

HANDOUT 7

ELA/ELD Framework Informational Text Strategies

Content Knowledge

The content areas are given systematic attention in transitional kindergarten. Teachers examine the California Preschool Learning Foundations in mathematics, social sciences, science, health, and the visual and performing arts and use the foundations along with the kindergarten content standards as guideposts for instruction. Much is learned through play and hands-on experiences, but these are intentionally designed with clear objectives in mind. Content knowledge is built in a cohesive, not haphazard, fashion.

Wide reading experiences contribute to the development of content knowledge. At transitional kindergarten children examine picture books and participate in teacher read alouds. Teachers ensure that about half of the books they read aloud and make available are informational books, which have been scarce in the lives of young children (Duke 2000, Yopp, R. H. and Yopp 2006). Books are selected wisely so that knowledge is built and domain-specific words are heard and viewed multiple times, thus increasing the chance that they become a part of children's vocabularies. Figure 3.15 provides guidance for ensuring young children's exposure to informational text.

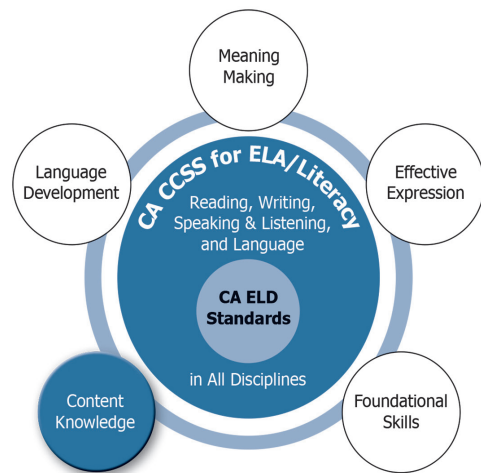


Figure 3.15. Ensuring Young Children's Access to Informational Text

- **Have an inviting and well-stocked classroom library that includes informational text, and ensure that it is accessible to children.** The library area should have visual appeal and comfortable furniture (a rug and bean bags, for example), and children should be provided with easy access to books and other text materials such as magazines and pamphlets. Consider placing books so that covers face out (as opposed to spine out) in order to capture children's attention and interest. Teachers keep informed about informational books they might want to include in their classroom libraries by visiting public libraries and book stores and searching the Internet. The National Science Teachers Association, for example, publishes a list of Outstanding Science Trade Books for children each year. This list can be found at <http://www.nsta.org/publications/ostb/>.
- **Place informational books in centers.** Children's books about forces and motion might be placed in a science center. Books about fish might be displayed by a class aquarium. Books about lines, shapes, and colors might be placed in an art center. Having books available where the children are engaged in activities invites children to pick them up and look through them and often inspires children to ask the teacher to read them aloud.
- **Make informational texts a regular part of your read aloud routine.** Children are curious and are eager to learn about their natural and social worlds. Reading aloud from books about plants and animals or national and state symbols, for example, answers children's questions about the world and inspire more questions. After reading, leave the books accessible so children can explore them on their own if they choose. Select books related to children's interests as well as those related to current topics of study.

Excerpted from pages 178-179 of the *English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*, © 2015 by the California Department of Education.

- **Include informational text in all areas of the curricula.** When children are exploring music, use books about musical instruments to convey information. When children are investigating weather, share books about rain, snow, and wind. Invite students to observe and talk about words and images in books.
- **Display informational text on classroom walls.** Teachers of young children are well aware of the importance of creating a print-rich environment for their students. Include in that environment informational text such as posters with diagrams and labels and pictures with captions.
- **Provide children with opportunities to be writers of informational text.** Let them write or dictate what they know and have learned or experienced. Share their writing with the class by reading it aloud or having the children read it aloud and posting it on classroom walls.
- **Monitor student access and exposure to informational text.** Observe children, and notice their interests and the books they handle. Use your observations to make decisions about additional books for the classroom and to gently spark interest in the variety of materials you make available. Keep a record of the materials you share with students, and be sure to balance informational text with other text types such as stories and poetry.
- **Teach with and about informational texts.** The CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy acknowledge the importance of including informational text in early childhood classrooms and require kindergarten teachers to address standards related to reading informational text. Transitional Kindergarten teachers play an important role in laying the groundwork for children to achieve the reading standards for informational text by offering developmentally appropriate experiences with these books.
- **Raise family awareness of the importance of sharing a variety of text types.** Some teachers share lists of books with family members for reading aloud at home to their young children. Others send home small backpacks containing books and ask that children share them with their families over the weekend. Be sure that informational texts are included on the lists and in the backpacks. At formal and informal meetings, talk to parents and other important adults about the value of reading aloud and sharing a variety of text types. Provide information about books in a school or classroom newsletter. Solicit parents' and families' input on favorite informational texts and topics.

Source

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