



FUNCTIONAL PRINT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: PRACTICAL APPROACHES FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

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**MONA SANDERS RECEIVES A
SALARY FROM MARSHALL
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**NO NON-FINANCIAL
DISCLOSURES**



**WHAT DOES
FUNCTIONAL PRINT
MEAN TO YOU?**



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Define Functional Print

Connect functional print to early literacy development

Explore classroom integration

Highlight collaboration between SLPs and teachers

Consider social determinants of health

Review of current research and strategies

Practical examples & brainstorming

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PRINT HUNT





WHAT IS FUNCTIONAL PRINT?

Print that serves a real-life,
functional purpose



A DAY IN THE LIFE— THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

What print does your student encounter within a school day?

Morning: cereal boxes, street signs, bus number, classroom labels

School Day: cubby names, visual schedules, center signs, snack charts

Afternoon: backpack tag, school pick-up signs, grocery store labels

WHY FUNCTIONAL PRINT?

Children benefit most from repeated, meaningful exposure to print across multiple settings (Mol et al., 2008)

Print referencing in natural contexts supports print knowledge development (Justice & Ezell, 2002)

Adult modeling of print concepts during shared book reading and classroom routines is strongly correlated with increased print knowledge and emergent literacy skills (Piasta et al., 2012)





WHY FUNCTIONAL PRINT?

Print as a tool to support communication

Children learn best within context

Multiple opportunities for exposure to literacy



SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES: COLLABORATION BETWEEN SLPS & EDUCATORS

SLP Role:

Support language/literacy connections, embed goals

Educators Role:

Reinforce print daily in routines and materials

Shared Role:

Goal setting, material planning, and family inclusion.

Social Determinants of Health & Print Access

Conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks (CDC, 2024)

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH & PRINT ACCESS



Social
Economic
Status

Community
Resources

Home
Language
differences



POP OUT PRINT

VIDEO MODELING POP

STRATEGY.MOV



FUNCTIONAL PRINT IN ACTION

Using a classroom calendar: letter identification, environmental print, writing, language opportunities

Extension into home and family communication



PLAY-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

[IMG_0006.MOV](#)

Play-Based Learning Opportunities

Centers: pretend play menus, signs, labels

Literacy play props: mailboxes, doctor forms, grocery lists

Writing opportunities integrated into routines

BRAINSTORMING

Choose a routine (e.g., arrival, snack, clean-up) and brainstorm how to embed print meaningfully



MAKING PRINT ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL FAMILIES

- Home-school connection strategies
- Respecting and reflecting family literacy practices
- Making functional print visible, inviting, and inclusive

POP

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FURTHER QUESTIONS?



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