

Getting Started With Portfolios

Welcome to **Look What I Can Do!**

Introductions



[Distribute **Look What I Can Do!** Rack Card and briefly go over main points:

- Parents are their child's first teacher
- Look What I Can Do will help parents get ready to meet their child's first teacher
- Workshop topics
- No cost
- Thank sponsors [if applicable]

Begin Session [Use posters/overheads/or PowerPoint of the 6 Talking Points. Put each Talking Point up as you talk about it. This gives you and the group a focus point and by the end you will have all the main ideas for this introductory session in view.]

When children start school it is a big event. Whether it is the first child in the family, or the last, it marks an important milestone in your child's life – and yours. It's the start of a new relationship between you and your child's teacher, your child and the teacher and even you and your child.

Teaching methods and expectations keep changing all the time as new research demonstrates more effective ways to meet the needs of all children. However, there are some things that remain constant over time.

Here's what we have known for quite a while and continues to hold true:

Talking Point #1: The Early Years are important years in a child's development.

Between birth and five years old your child learns an amazing number of things. Parents have been there to help, encourage and foster a young child's learning.

With a partner make a list of all the things you can think of that young children learn. Write down as many as you can in two minutes. You won't have time to write down everything!

[As a whole group share lists. These can also be put on chart paper and posted.]

Talking Point #2: When parents talk with their children, they are building their children's literacy knowledge.

Children draw on this knowledge as they learn to read and write. Children's picture books and everyday print can be used by parents as talking points to help build and extend a young child's vocabulary.

Talking Point #3: When parents read to their children, they foster their children's love of language and knowledge of how print works.

Reading in an interactive way helps children focus on meaning, an essential reading skill.

Talking Point #4: Writing is another way children learn to make sense of how print works.

When parents value writing and model writing-in-use, they send the message that writing is important.

Talking Point #5: Imaginative play has a connection to reading.

When parents encourage imaginative play they help their children identify with the feelings, actions and words of the characters they meet in the stories they read and hear.

Talking Point #6: Readers make sense of what they read by drawing on their previous knowledge or experience.

Parents can help to broaden their children's experience base by talking and reading about many different topics.




Soon your child will be starting school and his/her learning will continue to grow and expand. The more you are tuned in to your child's learning before s/he starts school, the better able you will be to tune in to his/her learning once they have started school.


Over the next few months we will be putting together a collection of your observations of your child's literacy development. You will have the opportunity to try out some of the activities and strategies shared during the six workshop sessions and to share examples of these with each other. You will then be able to add these and any other samples to your child's portfolio. At the end of this program you will have a portfolio that you can share with your child's first teacher. This information helps provide the teacher

with a more complete picture of your child's learning and interests prior to starting school.

A portfolio is simply a sampling or collection of items, including photographs, which represent your child's literacy interactions. We will use a binder [scrapbooks or file boxes can also be used] to hold the collection. Home portfolio samples may include art work, samples of writing [from drawing to scribbles to words], language samples [examples you write down of things your child has said and photographs of your child engaged in literacy activities. As you organize these, they will tell the "story" about your child's learning, one that you will be able to share and build on.

[Distribute chart of the **Target Areas for Portfolio Collections**]

Target Area	What is it?	What can you say?
Self-care 	Samples of the things your child can do independently, i.e. tying shoes, making a snack, chores, etc. For example, take a picture of your child tying her shoelaces or make a paper shoe with a real shoelace for your child to tie.	_____ can tie his shoes. Write a sentence or two about what the sample or photo shows.
Language 	Collect samples of your child reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing. Keep a list of the letters your child knows, the books you have read, environmental print your child recognizes, drawings and other forms of writing, etc.	Write a sentence or two that tells why you included the sample: _____ is left-handed except when she uses scissors. This says: "Mommy".
Problem Solving 	Provide examples of your child's ability to figure something out on their own. These can be times they figured out something in a computer game or how to work a gadget or even found a way around an obstacle or rule.	_____ took a photo with my cell phone.

<p>Social Skills</p> 	<p>Photos are especially good for showing friendships, i.e. your child helping you or another child, your child participating in activities or celebrations with others, etc. Instead of taking photos, you can have your child draw pictures.</p>	<p>_____ and _____ are special friends. They like to play Lego.</p> <p>_____ and his brother camping in the backyard.</p>
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[Briefly go over each Target Area.]

[Engage the group in a discussion of things they might already know they could include in each of the categories. Break up into small groups to do this if time permits. Assign one category to each group and come together as a whole to discuss what each came up with.]

[Distribute binders, page protectors, and dividers to be inserted. Have parents set up their portfolios. A large label with the project’s title can be stuck to the cover of the binder. Encourage parents to decorate this with their child’s name and artwork. Distribute take-home bags of supplies [markers, crayons, paper, post-its, etc. – contents will vary depending on resources].

[Note: Portfolios should remain with the facilitator and participants should be encouraged to bring items to put in their portfolio. Brown envelopes, with magnets glued to the front, can be given to parents to take home for their refrigerator door. A decorative label can be stuck to the flap side of the envelope as a visual reminder. As parents take photos or collect samples, they can put these in the envelope. The envelopes can be brought to each session and the contents put into the portfolio. Some parents may ask to work on these at home. However, you run the risk of the binders not being returned or getting lost. Binders can be stored in file boxes between sessions.]

[Distribute the Action Plan for parents to fill out. Emphasize that they may change their mind between sessions, but that this will serve as a way to get them thinking about what they might want to collect. Allow 5-10 minutes for filling it out. Share with a partner if time permits.]