INCREASING EMERGENT READERS' PRINT REFERENCE KNOWLEDGE

Prior to actually learning to read, students require (among other things) a good understanding of the forms, functions and features of print. This includes understanding that the written language is a code for the spoken language, that the function of print is to carry meaning, being able to differentiate between letters, words and sentences, and knowing the order and direction in which pages and print are read.

To some extent, print referencing knowledge is gained when adults read books aloud to children. However, unless adults deliberately highlight print concepts, children spend very little time looking at the print (Justice, Pullen, & Pence, 2008). Thus the most significant gains in a child's print referencing knowledge occur when the adult reader specifically draws the child's attention to these features (Justice et al., 2009).

Zucker, Ward and Justice (2009) identify four domains of print knowledge which should be targeted and provide examples of each. See the next page for a copy of these domains and strategies.

Integral to the success of this strategy is ensuring that a range of read-aloud books are selected that include elements from the various domains.

References:

Justice, L., Kaderavek, J., Fan, X., Sofka, A., & Hunt, A. (2009). Accelerating preschoolers' early literacy development through classroom-based teacher-child storybook reading and explicit print referencing. *Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools*, 35(2), 185-193.

Justice, L., Pullen, P., & Pence, K. (2008). Influence of verbal and nonverbal references to print on preschoolers' visual attention to print during storybook reading. *Developmental Psychology,* 44(3), 855-866.

Zucker , T., Ward, A., & Justice, L. (2009). Print referencing during read-alouds: A technique for increasing emergent readers' print knowledge. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(1), 62-72.

PRINT KNOWLEDGE

Adapted from Zucker , Ward, & Justice, L. (2009). * This is not included in Zucker et al.'s table.

Print Targets	Definition/Example
Print Meaning Domain	

Print Function	The function of print is to carry meaning. Additional meaning may be conveyed by:
	➢ Changes in font (colour, size, orientation, bold, shape).
	    ♦ "These words are big and bold because the person is shouting."
	➢ Visible speech (e.g., use of speech bubbles in illustration).
	    ♦ "The words inside the speech bubble tell us what the hen is saying."
	➢ Visible sound
	    ♦ "Grrr, is the noise made by the tiger."

Environmental Function	Words present in the environment are used in the illustration (e.g., signs, labels, lists, calendars, recipes, diagrams, etc.).
	    ♦ "Let's read these traffic signs."
	    ♦ " The jar has the word 'Jam' on it."

Concepts of Reading	The function of reading is to convey information or tell a story.
	    ♦ "If we want to find out what happens, we'll have to keep reading."
	    ♦ "If we read the recipe, it will tell us how to make the cake."

Book & Print Organisation Domain	

Page Order	The order in which pages are read.
	    ♦ "Where is the front of the book?"
	    ♦ "Which page do we turn now?"

Title of Book	The role of the title as a label and to convey the key idea/message.
	    ♦ "The title tells us about the story. What do you think it will be about?"
	    ♦ "The title page tells us that this book was published in Perth."

Top and Bottom of Page	English text is written from the top of the bottom of a page.
	    ♦ "This is the top of the page. The writing starts here."
	    ♦ "I read this top line and then the next line" – demonstrate.
	    ♦ "Show me how we hold the book so that we can read it?"

Print Direction	English text is written from left to write. Sometimes text is printed with unusual orientations or shapes to convey meaning.
	    ♦ Place your finger under the text as you read.
	    ♦ "These words are printed at an angle to make it look like the rocket going up in the air."

Author's Role	The role of the author/illustrator.
	    ♦ "The author is the person who wrote the book."
	    ♦ "Do you remember another book written by this author?"
	    ♦ "The author has written a dedication to his mother."

Letters Domain	
Sound of Letters	There are 26 letters. *The focus at this stage should be on the common sound represented by each letter (e.g., /a/ apple NOT the name /ay/).
	♦ "I see a word starting with /r/."
	♦ "Can you show me a /t/?"
Concept of Letter	The purpose of letters is to form words. Different fonts may represent the letters differently.
	♦ "I see the same letter in these two words."
	♦ "There are three letters in the word cat."
	♦ "Look at the letter /a/ in these two books. It looks different."
Upper and Lower Case Letters	Letters come in two forms.
	♦ "This is a capital D. We use it at the beginning of people's names."
	♦ "The uppercase /s/ looks the same as the lowercase /s/, but the upper case and lower case /e/ look very different."

Words Domain	
Concept of words	Words are distinct units of print and are different from letters.
	♦ "Let's count the words on this page."
	♦ "Which word is longer, dinosaur or soup?"
Letter vs Words	Letters make up words.
	♦ "This is the word sun. /s/, /u/, /n/ spells sun."
Word Identification	Some familiar or meaningful words can be identified.
	♦ "How times can you see the word cat?"

Sentences & Punctuation Domain	
Concept of sentences	Sentences are comprised of groups of words.
	♦ "I need to stop reading and take a breath because it's the end of the sentence."
Statements	Statements finish with a full stop.
	♦ "This dot is called a full stop. It tells us that it is the end of the sentence."
Questions	Questions are asking for information and finish with a question mark.
	♦ "How do we know the man is asking a question?"
Exclamations	Exclamations marks are used to indicate strong emotion.
	♦ "This exclamation mark shows us that Mark is surprised."
Speech	Speech is enclosed in quotation marks..
	♦ "This is where Tom starts speaking. Where does he finish?."
Paragraphs	Groups of sentences on the same topic are formed into a paragraph.
	♦ "Can you show me the end of the paragraph?"
	♦ "Tell me the main idea in this paragraph."