



The Kindergarten Chronicles

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The Value of Environmental Print

It's almost November and you know your students well by now. You've assessed, established routines, and have begun your quest toward literacy with your kindergartners. The first big step toward reading is helping your students see themselves as readers. In order to make sense of learning experiences at school, children need to bridge the gap between what they already know (schema) and what they experience in school. This can be achieved through the use of environmental print.

One way to make learning to read more meaningful is by having your students bring in environmental

print from their surrounding community. We can use the environmental print to make visual displays and class books that can be accessed and used by the students, giving them opportunities to practice their reading skills. Through the use of environmental print, students will ultimately view themselves as competent readers and users of print.

In *Month-By-Month Reading and Writing for Kindergarten*, Patricia Cunningham and co-writer Dorothy Hall suggest using environmental print, "Young children enjoy showing what they have learned in school, and environmental print gives them that opportunity each

day even if they do not come from homes with books and magazines."

Environmental print is a natural starting point to teach your students to read and write. It provides a concrete connection with every-day print, incorporates students' interests and backgrounds, and doesn't cost a lot of money to use!

Food for Thought

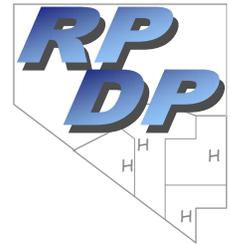
The more you use, examine, and play with environmental print, the more likely your students will.

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Environmental Print (EP) Activities

Reading

- Read from a reading bag: Collect EP in zip-top bags and allow students to read!
- Make books with cereal box covers, candy labels, and store front logos. Example:
Book Title- *What's for Breakfast?*
_____ likes to eat Lucky Charms.



- Find rhyming words or sort by beginning sounds, ending sounds, or word families.
- Use magazine pictures to make an alphabet page for a class ABC book.
- Find upper-, lower-, and mixed-case EP letters. Have students sort letters.

Writing

- Trace words or letters on EP or copy it onto another sheet of paper.
- Write a rebus class story on chart paper using EP and the students' own language.
Example:
"I ate dinner at



- Draw, design, and write your own EP
- Journal writing: glue EP to the top of the page and write about it.

Blocks

- Tape store signs or street signs to blocks for buildings and create an imaginary city.

Math

- Sort and graph EP by attributes such as shape, size, color, and font size.
- Graph favorite EP from restaurants, stores, etc.
- Make patterns or find repeating patterns in EP
- Find numbers on barcodes or labels.
- Add numbers on food or product coupons.
- Find number sequences.



Dramatic Play

- Set up a grocery store. Put price tags on EP
\$.50—



Environmental Print Field Trip Ideas:

- Around the school building to find labels and signs
- Around the neighborhood to examine street signs
- To other classrooms to read their EP
- To the grocery store or Wal-Mart, K-Mart, or Target
- To McDonald's, Pizza Hut, or KFC

Links to Websites About Environmental Print:

- © www.ourschoolfamily.com/Environmental%20Print.htm
- © www.sharonmacdonald.com/environmental-print.aspx
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