

# CORE SKILL: COMMUNICATE

## JOURNAL ROUTINE

# PRESCHOOL

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

You will provide each child with an individual journal and templates of journal pages. Journal time will become a regular part of your classroom routine (i.e., time set aside for journaling each day) and you will use the journals to support existing activities (e.g., to record observations during a science activity). Journals are a wonderful way to support young children's writing and literacy skill development. Beyond providing an opportunity to represent their ideas and thoughts in writing (or drawing, or writing/drawing in combination), journals are a vehicle to help children see literacy as something of "theirs" that's personal, and something important and enjoyable. Further, the Journal Routine is one that can grow and change with the children as they progress through the school year.



### WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Encourage children's early writing:

- ◆ Encourage children to decorate their journals (e.g., draw on, add pictures of self or family).
- ◆ Build a journal corner in your classroom so children can access their journals, writing materials, helper pages (e.g., pages showing the letters to serve as guides), and journal templates (see Writing Center Routine).
- ◆ Provide templates for them to write on. Start with just a few templates (e.g., star and blank drawing) and add more complex ones as they are ready. (See Setting the Stage: Core Skill Routine Resources.)
- ◆ When children complete their entry, engage them in talk about their writing (as a group share or one-on-one).

#### Take Dictation

"Tell me about your airplane!... Can I write what you told me? Great! I am going to write 'Flying to Grandma!' I start with the /f/ sound – the letter 'F' – for flying (*write 'flying'*). 'To,' and 'G' says /g/ for 'Grandma.' Let's read it together – 'Flying to Grandma!'"

#### Teach Letter Names and Sounds

"I'm writing about the flowers growing in the garden. 'Grow' and 'garden' both start with the letter 'G.' They start with the /g/ sound."

### TEACHING TIPS

#### WHEN AND WAYS TO USE

Across the day:

- ◆ Make journaling an option upon Arrival.
- ◆ Offer journals during breaks or Transitions.
- ◆ Offer as a center choice during Choice Time.
- ◆ Use journals to reflect on Outdoor Time or an activity.

During structured activities:

- ◆ Engage in specific small group activities that help build skills you may want to see grow (e.g., letter writing, name writing, or use of varied journal templates).
- ◆ Use journals to plan for or connect to other activities (e.g., create a special journal activity for story writing that will help with the Story Share Activity Card).
- ◆ Connect journal writing to books you read or daily routines (e.g., making lists, writing postcards).

Introduce additional templates to have children consider lengthier and more complicated forms of writing, such as lists, notes/letters, longer stories, data or observation recording, or even books (i.e., create multiple pages together with a title page, a few pages for writing, and an ending. Include spaces for illustrations, too!).

### ADAPT

**More Support:** Allow children to explore journals freely. As they add to their journal, ask if you can take dictation to connect children's drawings to print.

**More Challenge:** For children who are showing some sound-letter connections in their writing, you can notice one or two words where they did this well and reinforce how they heard sounds in words and wrote the letters for those sounds – and that helps you read what they wrote.