

Literacy Curriculum at Apple Blossom Waldorf School

At Apple Blossom Waldorf School, we believe that literacy begins in infancy. Birth to seven years old is a time of emergent literacy. At our school, we plant the seeds for reading, writing, and comprehension. Every day, through finger games, song, poetry, eurythmy, rhythmic movement and storytelling, these seeds are nourished.

Physical movement is essential for learning; words and language begin in the body.¹ Abundant time outdoors allows children opportunities to be active, to explore, and be creative. Nature provides children the sense of calm needed to absorb and process.²

“When children are at home in nature, they are also at home in the world.”³

In Waldorf early childhood programs, literacy education is intertwined with experience, both implicit and explicit. Literacy is practiced and developed through movement, imagination, using symbols, sequencing activities, sensory integration and building fine and gross motor skills. This multi-modal approach meets the needs of different learning styles and different developmental stages. The skills and foundations that form here ready the child for all types of educational experiences in their future.

At Apple Blossom this is how we build foundational skills necessary for literacy:

- *Decoding* - recognition of/meaning of symbols, books
- *Eye tracking* - bean bag games, circle time, throwing and catching
- *Vocabulary building* - use of rich language, nursery rhymes, circle and oral storytelling
- *Comprehension* - integrating and reenacting stories in play, retelling the story
- *Bi-lateral brain development* - sweeping, skipping, crawling, climbing
- *Phonological Awareness* - rhyming, alliteration, syllable clapping, tongue twisters, counting games
- *Fine motor skills* - finger games, dressing oneself, chopping, bread baking, painting, coloring, sewing and handwork, string games
- *Sequencing* - daily rhythms, seasonal curriculum, multi-step verbal directions and activities, rhythmic clapping, jump roping
- *Pragmatics (social language skills)* - free play, meal times, time in the cubby room, social interaction, turn taking, conscious body language
- *Phonology* - sound production, clapping games, nursery rhymes, rhythm, songs and story
- *Oral motor development* - modeling rich language, using cups and utensils at meal times, variety of food textures, tongue twisters, variety of sounds during circle time, blowing bubbles/games

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¹ “Linking Literacy and Movement” by Rae Pica
<https://www.wittfitt.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/10-Reasons-to-Promote-Emergent-Literacy-through-Movement-Active-Learning.pdf>

² Beaven, Liz, Aasen Floyd, Cathrine and Turner, Lynn. *Ideal Learning in Principle And Practice: Nurturing All Children In Nature*

³ Almon, Joan. *Resilience: More Than Bouncing Back* Research Bulletin • Autumn/Winter Volume 20 (Chatham, NY: Waldorf Publications at the Research Institute for Waldorf Education, 2015).

For further reading on literacy in Waldorf Early Childhood Education:

[Linking Literacy and Movement by Rae Pica](#)

[Literacy Learning in Waldorf Early Childhood](#) by Trice Atchison

<https://www.susquehannawaldorf.org/2023/03/06/when-and-how-is-reading-taught-in-a-waldorf-school/>