

Makeover Minutes

Quick tips for your learning environment



Books for Literacy and Beyond

Young children’s literacy is strongly supported by a variety of books that have been intentionally selected to build on specific skills and themes. When selecting books for an early learning environment, it can be tempting to think, “More is better.” But through careful book selection, children begin to link concepts they read about to their daily lives, as well as learn important social and emotional skills that support their development.



Watch Video:
[Books for Literacy and Beyond](#)

Environmental Tips

Define your reading area

Identify a quiet, cozy space where children can relax and read. Use shelving or rugs to define the space. Including puppets or soft animals can be a fun way to get children involved in acting out characters or stories.

Display books so they are easy to see

When books are packed tightly on shelving or placed in large stacks, they can be hard for children to access. Use a bookshelf that allows covers to be visible or keep stacks and baskets of books small. You can also make your own shelving, such as rain gutters attached to the wall (shown below), to create an accessible book display.



Provide a thoughtful variety

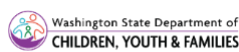
Offer books about familiar experiences, fantasy, animals, and people of varying races, cultures, ages, and abilities. Include both fiction and non-fiction texts. Choose a thoughtful variety that allows children to see and learn about things they may not typically encounter in their daily lives, as well as see themselves reflected in the books they read.



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Minimize, store, and rotate

Children show more interest in books when they are carefully selected to support their interests, abilities, cultures, and classroom topics.

- Preview/read each book before adding it to the learning environment.
- Rotate books frequently.
- Organize extra books by theme so that they are easier to find when rotating.
- Use books to support a variety of learning experiences. For example, include books about architecture in the block area and books about nature in the science area.
- When space is limited, accessible baskets can be used to hold and store small numbers of books.



Additional Resources

Visit the [Meaningful Makeover](#) website for full episodes and more great tips!

References

Harms, T., Cryer, D., Clifford, R. M., & Yazejian, N. (2019). Family child care environment rating scale, third edition (FCCERS-3). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

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