers if they participate in this beneficial program. For more information about Early Literacy Connections© curriculum or services provided by Child Care Aware® of Steuben and Schuyler, a program of Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc., visit our website <http://proactioninc.org/cca/> or contact Education and Literacy Specialist, Hailey Haigh at 607-776-2125 ext. 251 or via email at: haighh@proactioninc.org.

www.proactioninc.org

Pro Action works to build a community of resilient individuals and families who can meet their basic needs, overcome adversity, and prosper.