Literacy Toolkit (2005)

The toolkit contains print and electronic resources, including (1) *eMERGing Literacy and Technology: Working Together*, a 492 page curriculum guide; (2) *LitTECH Interactive Presents: The Beginning of Literacy*, a DVD that provides and overview linking technology to the concepts of emerging literacy. From the concepts of print to stages of writing, the DVD showcases children and teachers using technology while involved in literacy activities; (3) *Your Preschool Classroom Computer Center: How Does It Measure Up?*, a DVD that provides guidelines for teachers who are trying to make the computer center and integral part of their classrooms; (4) *A Guide to Selecting Software for Young Children*, a DVD to help teachers select appropriate software to meet children's needs; (5) *Supporting the Early Childhood Curriculum with Technology*, a DVD that addresses technology integration and ways teachers can support and enhance thematic units with software and related materials; (6) *Tools of the Trade: Early Childhood Software*, a DVD that shares innovative ways teachers integrate technology tools (software, digital cameras, etc.) into classroom routines; (7) *eMERGing Literacy and Technology: Curriculum Resource Guide*, a CD and Resource Guide that contains training materials, handouts, and agenda that can be used for staff development. The DVDs are also available in VHS format.

Available from the Center for Best Practices in Early Childhood at Western Illinois University. Cost is $300 each plus shipping. Call 309/298-1645 x 258 and ask for Carol.

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An Overview

Emergent Literacy: What It Is

Concepts related to emergent literacy form the basis for later reading and writing. When preschoolers point to pictures in a book or on a computer screen and pretend to "read" the story; when pseudo-letters, then recognizable letters and words, emerge from scribbles in drawings; or when a three-year-old recognizes the Hardees' logo on a hot air balloon and asks for french fries, these children demonstrate behaviors associated with the emergence of literacy.

Emergent literacy is based on social interactions with parents, teachers, and literary products long before children read from print. The beginnings of literacy lie in the everyday experiences of early childhood which seem to be crucial to literacy acquisition (Mason & Allen, 1986; McGee & Lomax, 1990). Children learn about reading and writing in similar ways to how they learn to listen and speak, by processes influenced by immersion in meaningful and stimulating environments (Katims, 1994). Unfortunately, when children have disabilities that make their world different from that of their peers who are not disabled, their early intervention plans are not likely to focus on literacy. Often, because of other more pressing issues, they do not enjoy a literacy environment at home where stories are read to them (Marvin, 1994). Their educational experiences tend to focus on gross and fine motor skills, communication, cognition, and self-help skills rather than on aspects of emergent literacy.

Research and Emergent Literacy: A Brief Review

Literacy is a social, psychological, and linguistic process. Emergent literacy's foundation is based in cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics (Gunn, Simmons, & Kameenui, 1995; Hiebert & Papierz, 1990; Katims, 1994; Mason & Allen, 1986; McGee & Lomax, 1990; Sulzby & Teale, 1991). An emergent literacy approach stresses that written and oral language develop concurrently and interrelatedly from birth. Both oral and written language are best learned when used in purposeful contexts and when children have opportunities to observe and interact with others who write and read (Clay, 1975; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Sulzby, 1990) as opposed to rote learning of letters, words, or sounds.

Literacy concepts emerge very early in life. A summary of basic emergent literacy concepts is shown in Figure 1. Since much of what is known about emergent literacy has been based on research with typically developing children (Cousin, Weekley, & Gerard, 1993), even if teachers of youngsters with disabilities know about emergent literacy practices, they may question the use of such practices with their children (Patzer & Pettegrew, 1996). Many children with oral language delays and impairments have significant literacy problems before they are in first grade (Scarborough & Dobrich, 1990). Although some suggest that children with mild to moderate disabilities develop literacy in ways that are quite similar to those of children without disabilities (Brazee & Haynes, 1989; Cutler & Stone, 1988; Erickson & Koppenhaver, 1995; Goodman, 1982; Hasselriss, 1982; Katims, 1991; Pierce & Porter, 1996; Reid & Hresko, 1980; Wiederholt & Hale, 1982), typically these children do not have the opportunity to do so and, as such, are the children who fall behind in kindergarten and the primary grades. Children who fail to "catch on" early keep falling further and further behind and are likely to end up repeating a grade or to be assigned to transition classes (Strickland, 1990). As children who are "behind" in reading move into the upper grades, they do not "catch up." Rather, they stay "behind" (Clay, 1979). The outlook for children with disabilities to experience opportunities to develop literacy is grim.

Figure 1. Summary of Basic Emergent Literacy

We use pictures and words to communicate.
Pictures have meaning.
Pictures tell stories.
Words have meaning.
Words are used to tell stories.
The words tell about the pictures.
Children can make their own stories using pictures and words.
Stories have a sequence.
Stories have characters, actions, and settings.
Stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end.
We read words on a page from left to right.
We read from the top of the page to the bottom.
There is a one-to-one correspondence between written and spoken words.
Each word we say can be written down, using one or more letters of the alphabet.
Written words are separated by spaces, just as spoken words are separated by brief pauses.

Many teachers do not view children with severe disabilities as capable of learning to read and write and, consequently, provide them with few opportunities to learn written language (Light & McNaughton, 1993). Koppenhaver and Yoder (1993) point out that even if teachers view the child as capable, that child is more likely to receive word-level skill-and-drill activities, seldom reading or listening to text and, more rarely, composing text.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) tend to emphasize fine motor tasks and self-help skills. Erickson and Koppenhaver (1995) found that when IEPs focused on academics, tasks were likely to include name recognition and rote memorization. Longitudinal case studies (Hutinger, Johanson, & Stoneburner, 1996) of fourteen children who demonstrated moderate to severe disabilities support Erickson and Koppenhaver's findings, revealing that those children, in spite of having sporadic access to technology applications as they progressed through school, rarely learned to read nor did their IEPs focus on literacy behaviors.

Interactive Technology and Emergent Literacy

Pairing appropriate literacy activities with current computer hardware, adaptive devices (when needed), and interactive software provides exciting, interesting, and activity-based experiences for children with or without disabilities. *eMERGing Literacy and Technology: Working Together* is based on the level of interactivity and potency brought to emerging literacy activities by increasingly high-quality software and hardware. A framework of concepts related to the development of reading and writing influenced the processes used to develop the emergent literacy concepts and outcomes found in this curriculum. Interactive technology forms the basis for the activities that assist children to acquire and develop literacy and language pleasantly, productively, and appropriately.

A Tested, Effective Emergent Literacy Curriculum

The activities suggested in *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* were tested over a three-year period in preschool classrooms with children who had disabilities ranging from mild to severe. This curriculum was originally developed in a research project[1] in two sites; then it was replicated in three new sites during the next two years. Two types of comparison sites—two without technology, and three with technology—demonstrated that children in the

[1] The Early Childhood Emergent Literacy Technology Project funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Technology, Educational Media, and Materials for Individual with Disabilities Program (PR#H180G40078).

curriculum-using research sites acquired emergent literacy concepts that were not shown in the comparison sites. The curriculum was adapted and further tested in a preschool model service delivery project[2] in classrooms attended by children with more severe disabilities. Cooperating teachers were committed to the projects; participated to the fullest of their ability; and assisted in planning, implementation, and aspects of data collection regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Effectiveness of the Curriculum: Some Results

The literacy and interactive technology research project represented a rigorous naturalistic inquiry using principles from Lincoln and Guba (1985, 1989), Miles and Huberman (1994), Patton (1990), and others (Filstead, 1970; Tesch, 1990). Classrooms were classified into four types according to the presence or absence of the project's curriculum activities and the technology experience of the teachers, ranging from experienced computer users to novice users to noncomputer users. The study, conducted in preschool classrooms in west-central Illinois, was designed to describe and explain the effects of a literacy and technology curriculum on the emergent literacy knowledge and abilities of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children who demonstrated mild to moderate disabilities.

Findings reported here are based on studying ten one-half day classes over two years. Observations, content analysis of field notes from over 500 hours of observation, videotapes, portfolios of children's drawings and writing samples, teacher and family interviews, as well as pre- and posttest data on the *Informal Literacy Assessment* (*ILA*) measure, as well as the *Behavior Interaction Tool* (*BIT*), were collected on 152 children. Six teachers, 16 support staff, and 142 families participated in the study.

Quantitative Results

First-year *ILA* and *BIT* scores were analyzed using the Ganova Multivariate Analysis of Variance program (Brecht & Woodward, 1987). The model is comprised of four categories with tests for prior linear trends. The categories were Group I: technology plus the *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* curriculum plus close supervision from the Center for Best Practices research team; Group II: technology plus the *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* curriculum; Group III: technology alone; and Group IV: no technology. In other words, the four groups could be ranked in order of their "strength," with the most intensive program being I and the least intensive being IV. At the beginning of the year, there were no significant differences among any of the four groups on either *ILA* or *BIT*.

At the end of the year, statistically significant differences were found between Groups I and II ($p<.04$) and between Groups II and III ($p<.03$), indicating that the intensity of the treatment was related to the emergent literacy outcome. Differences were more prominent on the *BIT*, with $p<.006$ for Group I and III and $p<.00001$ for the differences between Groups II and III. The scores themselves were in the order of I, II, and III from highest to lowest; however, it is likely that both the more highly supported *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* curriculum in Group I and the lesser-supported *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* curriculum in Group II were almost equally more effective than either of the "no curriculum" groups. Interestingly, the Group III teacher had just as much computer experience as the Group II teacher, but that factor alone did not contribute to increased literacy behavior in the children. Additionally, there were no significant differences between Groups III and IV. In other words, significant differences shown by Groups I and II resulted from the *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* curriculum.

Second-year results on the *BIT* were similar to first-year results. Differences between Groups I and II and Group III were significant ($p<.001$). Over a two-year period, 3-, 4- and 5-year-old

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[2] The Early Childhood Interactive Technology Literacy Curriculum Project funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Early Education Program for Children with Disabilities (PR#H024B50064).

children in both the two *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* conditions (N=114) and the non-*eMERGing Literacy and Technology* sites (N=48) showed gains on the *ILA* from the pretest to the posttest; however, the *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* children showed greater increases on two-thirds of the 12 items as compared to the non-*eMERGing Literacy and Technology* children. The greatest gains in the *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* group were shown on relatively sophisticated emergent literacy skills related to pretend "reading" with vocal inflection and sequencing stories in an appropriate order. Interestingly, one-third of the 3-year-olds in *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* sites turned book pages at the appropriate time, but not one in the non-*eMERGing Literacy and Technology* group did so.

Qualitative Data

Across *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* sites, teachers and parents commented informally and during interviews on children's attention to their names (their own and other children's) and to emergent writing. Videotapes and field notes support their observations. Children tried to find the letters of their names and classmates' names on the keyboard and typed their names. Children shared "messages" with one another using the notepad and electronic mail option on *KidDesk* (1995). Although the messages consisted of a string of random letters, the letters often took the form of recognizable words. Children were able to "read" back what they wrote, however. Teachers noted that computer use helped children distinguish between letters and numbers. Many typed the alphabet at the computer. One mother reported that her daughter got a pencil and paper and copied 30 words from a newly purchased *Busytown* (1993) software program for their home computer.

Children used story-writing software and graphic tools to explore letters and words and to produce stories. Emergent writing behaviors were observed when children used the keyboard to communicate thoughts, stories, phone numbers, and names. Some children who were observed creating stories in isolation in a writing center showed interest in the technology center when tool and graphic software was available. Children used beginning word-processing software to communicate with peers, family members, and other adults. The data showed that the children viewed the writing as a meaning-making process and were motivated to write, draw, and read. The writing that children produced on the computer and in "sign up" books followed the steps of emergent writing.

Children displayed positive literacy behaviors while using software programs such as *Harry and the Haunted House* (1994) from the Living Books series. Children developed a concept of "story" and began to link the spoken words to the written words. Children repeated whole phrases and began to learn concepts about print (e.g., writing goes from top to bottom and left to right, and there are spaces between words). They connected pictures and words in the books to the story on the computer.

During an interview, a parent summarized what other researchers and other teachers have observed:

> *She is doing one to one, pointing to words; the simple text. She is moving left to right. Maybe that lends itself to some of the things we've seen on the electronic storybooks when they highlight the words across the page. I think that she is starting to pay a little more attention to print. I was a little concerned about books on CD-ROM, that kids would get so into the animation they would ignore the words, so how would that help their reading literacy. But she is getting to the point that now she is doing so much writing she is paying attention to print.*

As young children begin to acquire emergent literacy skills, it is important that they be exposed to books and establish good book behaviors (Kupetz, 1993). One teacher reported on a child who was in an *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* classroom for two years:

> *He can hardly make it through a story on the carpet during group time; however, he is making books of several pages in length, illustrating and dictating words to it. It is a story that makes sense and has sequence. He likes to hook the pages together so it turns the pages like the computer. He has drawn arrows at the bottom of the pages like the computer screen. It has really been neat to watch [this child] because he has very little interest in books otherwise.*

Overwhelmingly, across treatment classrooms and sites, a variety of data sources—teachers' comments, field notes, and videotapes—documented increased social interaction using the *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* curriculum. Children asked questions, made comments, and pretended to "read" stories—skills that mark the beginnings of later success with written language (Kahmi & Catts, 1989; Stanovich, 1984). Some children gave directions about computer operation; others asked for help. When children interacted with selected commercial software, they engaged in social interaction with other children and adults, promoting listening and language skills. For example, Sam, who was diagnosed with autism, interacted with John, who came to the computer to see what Sam was doing. John began telling Sam what to click on and what to do in order to change the program. Sam followed John's direction exactly and launched another software program.

Results from Demonstration Sites

The *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* curriculum was adapted and tested for three years in preschool classrooms with children with moderate to severe disabilities. Results show literacy gains similar to those of children who participated in the *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* research classrooms. For example, children showed increases in their interest in books, in their ability to attend to a story, and in their ability to sequence events. Even children with severe disabilities showed increased attention to stories both on and off the computer. Teachers and families remarked on children's enthusiasm for both reading and writing activities at home and at school.

Using *eMERGing Literacy and Technology: Working Together*

The *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* activities are designed to promote literacy development at the technology center as well as in other areas of the environment and other curricula areas. A description at the beginning of each activity explains the links between the software and children's learning. Three types of software, organized according to levels of interactivity, are used: (1) interactive commercial software which can be used to extend literacy concepts and behaviors, including the Living Books series such as *Just Grandma and Me* (1994), *Harry and the Haunted House* (1994), and *Stellaluna* (1996); (2) commercially available graphics and story-making software such as *Kid Pix Studio* (1994), *EA*Kids Art Center* (1994), and *Stanley's Sticker Stories* (1996); and (3) *HyperStudio* (1996), an authoring program used by teachers and children to develop their own software based on meaningful experiences such as a favorite story or artwork, a field trip to the veterinarian's office, or family experiences of the children.

Classroom management techniques involve methods to integrate literacy activities during free choice and group time. Arranging placement of the technology center; facilitating children's management of the technology center; and supporting groups of computer users to promote socialization, oral language, and turn taking are critical factors. A careful review of software leads to a selection of software titles that support both literacy and the classroom curriculum. The software titles suggested in *eMERGing Literacy and Technology* are interactive; appeal to the wide range of abilities in a class; nurture children's learning styles; and support activities in the reading center, in other areas of the classroom, and at home.

Families play an essential role in the education and growth of their children, and *eMERGing Literacy and Technology: Working Together* supports that role. The chapter "Family Involvement" describes three levels of family participation in literacy and technology activities. Each level offers participation in various forms to meet the unique needs and interests of families. The chapter offers ideas for awareness activities, a variety of literacy and technology sessions for family night workshops, and classroom activities in which family members can participate.

Summary

While literacy activities are widely accepted in programs for young children without disabilities, those activities are rarely evidenced in educational practice for preschool children with special needs; however, advancements in technology have led to the availability of adaptive devices which provide access to computers as well as to software, which promotes increasing interaction between the child user and the computer. Teachers and parents can capitalize on this technology to develop activities that promote literacy skills. Assessment procedures found in Chapter 9 ensure that teachers and families have the necessary information on children's abilities so decisions regarding appropriate activities for the promotion of emergent literacy can be made. When interactive software is combined with related off-computer materials and curriculum activities such as those suggested in *eMERGing Literacy and Technology: Working Together*, children of *all abilities* are given opportunities to use technology to achieve early literacy skills.

This curriculum supports developmentally appropriate early childhood practices according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) curriculum and assessment guidelines (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). "Research Recommendations and the ITLC Model," found in the Appendices, contains information to demonstrate how the curriculum supports the reading research recommendations for early childhood professionals. The information provided is based on material in the National Research Council's *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Just Me and My Mom

Publisher

GT Interactive Software

System Requirements

Macintosh

- Macintosh computer
- System 7.1 or later
- 4 MB RAM
- 5 MB ROM
- CD-ROM drive
- Color monitor

Other PC

- IBM or compatible 486BX/33 or higher processor
- Windows 3.1 or later
- 4 MB RAM
- CD-ROM drive
- Super VGA (640x480), 256-color display
- Sound Blaster 16 or 100% compatible sound card

Optional

- Speakers recommended

Software Description

Join Little Critter and his mom on their trip to the city. After Little Critter reads the story, children can interact with each page. Pages are full of animation, sounds, humor, and surprises. Look for seven secret screens throughout the story. Screens are either movies or interactive pages.

In the story, Little Critter and his mom take the train to the city. While in the city, they visit the museum of natural history, an aquarium, an art museum, and a department store. Little Critter and his mom try having lunch at a restaurant, but frog was not allowed. Little Critter, Mom, and frog end up eating at the hot dog stand. After they eat, mom and Little Critter take a taxi ride through the city on their way to the train station.

On each page of the program, children can find Little Critter's friend, the frog. The frog is a hot spot on most of the pages. Often he sings and dances, imitating a famous singing star such as Elvis or Michael Jackson.

Children make several choices at the Main Menu. If they choose "Play," the story is read page by page, and the children can click on hot spots to interact. If they choose "Read," the story will be read with no interaction. Another option takes each child to a specific page. The fourth option is "Music" in which children can listen to six different songs as well as find hot spots. Little Critter and his band perform each song. The words to the songs appear across the bottom of the screen. With a click on the keyboard icon, children play the piano to make their own music. The many activities in this software make it suitable for curriculum integration.

Just Me and My Mom

Introduction

Mothers or mother figures are very important parts of children's lives. Mothers and children share special adventures together. On this particular day, Little Critter and his mom go to the city, an opportunity many children living in rural areas do not often experience. Children interacting with *Just Me and My Mom* can experience several aspects of a big city. The program offers an exciting way to travel about the city at leisure.

Materials

- Computer
- *Just Me and My Mom*
- *Just Me and My Mom* book (M. Mayer)
- Books and poems about cities and moms for the reading center

Introductory Activity

- Read selected poems from *Street Music City Poems* by Arnold Adoff. The poems in this book celebrate city life. Talk about the children's favorite poems and make a chart for classroom display. Also, display pictures of cities, including trains, restaurants, museums, aquariums, department stores, taxis, and city streets. Children may share their ideas about city experiences or what they might like about the city.
- Children may share stories about special times with their moms. Read the book, *Say It*, by Charlotte Zolotow. The story is about a mother and daughter's walk together on an autumn day.

Computer Activity

- View and interact with *Just Me and My Mom* at the technology center individually or in small groups during center time.
- Ask children open-ended questions such as the following as they view the program: "What do you and your mom like to do together?," "Have you ever been to the city?," and "How was the city different from where you live?"

Extended Activity

- Communicate with pen pals or classmates on the computer. Children from smaller towns/cities or rural communities can communicate with a Pen Pal over the Internet. The children can share everyday experiences with other children. This will offer them the opportunity to learn about both city and country life. A teacher may find another classroom to adopt as their "city" or "country" friends.
- Create a *HyperStudio* stack of city sounds. Read *City Sounds* by Rebecca Emberley in which sounds of the big city are brought to life in labeled pictures. Children can choose a city sound (one of their own or an idea from the book) and illustrate it in *HyperStudio* or draw it on paper and scan it. Sounds can be recorded with the picture. Children can make sounds; sounds can be imported from a sound library and/or captured on tape around the school community.
- Use Little Critter's music section in your music center. If you have two computers, move one to the music area. Display a variety of instruments for children to play as they listen to the songs. There are six songs to choose from, and the words appear at the bottom of the screen. Children can sing along as well as play instruments. Chart the songs for children so the words can be seen by a group. A keyboard could also be placed in the center for children to

make their own music. Don't forget that headphones can be attached to the computer for individual listening experiences.

Summary

Just Me and My Mom provides an opportunity for all children to visit a big city. Although a child may live in a rural community, he or she can learn about the city through computer software.

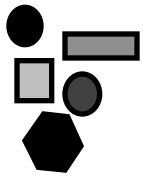
Just Me and My Mom

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION IDEAS

Art

- Paint at the easel; provide a variety of paintbrushes and colors. Change the art media throughout the unit (e.g., watercolors or pastels). Use different tools for paint (e.g., Q-tips, sponges, straws).
- Create collages around under the sea themes. Children can make artwork with seashells, sand, rocks, and so on.
- Create sculptures from modeling clay.
- Create an area of the room for the art museum.
- Paint or draw a picture of mom.

Blocks/Manipulatives



- Construct roads and buildings from blocks. Try making buildings from used milk cartons.
- Use fabric printed with roads on the floor. Place toy cars, trucks, and motorcycles in the area.
- Place toy people in the block area. Turn cars into taxis by making a sign for the top.
- Encourage children to make or color billboards, streetlights, and street signs for the city.
- Display photographs and drawings of city buildings, taxis, billboards, museums, department stores, and an aquarium.
- Place a train set in the block area.

Construction

- Build skyscrapers using assorted boxes (shoe boxes, cereal boxes), glue, tempera paint, scissors, and collage materials.
- Make a train ticket booth from an appliance box and then create props (e.g., tickets).
- Use cardboard and paint to decorate wheel toys like train engines and train cars.
- Construct dinosaurs or buildings from Popsicle sticks and glue. Use markers to color them.

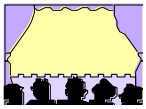
Cooking/Snacks

- Eat at the Coffee Shop.
- Make hot cocoa mix; prepare and serve it with animal crackers.
- Make tuna salad sandwiches with lettuce, tomato, and a green olive. Serve any of the following ham dishes: fried eggs and ham, ham and cheese, ham kabobs, glazed ham, and/or ham on toast.
- Eat lunch at the hot dog stand; serve mini-hot dogs with the works.

Music and Movement

- "Child of Mine" (C. King)
- "Down By the Station"
- "I've Been Working on the Railroad"
- "It's A Mother and Child Reunion" (P. Simon)
- "Little Red Caboose"
- "Gartan Mother's Lullaby"

Dramatic Play



- Create a restaurant or coffee shop. Add the following props to the housekeeping area: menus, ticket pads, play money, tablecloth, cloth napkins, apron, bow tie, dishes, utensils, flowers and vase, and salt and pepper shakers.
- Create an aquarium. Children can act out the Seal Show by adding the following props: stuffed sea animals, beach balls, hoops, noisemakers, balance beam, and ruffle collars.
- Re-create the Native American exhibit in the story with a teepee (sheet and newspaper), homemade costumes, drums, Indian corn, totem poles, and lots more.

Group/Individual Story Experiences

- Read *Just Me and My Mom* by Mercer Mayer. Set up a train and/or taxi with chairs. Play act a ride to the city with mom.
- Produce a book of "What I Like to Do with My Mom." Create the class book on paper or make a stack with *HyperStudio*.

Outdoor Play/Motor

- Play "Train Express." Use decorated wheel toys and a ticket booth.
- Make tracks with tape and post railroad signs.
- Play "Dinosaur Walk" for creative movement using large muscles.
- Re-create a "Seal Show." Provide beach balls, hoops, jump ropes, etc. Let the children try tossing the beach ball through hoops or tossing them with their noses.

Science/Math

- Study dinosaurs.
- Study mummies.
- Set up a department store. Use play money to purchase toys.
- Make shelves and let children sort and display toys like in a store.
- Exchange money at the coffee shop.

Sensory

- Play city sounds for the children and let them try to identify the sounds.
- Set up the sensory table with sea animal toys, boats, and measuring tools.
- Dig for dinosaur bones. Fill the sensory table with dirt and add fossils, bones, and rocks.
- Place small toys in a box with a hole so children can feel different objects.

Literacy Links

- Name and make a sign for the "Train Express," including a ticket booth. Make tickets to various cities.
- Make cards for Mom on the computer or in the writing center.
- Create menus for the restaurant in the dramatic play area. Make a "Today's Special" sign on the chalkboard.
- Create billboards, street signs, and a taxi sign for the block city.

Related Books, Poems & Stories

- *City Seen from A to Z* (R. Isadora)
- *Jonathan and His Mommy* (I. Smalls)
- Little Critter books by Mercer Mayer
- *Round Trip* (A. Jonas)
- *Underground* (D. Macaulay)

Related Software

- *ArtSpace*
- *Big Job*
- *Dinosaur Adventure 3-D*
- *Green Eggs and Ham*
- *HyperKeys*
- *Just Grandma and Me*
- *Just Me and My Dad*
- *Kid Pix Studio*
- *Putt Putt Saves the Zoo*
- *Sleeping Cub's Test of Courage*

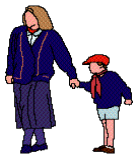
Related Websites

- **Metropolitan Museum:** www.metmuseum.org/
- **Safety City:** www.nhtsa.dot.gov/kids/
- **St. Louis Zoo:** www.stlzoo.org/
- **San Diego Zoo:** www.sandiegozoo.org/
- **Shedd Aquarium:** www.sheddnet.org/

Extensions Beyond the Classroom

- Visit a museum. Local colleges or universities have an art museum on their campus. Many towns or counties have local historical museums.
- Take a field trip to a local department store.
- "Dine Out" at a restaurant or coffee shop (or just visit).
- Go for a train ride on Amtrak or a local commuter train.

Family Connections



- Share experiences children have had with their moms. Bring photos and video of a special time with mom.
- Bring mom to class. Have a "Just Me and My Mom" day. Make "You're Special" cards for mom using the computer. Decorate the room with banners and signs.
- Invite parents who work in the city to talk and share with the class, or invite a parent who works for the railroad or drives a taxi.