

About The Visuals

The majority of this video was filmed in five classrooms. The fluent reader at the beginning of the video and the older children within the body of the film were in an after-school program in Oakland, California. The three year olds in the video were in the same school-district-run neighborhood center.

Four year olds were filmed in both a public school's early childhood classroom in Denver and a community college's children center in San Luis Obispo, California. The kindergarten children were filmed in a classroom in Westminister, Colorado, a suburb of Denver.

Introduction

There is some sense of urgency for the attainment of universal literacy. Rather than politicized debates or dependence on quick fixes, the emphasis in the last few years has been on careful examination of the precursors of reading. It is on this body of research that this video is based.

Underlying Cognitive Competencies—necessary for all formal education

- Oral Language Fluency
 - Develops from verbal communication with young children on varying subjects that interest them.
- ***Fine Motor Coordination***: dexterity and control learned through many activities.
 - For example, “paper cookies.”
- ***Symbolic Thought***: words, drawings, and props are all symbols.
 - Illustrated by children interpreting their own maps, “reading” environmental print, and responding to new vocabulary.
- ***One-to-One Correspondence***: matching.
 - Illustrated with a lotto game.
- ***Self-Regulation Skills***: Focused attention, deliberate memory, planning, and monitoring actions.
 - Importance of dramatic play for developing self-regulation.
 - Illustrated with space-themed dramatic play.

Literacy Specific Competencies

- Communicative aspects of literacy
 - Motivate us to read and write.
 - Continue to develop throughout life.
- ***Purpose of Reading***: understanding that print conveys messages.
- ***Concepts of Print***: Basic conventions that describe the relationship between the organization of a printed text and the processes involved in reading that text.
 - Examples include learning to turn pages, starting at the beginning of a book, learning that print is from left to right, etc.
- ***Comprehension of Text***: understanding the vocabulary and narrative of a story.
 - Story time should be part of the daily activity for children at home and in groups.
 - Importance of multiple readings of a book for young children.

Literacy Skills

- ***Phonological Awareness***: Ability to focus on the sound structure of words, rather than on their meaning or role in grammar.
 - Children are seen sounding out the syllables in their names, singing and creating rhymes and nonsense words.
 - ***Phonemic awareness***: Ability to break individual words into their component sounds.
 - This is an advanced form of phonological awareness.

- Illustrated with Elkonian boxes.
- *Phonics*: Instructional practice that emphasizes the rule system for connecting sounds to letters.
- **Letter Recognition**: Ability to identify a letter either by its name or the sound it makes.
 - Due to the arbitrary nature of the English alphabet, this is not an easy task for young children.
 - Start with familiar letters.
 - Children generally tend to first use capital letters.
- **Alphabetic Principle**: Understanding that a sequence of letters in a written word represents a sequence of sounds in a spoken word.
 - Children without this understanding produce “words” consisting entirely of the same letter.
- **Sound/Symbol Correspondence**: Ability to relate speech sounds to the letters that represent those sounds.
 - First attempts result in “inventive” or “creative” spelling.
 - English does not have a completely reliable system of sound/symbol correspondence.
- **Encoding**: Process of representing sounds with letters and spoken words with written words.
 - Incorporates skills of phonological awareness, sound/symbol correspondence etc.
 - In the larger sense of conveying meaning, it is not considered to be writing.
 - Illustrated with a child writing a single word in invented spelling.
- **Decoding**: Process of converting written words into spoken words.
 - Involves several processes.
 - Illustrated with a child reading a set of word cards.
- For reading and writing to occur, the Skills of Literacy have to come together with the Communicative Aspects of Literacy.
 - Graphically shown creating a structure with bricks and mortar.
 - Children reading books.
 - Child sending a written message to another.
 - Reading and writing continue to evolve throughout life although most important foundations are established in early childhood.

Related Films Also Available From Davidson Films

This is one of seven films in Davidson Films' "Early Childhood" series. The other titles are:

- ***Growing Minds: Cognitive Development in Early Childhood*** (1996) 25 Minutes
- ***How Children Learn*** (1997) 23 Minutes
- ***Nourishing Language Development in Early Childhood*** (1996) 31 Minutes
- ***Play: A Vygotskian Approach*** (1996) 26 Minutes
- ***Maria Montessori: Her Life And Legacy*** (2004) 35 Minutes
- ***Performance Assessment: A Teacher's Way Of Knowing*** (1993) 21 Minutes

Other related films are:

- ***Scaffolding Self-Regulated Learning in Primary classrooms*** (1996) 35 Minutes
- ***Vygotsky's Developmental Theory: An Introduction*** (1994) 28 Minutes