

USING A MESSAGE BOARD



Ready for School Since 1970

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Using the Message Board

Reading a daily message board at greeting time (or circle time) is an interactive way to share information with preschool children about the upcoming day, while introducing them to the function of pictures, symbols, and words. Messages help children begin to acquire concepts about print while simultaneously developing their reading, writing, and communication skills.

Early childhood educators can use these cards to communicate with children about a range of topics — from changes in the day’s usual routine to the addition of new materials to the classroom. Teachers can also use the message board to initiate discussions or problem solving related to classroom situations (e.g., a new classroom pet, missing toys).

The 20 message board activities in this booklet offer specific examples of messages teachers might replicate in their classrooms.

Each message board activity includes the following elements:

- **A Message** — a hand-drawn example for teachers to replicate or adapt for their children’s needs
- **Purpose** — a brief explanation of how the message is used
- **Literacy Focus** — the relevant content areas addressed in the message
- **Preparation** — suggestions for how to set up the message clearly
- **Reading the message board with children** — strategies for conversing with children about the message





PURPOSE

Every classroom has typical activities and consistent expectations that children learn and anticipate each day. Sometimes there are special events, new toys, and changes in the routine that affect what children typically anticipate and do. When children know about these changes, they can respond to and act on that new information. Reading a daily message board with children at greeting time (circle time) is an interactive way to share this information with them. The message board also gives children an opportunity to practice reading and writing drawings, symbols, and words with a teacher's guidance.

COMMON MESSAGES

- **Who's not here?** When children know a classmate or teacher is absent, they talk about that person's well-being and learn that others will miss them when they're absent. This information also helps children plan whom they will play with and think about who will care for them when a familiar adult is absent.
- **New materials.** Messages that let children know there are new materials available help them make informed plans. Teachers can share information about the materials or ask children for ideas about how to use them.

- **Changes in the daily routine.** Since predictable routines help children navigate their day, any change in routine can be a potential roadblock. Teachers can use the message board to inform children ahead of time about changes to the daily schedule, as when a visitor will be coming to the classroom, so they aren't surprised by the change.



CREATING MESSAGES

- Write messages on a whiteboard, chalkboard, or large piece of paper positioned at the children's level.
- Prepare the message board before children arrive by drawing or writing messages using picture representations, symbols, and words to support all developmental reading levels.
- Identify each message with a numeral and cover each message with a sheet of paper; you will reveal messages one at a time and in sequence as you read the message board with children.
- At the start of the year, or with younger children, create simple messages with pictures and familiar symbols. Repeated encounters with these consistent symbols help children learn how print conveys meaning.



- Add words to messages as children develop more interest in and knowledge about letters and print concepts.

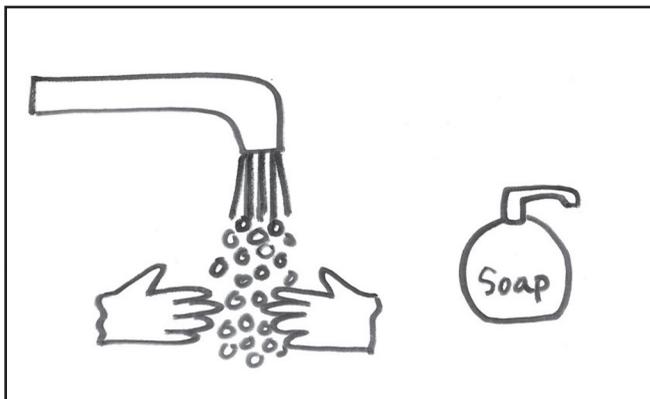
READING MESSAGES

- Model reading a message (e.g., you might say, *When I read a message, I look for pictures, symbols, and words I know*).
- Think aloud as you read a message (e.g., you might say, *I see the picture for outside time; it might tell us something about outside time today*).
- Point out individual elements of a message (e.g., you might say, *I see a picture of a paintbrush, our symbol for the art area. Here are the words that say Art Area*).
- Talk about letters in familiar words (e.g., you might say, *Here's the letter t in the word toy. Tommy's name also starts with the letter t*).
- Ask *What symbol(s), letters, or words can you read in this message?*
- Ask *What part of this message tells us it's about...?*

A COMMON LANGUAGE

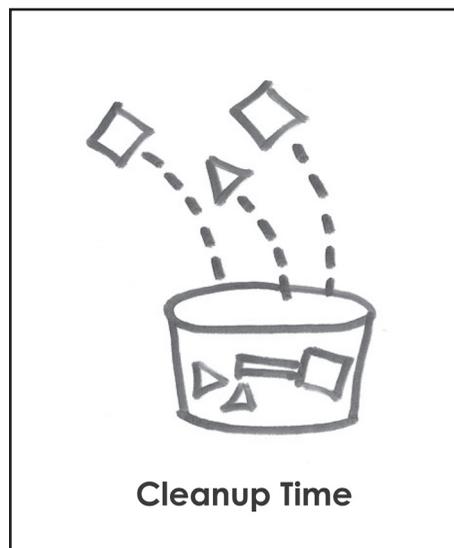
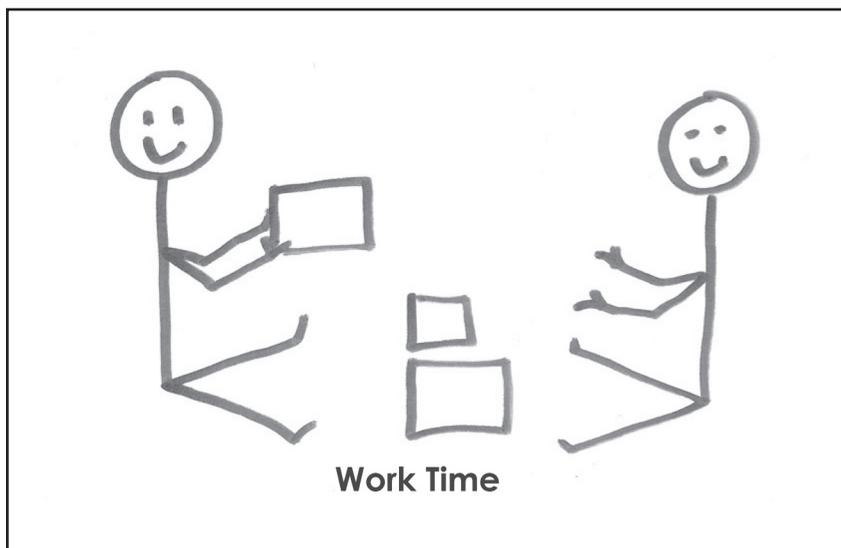
It's important to create a shared or common language of words and symbols to use on the message board.

Through the daily experience of reading messages that are represented in consistent ways, children begin to understand how pictures, symbols, and words convey meaning. Children's understanding of symbols and picture representations paves the way toward future reading skills.



PERSONAL SYMBOLS

Children and adults choose a personal symbol that correspond to the initial letter and letter sound of their first names (e.g., *Serena* might choose a sun). The image is paired with the child's or adult's written name, which serves as an aid in name recognition and is particularly helpful for children who are not yet distinguishing letters in names. HighScope's *Letter Links* system is one method of assigning symbols that correspond to the





initial letter and letter sound of a person’s first name. For example, Benjamin might choose a boat, balloon, or butterfly, and Cierra might choose celery, cymbals, or a circle. Alternatively, you may choose to attach children’s and adults’ photos instead of Letter Link symbols.

SYMBOLS OF CLASSROOMS OR SCHOOL BUILDING

It is also useful to create picture representations for your school building, individual classrooms, and common school spaces that children frequent. As you create symbols for your school building and classrooms, include distinctive physical features (e.g., flagpole, double doors, circular drive) to help children make the connection between the picture and the room or building. Classroom and building representations are commonly used in messages that help children understand and anticipate transitions to and from their classroom to other spaces.

CLASSROOM AREA SYMBOLS

Well-defined, labeled interest areas in the classroom make it easier for children to navigate through the room. Teachers label each area with words and a related symbol, usually an object associated with that area (e.g., a paintbrush for the art area). These representations are used frequently on the message board, for instance, in messages about where to find materials that have been added to the classroom.



MESSAGE BOARD

Introducing Classroom Interest Areas

PURPOSE

Use this message to introduce children to the symbols that represent the classroom interest areas.

LITERACY FOCUS

Reading symbols and words

PREPARATION

1. Write the name and symbol of each of the classroom interest areas.
2. Cover each area's name and symbol with a piece of paper, and number each piece of paper.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Call attention to the numbered pieces of paper. You might say, *Today we have a message with five different parts. Each part has a number. Let's count them. How many do we have?*
- Remove the paper from the first message and invite the children to read the message. Ask *Have you seen a picture and words like this?* or *This picture of a house looks familiar. Where have I seen this in our room?* Encourage children to find the corresponding area sign in the classroom.
- Talk about the purpose of the area signs in the classroom. Ask the children why it's helpful to know the names of the areas.
- As you reveal each area symbol, talk about the types of materials children can find in each of the areas.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



Turn paper over to reveal interest area sign.

MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Introducing Small-Group Tables

PURPOSE

Use this message to introduce who will be in each teacher's small group.

LITERACY FOCUS

Reading symbols and words

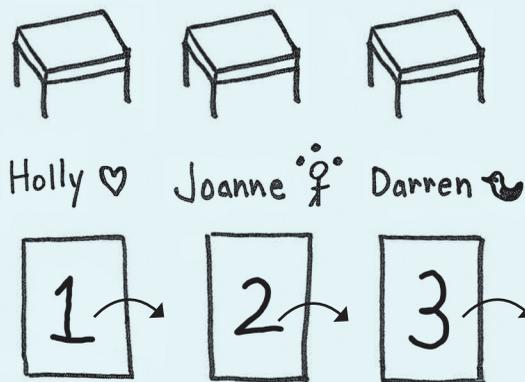
PREPARATION

1. Draw representations of small-group-time tables labeled with each teacher's name and personal symbol.
2. Write children's names and their personal symbols for each group in list form under the corresponding table.
3. Cover the lists of children's names with paper and number the messages.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Draw children's attention to the table drawings and invite children to read the message.
- Explain that the tables represent the teachers' small-group-time tables.
- Acknowledge children's ideas (e.g., *You read Holly heart*).
- Uncover the list of children's names at the first table, point to it, and say something like *This is a list of the children who are in Holly's group. If your name is on this list, you sit at Holly's table.*
- Read the names and symbols with children, and point to the corresponding table in the classroom. Repeat with the other tables.
- Talk with children about the times of day when they sit with teachers at their tables.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



Turn paper over to reveal children's names.

MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Who's Not Here Today? Introducing the "No" Symbol

PURPOSE

Use this message to inform children that someone will be absent.

LITERACY FOCUS

Reading symbols and words

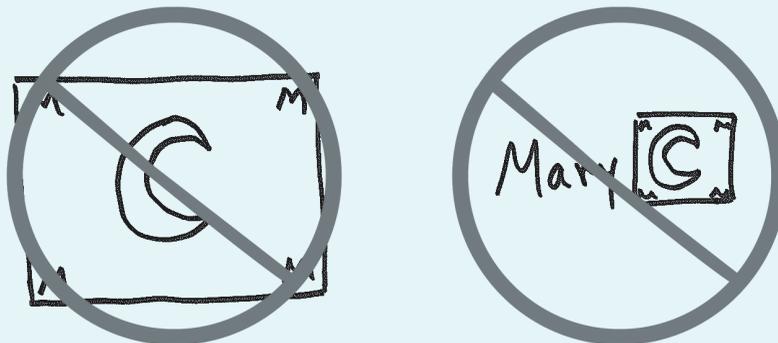
PREPARATION

1. Write the name and draw the personal symbol of the child or adult who will be absent. (Use photos if you do not use symbols.)
2. Number the message and cover it with a piece of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.
3. Have a marker available. [Note: Later in the year, include the symbol on the prepared message or invite a child to add the "no" symbol when you read the message.]

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Point to the picture. Say something like *I see somebody's symbol on the message board. I'm thinking this message is about somebody in our classroom. Do you know?* Acknowledge children's responses and confirm their answer.
- Draw the "no" symbol over the symbol of the person who is absent. Say *I drew another symbol over Mary's symbol. What do you think the message means now?*
- Introduce the "no" symbol. You might say, *A circle with a diagonal line through it is called the "no" symbol. What do you think it means when the "no" symbol is over Mary's symbol?*
- Acknowledge children's responses and restate what the "no" symbol means.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Who's Not Here Today? Introducing the Word *Absent*

PURPOSE

Use this message to introduce the word *absent* when someone in the class will be absent from school.

LITERACY FOCUS

Vocabulary;
Concepts about print; Reading symbols and words

PREPARATION

1. Write the name and draw the personal symbol of the person who will be absent. Circle the name/symbol with the "no" symbol.
2. Under the symbol, write (name of child or adult) is *absent*.
3. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

1. Anticipate that children will be able to read the familiar message "Who's not here today?" and acknowledge their responses. You might say, *Yes, Zarius is not going to be here today. But how did you know that was what the message said?*
2. Acknowledge children's answers by saying something like *You read the "no" symbol or You read Zarius's symbol.*
3. Point to and read the words. You might say, *This message has a sentence under the symbols. It says Zarius is absent. I wonder what the word absent means?*
4. Acknowledge children's ideas and summarize (e.g., *When somebody is absent, that means they will not be at school today. Zarius is not here; he is absent.*)

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



Zarius is absent.

MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Who's Not Here Today? Listen to the Rhyme

PURPOSE

Use this message to inform children that someone in the class will be absent.

LITERACY FOCUS

Phonological awareness;
Reading symbols and words

PREPARATION

1. Draw a question mark and then use a marker to draw the “no” symbol over the question mark.
2. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Ask children what they think the message is about and acknowledge their responses.
- Confirm children’s ideas and call attention to the question mark. You might say, *Yes, this message is about somebody who will be absent today. Instead of the person’s name and symbol, there is a question mark. Our question is, “Who will be absent today?”*
- Say *Here is a clue. The absent person’s name rhymes with* (insert rhyming word). [Note: Rhymes can be nonsense words, such as *Batalie* for *Natalie*.]
- Ask *Who in our classroom has a name that rhymes with* (insert rhyming word)?
- Repeat the name and rhyming word several times to give children an opportunity to hear the rhyme.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Who's Not Here Today? Initial Letter and Sound Clue

PURPOSE

Use this message to inform children that someone will be absent and to help build children's awareness of letter names and corresponding sounds.

LITERACY FOCUS

Alphabetic knowledge;
Reading symbols and words

PREPARATION

1. Draw a question mark and then use a marker to draw the "no" symbol over the question mark.
2. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Say something like *This message is about somebody who will be absent today. Instead of the person's name and symbol, there is a question mark. Our question is: Who will be absent today?*
- Draw blank lines to represent the letters in the absent person's name, and say *Here is a clue. This is the first letter of her name.* [Note: To incorporate letter and sound correspondence, ask children to guess the letter based on the letter's sound that you produce (e.g., the /p/ sound) before you write the letter. For example, you might say, *This person's name begins with this sound: /p/. What letter makes the /p/ sound? Whose name starts with /p/?*]
- Acknowledge children's ideas and confirm the name of the absent person.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Who's Not Here Today? Fill in the Name

PURPOSE

Use this message toward the middle to end of the school year to inform children when someone will be absent.

LITERACY FOCUS

Alphabetic knowledge;
Reading symbols and words

PREPARATION

1. Draw a question mark and then use a marker to draw the “no” symbol over the question mark.
2. Draw blank lines to represent the letters in the absent person’s name.
3. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Ask children what they think the message is about and acknowledge their responses.
- Call attention to the blank lines and say something like *I wonder if these lines could be a clue to who's absent. What do you think the lines represent?*
- Acknowledge children’s ideas and summarize (e.g., *The person who is absent has four letters in their name. Who could it be?*).
- Support children as they try to determine whose name it is. Have a list of children’s names available for children to reference.
- Fill in one or more of the letters if children need help (e.g., *This person’s name begins with the letter J. Whose name starts with the /j/ sound?*).
- Invite one child to fill in the remaining letters.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



— — — —

MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Introducing New Materials

PURPOSE

Use this message to introduce a new material to the classroom so children know where to find it.

LITERACY FOCUS

Reading symbols and words

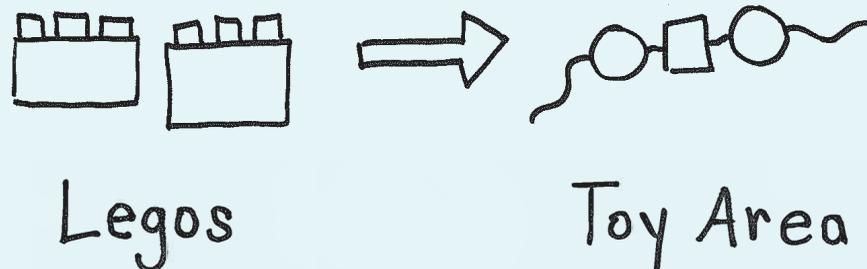
PREPARATION

1. Put a representation of the new material on the message board (e.g., a drawing, picture, or actual item taped to the board). Draw an arrow to the name/symbol of the interest area where children can find it.
2. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Invite children to read the message. You might do one of the following:
 - Point to the area symbol/words and say *I see the toy area symbol and the words Toy Area. What else do you see?*
 - Ask children what they think the message might be about and why they think that.
- Explain that you've added a new material to the classroom. Talk about where children will find it.
- Talk about how the children might use the material. If it's a new material, ask them if they recognize it. If it's a reintroduced material, ask them how they've used it previously.
- Remind children that they can make a plan to use the new material at work/choice time.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Introducing New Materials: Guess the Area Rhyme

PURPOSE

Use this message to introduce a new material to the classroom so children know where to find it.

LITERACY FOCUS

Phonological awareness;
Reading symbols and words

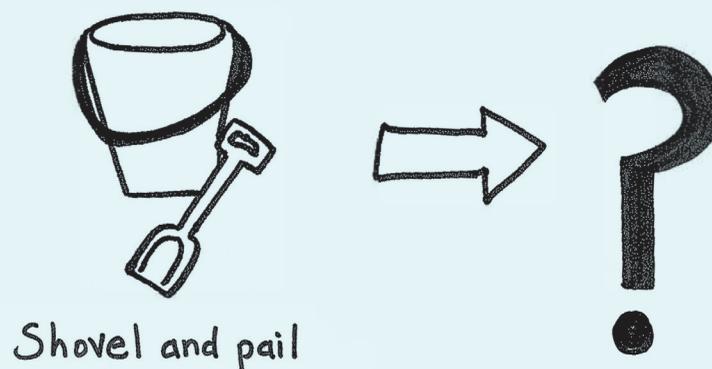
PREPARATION

1. Put a representation of the new material on the message board (e.g., a drawing, picture, or actual item taped to the board) and write its name under the image/item.
2. Draw an arrow to a question mark.
3. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Ask the children what they think the message might be about, and briefly talk about the new material.
- Tell the children that you're going to give them a rhyming clue about where they'll find the material (e.g., *The materials are in an area that rhymes with band*).
- Once children guess the area, write (or have children help you write) the name/symbol for the interest area on the board. You might say the following:
 - Ask *What letters do I need to write the word sand?*
 - Say *Let's listen to the first sound in the word sand. What letter is that?*
- Remind the children that they can make a plan to use the new material at work/choice time.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Introducing New Materials: Find the Mistake

PURPOSE

Use this message to introduce a new material to the classroom so children know where to find it.

LITERACY FOCUS

Alphabetic knowledge;
Reading symbols and words

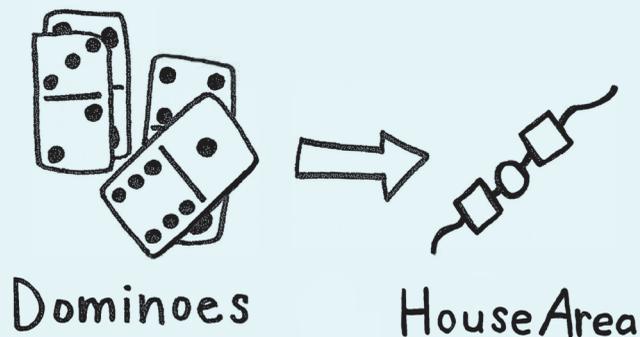
PREPARATION

1. Put a representation of the new material on the message board (e.g., a drawing, picture, or actual item taped to the board) and write its name under the image/item.
2. Draw an arrow to the symbol of the interest area where the new material will be stored. Mislabel the area symbol.
3. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Ask children what they think the message might be about and acknowledge their ideas.
- Draw attention to the area symbol/name. Help children notice the mistake by saying something like *I see the toy area symbol, but the words don't say Toy Area.* Ask children to identify the problem.
- Once children have explained the mistake, write (or have them help you write) the correct name/symbol of the interest area on the board. You might ask, *What letters do I need to write the word Toy?* or say *Let's listen to the first sound in the word Toy: /t/. What letter makes the /t/ sound?*
- Remind children that they can make a plan to use the new material at work/choice time.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Introducing New Materials: Find the Misspelled Word

PURPOSE

Use this message to introduce a new material to the classroom so children know where to find it.

LITERACY FOCUS

Alphabetic knowledge;
Reading symbols and words

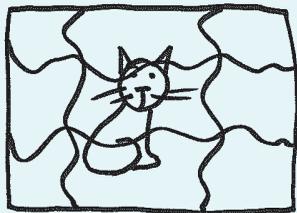
PREPARATION

1. Put a representation of the new material on the message board (e.g., a drawing, picture, or actual item taped to the board) and write its name under the image/item.
2. Draw an arrow to the symbol of the interest area where the material will be stored. Misspell the name of the area.
3. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

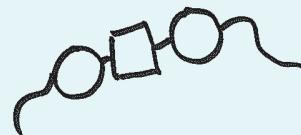
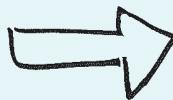
READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Draw children's attention to the message, and ask what they think it might be about.
- Draw attention to the area symbol/name. Help children notice the misspelled word by saying something like *I see the toy area symbol, but the words don't say Toy Area. Notice that the misspelled word looks similar to the correct word and point out how it's different.*
- Ask children to help you correct the misspelled word.
- Invite a child to write the correct letter on the message board.
- Remind the children that they can make a plan to use the new material at work/choice time.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



Puzzle



Boy Area

MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Introducing New Materials: Fill in the Area Name

PURPOSE

Use this message to introduce a new material to the classroom so children know where to find it.

LITERACY FOCUS

Alphabetic knowledge;
Reading symbols and words

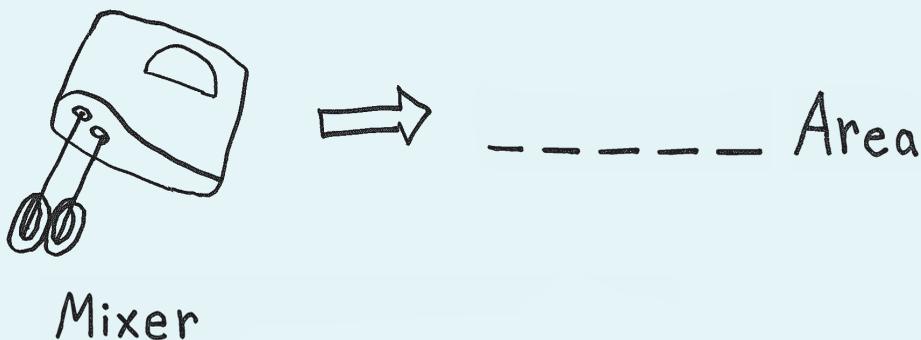
PREPARATION

1. Put a representation of the new material on the message board (a drawing, picture, or actual item taped to the board) and write its name under the image/item.
2. Draw an arrow pointing to the blank lines that represent the missing letters of the interest area name.
3. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper so you are ready to reveal it at the appropriate time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Draw children's attention to the message. Ask what they think it might be about.
- Call attention to the word(s) that describes the new material (e.g., *This word starts with the /m/ sound. What might it say?*).
- Call attention to the blank lines that represent the missing letters of the interest area name.
- Help children figure out the letters that complete the name. If they don't guess correctly, provide clues (e.g., write or make the sound of the initial letter).
- Ask a child to write in the letters and/or add the area symbol.
- Remind children that they can make a plan to use the new material at work/choice time.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Whose Turn Is It? Introducing a New Symbol

PURPOSE

Use this message to introduce a new symbol and to indicate whose turn it is to do a task (e.g., choosing a song to sing from the song book).

LITERACY FOCUS

Reading symbols and words

PREPARATION

1. Draw a simple symbol that will consistently represent the task to be completed (e.g., the song book symbol represents the daily job of choosing a song).
2. Write the name and symbol of the child who will complete the task.
3. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Ask *What do you see in this message?* (Some children may identify the child's name or symbol.) Point out and explain the new symbol that represents a specific task.
- Draw children's attention to symbols and words by asking, for example,
 - *How do you know what this message means?*
 - *What part of the message says (name of symbol)?*
- Read the name of the child chosen to complete the task. Depending on the children's familiarity with letter names/sounds, point to and name the initial letter and/or make the letter sound (e.g., *This name starts with the letter R and the /r/ sound. It's Ricardo*).

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Whose Turn Is It? Recognizing Question Marks

PURPOSE

Use this message to indicate whose turn it is to do a task (e.g., choosing a song to sing from the song book) and to help children recognize question marks.

LITERACY FOCUS

Reading symbols and words

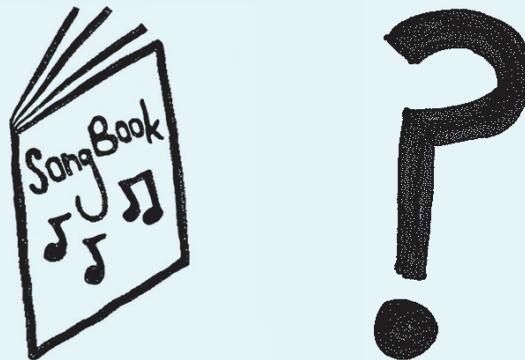
PREPARATION

1. Draw a simple symbol that will consistently represent the task to be completed (e.g., the song book symbol represents the daily job of choosing a song).
2. Draw a question mark next to or under the symbol.
3. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Ask *What do you see in this message?* (Children may quickly “read” the message.)
- Draw attention to the question mark. Depending on children’s familiarity with this symbol, say *I see a question mark. This symbol means there’s a question about whose turn it is to (add name of task) or ask What is this symbol called? What does it mean?*
- Name a child to complete the task.
- For later in the year: Draw blank lines to represent the letters in the name of the child whose turn it is (e.g., _____ for Amara).

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Whose Turn Is It? Adding a Sentence

PURPOSE

Use this message to indicate whose turn it is to do a task (e.g., choosing a song to sing from the song book) and to help children understand what a sentence is.

LITERACY FOCUS

Reading symbols and words

PREPARATION

1. Draw a simple symbol that will consistently represent the task to be completed (e.g., the song book symbol represents the daily job of choosing a song).
2. Write *Whose turn is it?* and/or *It is Moustafa's turn*. Vary sentence complexity depending on children's developmental levels.
3. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Ask *What does this message mean?*
- Use the following questions to draw the children's attention to the symbol and words:
 - *How do you know what this message means?*
 - *What part of the message says (add name of symbol)?*
- Draw attention to the sentence(s). For example, you might say, *These words say...* or you might point to familiar words (e.g., *I see Moustafa's name in this sentence*) or the question mark.
- Point to the words as you read the sentence(s) with the children.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



Whose turn is it?
It is Moustafa's turn.

MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

A Change in the Daily Routine

PURPOSE

Use this message to help children understand and anticipate a change in their typical daily routine (e.g., weather event, field trip).

LITERACY FOCUS

Reading symbols and words

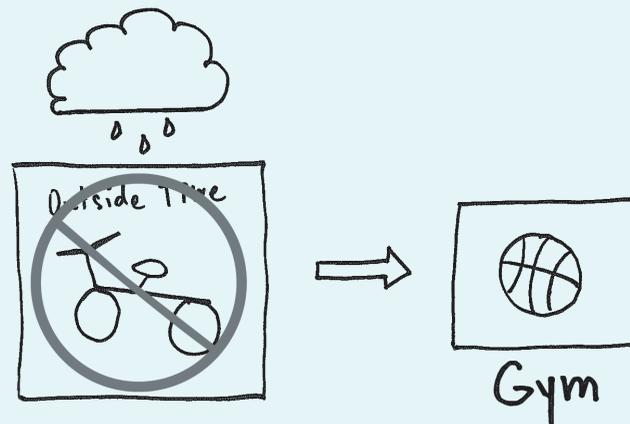
PREPARATION

1. Draw the symbol or picture representation of the part of the daily routine that will change.
2. Use the “no” symbol to indicate when a part of the daily routine will be omitted, and add an arrow pointing to a symbol or picture that represents the alternative activity.
3. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Invite children to read the message. You might say, *I see words and a familiar symbol in this message. What parts of this message can you read?*
- Acknowledge children as readers (e.g., *You read the picture of the rain cloud. What else can you read on this message?*).
- When children give their ideas about what the message says, ask *What part of the message says that?*
- Summarize the message and share any other information that children need to know about the change in the daily routine.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Classroom Visitors

PURPOSE

Use this message to let children know that there will be a visitor (or visitors) and what they will be doing in the classroom.

LITERACY FOCUS

Reading symbols and words

PREPARATION

1. Develop simple representations for different visitors (e.g., a watching visitor [someone who will observe]) in advance. If possible, collect photos of regular visitors to include in the message.
2. Draw a representation of the visitor and write the visitor's name (if known).
3. Add the time of day children should expect the visitor (e.g., work time, all day).
4. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper.

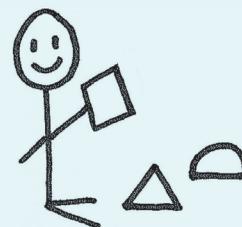
READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Draw children's attention to the visitor figure, invite them to read the message, and acknowledge their ideas.
- To encourage further reading, point to the word *Visitor* and notice that it starts with *V*. Say *This word starts with /v/ and says Visitor*. Talk about what *visitor* means if children don't know.
- Introduce the visitor(s) and explain their role (e.g., *Mr. Adam is going to visit our class today at work time. In this picture, our watching visitor is holding a piece of paper and a pencil. This is what Mr. Adam will do today*).

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



Visitor (Mr. Adam)



Work Time

MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Remember to Wash Your Hands with Soap

PURPOSE

Use this message to remind children to use soap when they wash their hands. You can create similar messages to help children remember other classroom expectations.

LITERACY FOCUS

Reading symbols and words

PREPARATION

1. Draw a picture of a hand (or hands) under a faucet with water and a labeled soap dispenser.
2. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Ask children what they notice about this message. Say something like *You see a hand. What do you think the hand is doing?*
- Continue reading the message. Point to the word **SOAP** and help children read the word by identifying the initial letter and letter sound. For example, you might say, *Here's a word that starts with the letter S. This word starts with the /s/ sound. I wonder what it says?*
- Have a brief discussion about the importance of washing hands with soap.
- Post a visual reminder similar to this message next to the sink.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

What Should We Do at Cleanup Time?

PURPOSE

Use this message to discuss classroom expectations at cleanup time. You can create similar messages to help children remember other classroom expectations.

LITERACY FOCUS

Reading symbols and words

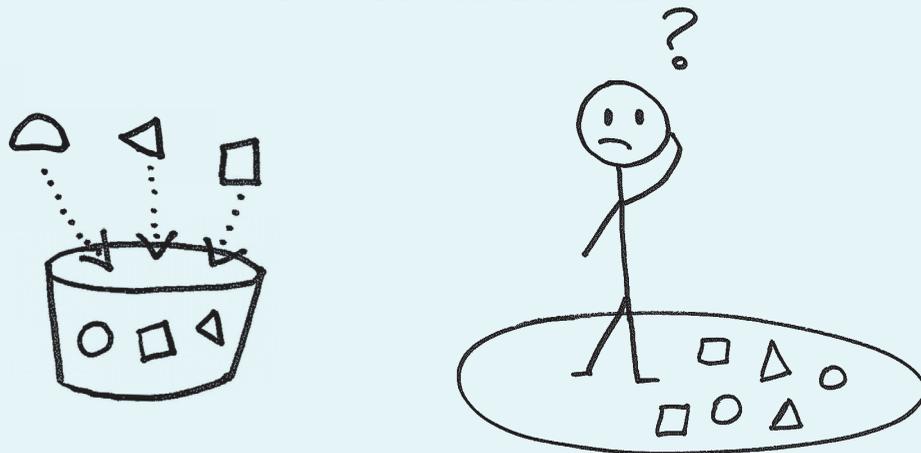
PREPARATION

1. Draw your symbol or representation for cleanup time.
2. Draw a simple stick figure with a sad or puzzled look on its face.
3. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.
4. Place a large piece of paper and a marker near the message board.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Ask children what they notice about this message. Say something like *You read the expression on the figure's face. I wonder why that person is (sad or puzzled). Let's read more of this message to find out.*
- Continue reading the message. Point to the cleanup-time symbol, read the words, and say *I've seen this symbol before on our daily routine chart. Help me figure out which part of the day it is.*
- Have a brief discussion about a problem you've observed at cleanup time.
- Create a list of cleanup-time expectations with the children.
- Ask the children where you should post the list.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS



MESSAGE BOARD

Classroom Situations

PURPOSE

Use this message to start a conversation about a specific classroom situation that needs to be addressed with the whole group (e.g., reminders to keep the tops on the markers, hold the class pet gently, wear a smock when painting).

LITERACY FOCUS

Reading symbols and words

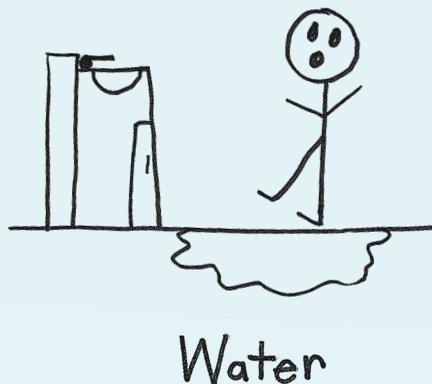
PREPARATION

1. Draw a simple picture to represent the situation or circumstance (e.g., a person slipping on a wet floor).
2. Number the message and cover it with a sheet of paper. Reveal the message in the appropriate sequence at message board time.
3. Have a large piece of chart paper, whiteboard, or easel available so you can write down children's ideas.

READING THE MESSAGE BOARD WITH CHILDREN

- Invite children to read the message. You might use one of the following conversation prompts:
 - *Let's read this message. What do you think it says?*
 - *I'm noticing a picture and some words in this message. Let's figure out what the picture and words mean.*
 - *I see the word (add word) in this message. This message has something to do with (add word). What do you think?*
- Have a conversation about the situation, and ask children for their ideas.
- List children's ideas on chart paper and post them in the classroom.

MESSAGE BOARD EXAMPLE



MESSAGE BOARD IDEAS

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