

THE CHILD CARE CONNECTION

CHILD CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

» FALL 2025 «

5 WAYS TO CREATE A LITERACY-RICH PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM

Language and literacy skills in preschool and kindergarten are a strong predictor of children's academic achievement in all subject areas through high school. Teachers can support this by offering real and meaningful experiences that help children connect new learning to what they already know.

Here are five ways that preschool teachers can create a literacy-rich environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and meaningfully promotes emergent reading and writing skills.

AN ENVIRONMENT FOR LITERACY

1. **Label children's personal items and spaces with their photos and names:** Preschoolers first begin to identify the letters in their own names, followed by their friends' names. Add labels with children's photos and their names to cubbies, coat hooks, seats, place mats, classroom jobs, or any other individual items you may have in your classroom.

When it is time to put things away, encourage children to find their own name. This not only encourages valuable self-help skills but also helps them begin to identify their names in print. Occasionally, you can also ask children to help a friend put away their items too. For example, "Sally left her water bottle on the table. Can you put it in her cubby?"

When children are ready, remove the photo support and continue with only written names. Ask questions like "How do you know that's Sally's cubby?" to guide them toward letter identification in the context of their friends' names.

2. **Label classroom materials with both pictures and words:** Environmental print in the classroom serves multiple purposes. First, photos of materials with word labels on baskets, bins, and shelves help children easily find materials and know exactly where those materials belong when they're cleaning up. They also allow children to see that print has a purpose and that groups of printed letters represent words.

Finally, with adult support, children can begin to associate beginning letters with sounds, using the pictures of familiar classroom materials as a reference. As children are cleaning up, try asking, "What goes in this basket?" and "How do you know?" Encourage them to "read" the label using the pictures and the words.

3. **Add books to every learning center or interest area:** Books don't have to be limited only to your classroom library. Adding a basket of topic-related books to each interest area helps children develop an understanding between print and its purpose.

4. **Offer writing materials in every learning center or interest area:** Preschool teachers often have a writing center available in their classroom, but why limit writing to just one space? Adults use writing all the time—from writing out birthday cards to jotting down grocery lists and sticky note reminders, writing is all around us. Young children, who learn best through meaningful and contextualized experiences, should also have opportunities to practice writing for a variety of purposes. Though a well-crafted writing center is important, offer writing materials in every area of the classroom.

5. **Create resource rings with relevant vocabulary words:** With intentional and continued exposure, young children can build the rich and expansive vocabulary they need for later reading development. As your class explores new topics of interest throughout the year, be intentional about exposing children to new vocabulary words.

Create resource rings with topic-related vocabulary words and picture cues to add to a designated area of the classroom; some teachers may prefer to place these in the writing center. Add a hole punch to each card, and group topic-related word cards on a single binder ring.

Excerpted from:
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/creating-literacy-rich-preschool-classroom/>
By Amanda Reardon

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Family and Group Family Child Care providers are responsible for countless priorities and tasks throughout the day. The safety and supervision of the children in their care, the cooking and cleaning to maintain a healthy environment, communication with families, and dozens more. They are also the sole proprietor of a small business. The Office of Children and Family Services recognizes the administrative burden placed on Family and Group Family Day Care Programs. OCFS has launched in collaboration with The Early Care and Learning Council and Child Care Resource Center agencies a new statewide program: The Empire State Family Child Care Collaborative.

Family and Group Family Providers are eligible to join the network through their CCRC. Joining the network will give programs access to free membership in a Child Care Management System and full support through the process. At Catholic Charities, we know that starting a new technology or system can be intimidating. We will have staff member on board to help programs through the process and utilize the technology to its fullest extent. This will put more money back into our providers' pocket and more time to put into doing what they love. I don't think anyone opens a Family Day Care out of the joy of inputting attendance into twelve different systems.

As we navigate through this new program, we want to make sure we are meeting the needs of the providers in our area. We have unique strengths and challenges in Otsego County. More information will be forthcoming as we get our network off the ground and we move forward in partnership with providers.

Rebecca Matthews

TRAINING

P.A.L.S. - Physical Activity Learning Sessions

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: FoxCare Center, Oneonta

Physical activity is a vital part of all learning programs. This fall we will hold a series of Physical Activity Learning Sessions (P.A.L.S) in order to help you incorporate physical activity into your daily schedule. Each session will be 1 to 1.5 hours; the last session will be approximately 2 hours and contains a goal setting and action planning component. **A minimum of 4 participants is required to hold each class.**

▪ **October 7:** Physical Activity is Important in Early Childhood

▪ **October 14:** Best Practices for Physical Activity in ECE settings: Time and Space

▪ **October 21:** Best Practices for Physical Activity in ECE settings: Type, Daily Activities, and Providers' role

▪ **October 27:** Best Practices for Physical Activities in ECE settings: Families, Training & Resources, and Policies & Goal Setting and Action Planning (Tentative Date)

**** This series includes the opportunity for three additional hours of on-site training at your program.**

The Growing Brain Training Series

Time: 5:30 - 8:30 PM

Location: FoxCare Center, Oneonta

Our second session of Zero-to-Three's The Growing Brain training series is being offered through the fall and early winter months. The greatest rate of growth and development on the human brain takes place in the first years of life and occurs during the same time a child is making critical connections with their outside world. This series covers the growth that occurs, and how early experiences, including relationships with adults, have a foundational impact on the growing brain. At least 4 participants are required to hold each class. **Please RSVP by October 10th** to hold your place for the first session.

▪ **October 16:** The Growing Brain: The Basics

(This class is mandatory to participate in any other session)

▪ **November 13:** The Factors Affecting Brain Growth and Development

▪ **December 18:** Communication and Language Development

▪ **January 15:** Cognition and Executive Function

▪ **February 19:** Social and Emotional Development

▪ **March 19:** Understanding Behavior

▪ **April 16:** Everyday Play

ACES 101

Date: November 6, 2025

Time: 5:30 - 8:30 PM

Location: FoxCare Center, Oneonta

Participants will gain an understanding of ACE's and its impact on young children, their families, and the field of early childhood education.

ACES 201

Date: January 29, 2026

Time: 5:30 - 8:30 PM

Location: FoxCare Center, Oneonta

This workshop begins to unpack science-aligned interventions for both children and adults to create regulated spaces in child care programs. Providers will practice the key relational skills of co-regulation and reframing of behavior to strengthen a provider's response to children's stress behavior.

REMINDER

We have **winter weather gear** in our loaner closet if there are providers who need it!

We have snow pants, gloves, and snow suits for infants!

We also have outside play items like shovels, buckets, bins and shapers for playing out in the snow!



Welcome

Welcome to our newest registered and licensed child care programs in Otsego County:

- ★ **Blissful Beginnings Day Care, LLC - Cherry Valley**
- ★ **Oneonta Family Day Care - Oneonta**

FIRE SAFETY

Our Child Care team will be coming out to do Fire Safety related activities! We will reach out to schedule a time to come out to your program!



FALL REGULATION ROUND-UP!

417.7(a) – The program must establish and implement a daily schedule of program activities that offers reasonable regularity in routines, including snack and meal periods, nap and rest periods, indoor activities, outdoor play time and a variety of large muscle activities throughout the day. There must be physical activity, appropriate to the ages of the children in care, every day.

As the school year begins, we have been reflecting on the importance of building a strong foundation for children. Children must have their basic needs met before they can focus on learning. Children's needs are met through building trusting relationships with their caregivers and through daily routines that provide predictable meal times, opportunities for play and moving their bodies, and rest periods. Following a daily routine helps children to feel safe, to transition more easily, and to focus on growing and learning. If you would like help in adjusting your daily schedule to meet the needs of your children, please reach out to us.



Food For Thought

Black Bean Dip

Ingredients:

- 2 (14oz) Cans Black Beans, drained and rinsed
- $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup Mild Salsa
- 4 Garlic Cloves, minced
- 2 Teaspoons Lemon Juice
- $\frac{1}{8}$ Teaspoon Salt
- 1 Teaspoon Ground Cumin (optional)



Directions:

1. Puree all ingredients in a food processor until smooth.

Yields: 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ Cups

Toddler = 2 tablespoons as meat/meat alternate OR

Toddler = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup as vegetable at snack.

Preschool & School-Age = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup as meat/meat alternate OR

Preschool & School-Age = $\frac{3}{4}$ cup as vegetable at snack.

myfoodprogram.com

PINEAPPLE BBQ BAKED BEANS

Ingredients:

- 2 (15oz) Cans White Beans, Rinsed and Drained
- 15oz Can Pineapple Chunks, Drained (reserve juice, if desired) OR 1/2 Fresh Pineapple, Cubed
- 2 Tablespoons Chopped Bacon
- 18oz Bottle BBQ Sauce
- 2 Tablespoons Brown Sugar
- 2 Tablespoons Worcestershire Sauce
- 1/2 Cup Water OR Reserved Pineapple Juice



Directions:

1. Add everything to a 4-5 quart slow cooker and stir until well combined.
2. Cook on low for 4 hours. Stir.
3. Serve garnished with chopped green onions, if desired.

*Toddler = 1/4 cup; Preschooler = 2/3 cup; School Age = 1 cup
as vegetable and fruit as a side at lunch/supper.*

myfoodprogram.com

Egg and Cheese Toasts

Ingredients

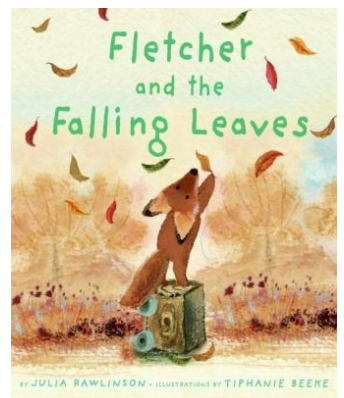
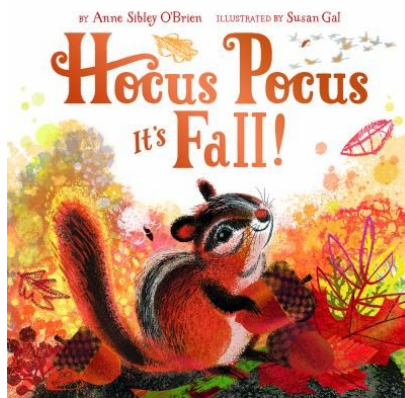
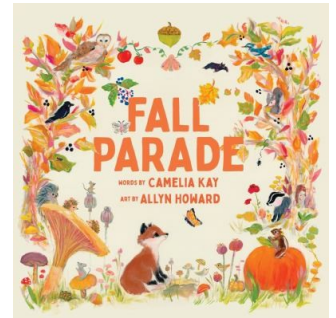
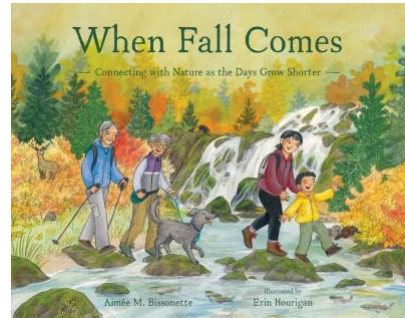
- 2 Slices Bread (at least 28 grams each, enriched or whole grain rich)
- 1 Large Egg
- 1/2 Cup (2 ounces) Grated Cheese
- 1 Teaspoon Finely Chopped Fresh Herbs (like Thyme or Rosemary)
- Salt and Black Pepper



Directions:

1. Lightly toast bread.
2. Preheat oven to 400°.
3. Crack the egg into a small bowl and beat with a fork until the yolk and white are combined. Mix in the cheese and fresh herbs if using. Add salt and pepper as desired. Spread mixture over the bread all the way to the crusts. Bake until the cheese and egg mixture is puffed, bubbly, and starting to brown, about 10 to 12 minutes.

Fall Reading



FALL SENSES SCAVENGER HUNT

SMELL

- ☐ APPLES
- ☐ PUMPKIN SPICE
- ☐ PINE TREES
- ☐ CINNAMON
- ☐ PUMPKIN PIE
- ☐ BONFIRE

TASTE

- ☐ APPLES
- ☐ PUMPKIN SPICE
- ☐ APPLE CIDER
- ☐ CINNAMON
- ☐ PUMPKIN PIE
- ☐ HOT CHOCOLATE

TOUCH

- ☐ TREE BARK
- ☐ DRY LEAVES
- ☐ PINE CONES
- ☐ SOFT SWEATER
- ☐ SMOOTH PUMPKIN
- ☐ BUMPY PUMPKIN

SEE

- ☐ SPIDER WEB
- ☐ CLOUDS
- ☐ FALL LEAVES
- ☐ ACORNS
- ☐ PINE CONES
- ☐ SQUIRRELS

HEAR

- ☐ CRUNCHING LEAVES
- ☐ FIRE CRACKLING
- ☐ WIND BLOWING
- ☐ CRICKETS
- ☐ BIRDS CHIRPING
- ☐ RAIN FALLING





Catholic Charities
of Delaware, Otsego and Schoharie Counties
176 Main Street
Oneonta, NY 13820



Family Child Care Providers Needed!

We are seeking qualified individuals in Otsego County looking to give back to our community!

Benefits of becoming a Family Child Care Provider:

- ✓ Self-Employment
- ✓ Annual Grant from CSEA
- ✓ Health, Dental and Vision Insurance Through CSEA

Catholic Charities is the Family Child Care Registrar in Otsego County. Our Child Care Specialists are here to help you through every step of the registration process - and beyond!



Call (607) 432-0061 or
visit: charitiesccd.org
for more information!

www.CharitiesCCDOS.org
176 Main St., Oneonta NY

Follow Us On Social Media



AUTUMN



Q L W E J M E D I R Y A H K Z B N U T C V P
H N P G I B T S C U E T S O R F D R O S A M
R B S A Z D E P Q N J W I V G X T L E K F H
Y Q U I L T K J F U B H O A E C O L Q D B S
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T C E J R H S A U Q S Y G W L K O S X H D M
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S R J C I Q P N O H V L U C A D M E F O K T
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B Z R A K E Q H D M X N R E S J P I C E T O
E I L S H Y C B G U K O P T D M F L A R L Z
P F R Q Y R O T X Z W J N B U L A S E M I D
W X B D O J H A R V E S T P C I O Q Y S N L
L H Z M S I J F W O R C A Q Y N K B P U G X

apples	colorful	frost	pumpkin	squash
autumn	cozy	harvest	quilt	squirrel
birds	crow	hayride	rake	sunflower
blanket	deciduous	jacket	rustling	sweater
bonfire	equinox	leaves	scarecrow	trees
changing	flannel	migrate	season	vegetables
cider	foliage	orchards	spider	wheelbarrow

