

Using a Daily Message Board in the Preschool Classroom

What and How

Week 3 Learning Unit

Strategies for Supporting Curriculum Content at Message Board



As you reflect on planning message boards, how are you respecting and incorporating children's home cultures, languages, and abilities? For example, a child's home language may influence their understanding and their home culture may affect their response and engagement.

Week 3 Learning Unit Topics

- Strategies for Supporting Literacy at Message Board
- Strategies for Supporting Mathematics at Message Board
- Strategies for Supporting Social Studies at Message Board
- Challenge Children by Making Mistakes
- Strategies for Supporting Social and Emotional Development at Message Board
- Guidelines for Creating Social Stories



Supporting Additional Learning Opportunities at Message Board

- Message board provides an opportunity to actively introduce and support the following curriculum content areas of learning:
 - Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Social Studies
 - Social and Emotional Development

Purpose of Message Board:

- The primary purpose of message board is to provide meaningful messages that help children understand and navigate changes throughout their day.
- Message board should last only a few minutes. It is not a lesson.

Strategies for Supporting Literacy at Message Board

- Naming letters in familiar words
- Identifying letter sounds
- Identifying rhyme and alliteration
- Supporting concepts about print



Naming Letters in Familiar Words

- Point out and/or name the beginning letters in familiar words written in messages
 - Point to the “b” in block. You might say, *Here is the letter “b” for block.*
- Point to a letter and have children help identify the letter.
 - Point to the “h” in house and pause. *Here is the word house. What was this letter again?*



Challenge Children by Making Mistakes

- **Children must have many opportunities to see and identify letters on the message board before you begin to introduce mistakes.**
- Make a “mistake” in common symbols and words the children know.
 - Combine the words block area with the art area symbol. Say, *block area* and point to the art area symbol. Then say, *Is something wrong here?* and wait for children to correct you.
 - Write the words “Boy” Area. *Here is the letter “b.” That’s the first letter in the word “toy.” Uh, oh, that’s not the first letter in toy! What should it be?*
- Provide all children with opportunities to correct the mistakes on the board. (Have an eraser and dry erase marker available.)



Challenge Children by Making Mistakes (continued)

- Bring children's attention to letters by pointing to them and then misidentifying the letters
 - Point to the letter "o" in outside time and say, *Oh here's the letter "n."* That's the first letter in outside. Wait for children to react.
- Build on children's interest in the letters in their own names and those of their peers. Start with simple examples and move to complex examples.
 - When a child is absent: Use the first letter of the child's name with a no symbol around it. Have children guess who it is. (If it is a younger child, include letter link.)
 - When choosing a song from the songbook for large-group time: Draw the song book symbol. Write the first letter of the child's name with the rest of the letters in dashes (e.g., C _ _ _ _ , Cyiana). Have children guess who it is.



Identifying Letter Sounds

- Bring children’s attention to individual letter sounds in common symbols and children’s names
 - Point to the first letter and say, This is a /z/ for “Zach” and he will not be here today.
 - *This is a message about the /t/oy area. “Toy” starts with a “t” that makes the sound /t/.*
 - Leave a blank space for one of the letters in the message. You might write “_oy.” *Hmm, the first letter is missing for the area symbol I have drawn on the message board. Does anyone have a guess for which letter is missing? It makes the sound /t/.*



Identifying Rhyme and Alliteration

- Point out that words rhyme and sound the same.
 - *We have some new things to play with in the boy area.* Children attending to the message will correct you. *It's the toy area, not the boy area! You're right. It's the toy area. Toy and boy rhyme. Does anyone have any other ideas of words that might rhyme with toy?*
- Rhyme with the number of messages.
 - *We are having fun, let's read message one.*
 - *Willoughby walliby woo, let's read message two.*
- Create an alliterative message.
 - Write "Toy Tarea" under the symbol of the toy area. *We have new items to play with today in the "toy tarea."* Children will correct you. *You're right. It's the Toy Area. I was using the same beginning sound for both words. "/t/oy- /t/area."*



Supporting Concepts About Print

- Read messages from left to right and from top to bottom.
 - *Let's begin reading our message from the beginning.* Point your finger at the left-hand side of the board and then move your hand to the right as you read the message.
- Move letters to the end of a word that children know well.
 - *We have some new things to play with in the "oyT" area today.* This gives children the opportunity to point out that the "T" is in the wrong position.



Again, keep in mind that some children may be confused at where to start reading because in their culture they do not read left to right and top to bottom. Point to individual messages so they can see what you are doing. Talk with parents about the importance of learning Concepts about Print and their desires for their child's development while being respectful of their cultural differences.

Strategies for Supporting Mathematics at Message Board

- Identifying numerals
- Counting
- Graphing and representing data



Identifying Numerals

- Number each of the messages. As you read them, say the number and point to the message.
- Have children count messages. *I wonder how many messages we have today?*
- *Let's look at message number one, our first message.*



Counting

- **Using dots for counting:** To help children understand counting, use dots under the numerals to represent “how many” for each message.

1 2 3
 • •• •••

- **How many are absent?:** This is a way to occasionally incorporate counting. Write numbers under the names of absent children.
 - *I wonder how we can find out how many children are absent today?* As children count, point to each name and numeral.
- **Teacher absent for extended period:** As mentioned in week two, use paper chains to help children count the number of days the teacher will be out. This will be a message on the board each day until the teacher returns. Each day have a child remove a chain and count with them how many days are left before the teacher returns.



This teacher helps children count how many school days are left.

Share the paper chain idea with parents. When there are extended days at home, parents can have their child remove a chain and count the number of days before they go back to school.

Challenge Children by Making Mistakes

- **Children must have many opportunities to see and identify numbers on the message board before you begin to introduce mistakes.**
- Misnumber messages or parts of messages
 - Number the messages 1, 2, and 4, or 2, 3, and 1. Bring children's attention to the numbers and wait for their reactions.
 - Point at message number two and say, *Let's read message number one.* Wait for the children to catch your mistake.
 - Instead of writing two home days, write four home days or draw three houses for two home days. Wait for children's reactions.
- Misnumber the dots
 - Have two dots under the number one or one dot under number three.



This teacher uses dots to represent the numerals to help children with counting.

- Accidentally start with message three. Let children correct you.
- Provide all children with opportunities to correct the mistakes on the board. (Have an eraser and dry erase marker available.)

Graphing and Representing Data

- A change in the routine that *might* occur is an opportunity to create a graph of children's predictions.
 - If it's raining in the morning, you might ask children to predict if they will get to play outside that afternoon. You can create two columns: one for outside and one for inside. Place tally marks in each column based on children's predictions. (Be sure to return to this at outside time to see who predicted correctly!)
- Adding new materials to the sand and water table is another way for children to graph out their predictions and get the results.
 - Place blue water in one table and red water in another table. Say, *We have blue and red water in the sand and water area today. I wonder what would happen in if you mixed them together.* Gather ideas and then tally children's predictions and get results at work time.



Strategies for Supporting Social Studies at Message Board

History/Counting

- Talking to children about changes in the schedule, such as days spent at home over a weekend or school break, supports early learning around concepts in history. At this level of development children are learning to understand past, present, and future.
- Draw a simple house twice to signify that children will be home for two days. You might say, *What do you think these two house symbols might mean? They mean that you will be staying home (Saturday and Sunday) for two days and then you will come back to school.*

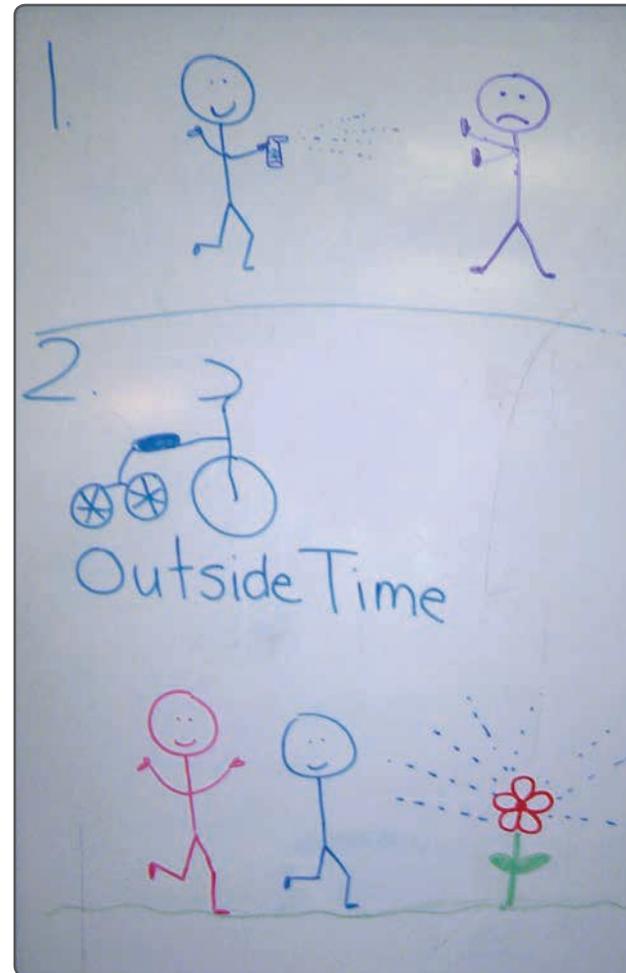


Strategies for Supporting Social and Emotional Development at Message Board

- Solving a classroom dilemma at message board supports several social and emotional learning outcomes.

Children:

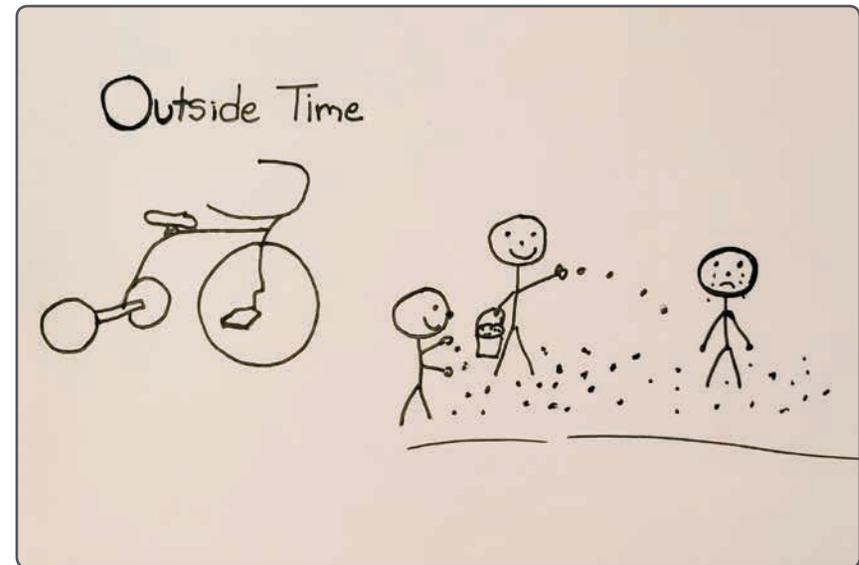
- Learn about their classroom community
- Build relationships
- Develop a sense of belonging
- Practice solving classroom conflicts
- These classroom conflicts can be represented in social stories at message board.
- Use a social story when the conflicts involve the whole class in order to make decisions and/or resolve the conflict.



Teachers talk with children about spraying each other when they don't want to.

Creating a Social Story

- Prepare ahead of time
- Use construction paper or chart paper stapled into a booklet
- Use simple stick figures
- A social story includes:
 - Title page
 - The problem
 - Blank page for children's and teachers' ideas
 - Ending, if needed
- Make it the last message at message board
- Have a marker available



Social Story Discussion

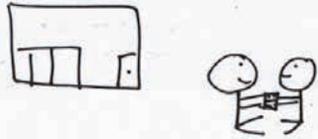
- Draw children's attention to the title of the social story. You could use one of the following prompts:
 - *What do you think this story is about? What do you think this says?*
 - *I'm noticing a picture and some words in this message. Let's figure out what the pictures and words mean.*
 - *I see the words [I want to play] in this message. This message has something to do with playing. What do you think?*
- Open to the problem page
 - *What do you think is happening in this picture?*
- Generating ideas:
 - Write down what children say. Use a picture to help, if possible
 - If children need help, teachers can offer ideas
- Place the story in book area for children to refer to as needed

Example of a Social Story

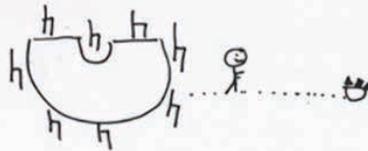


I Want to Play

At school children
play



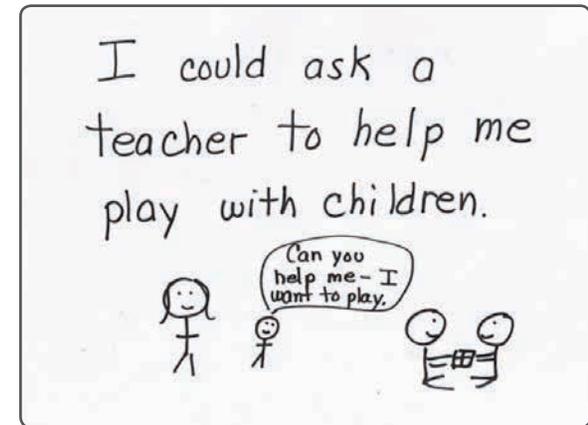
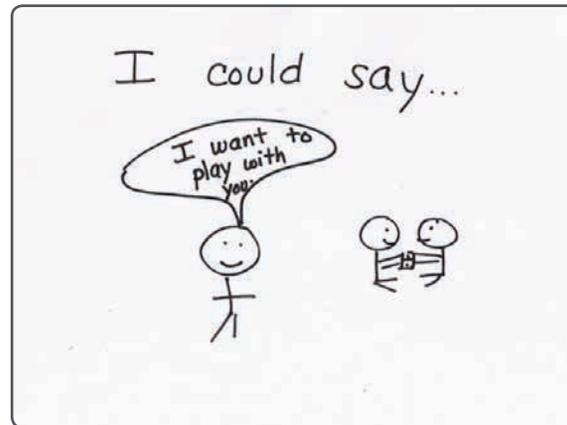
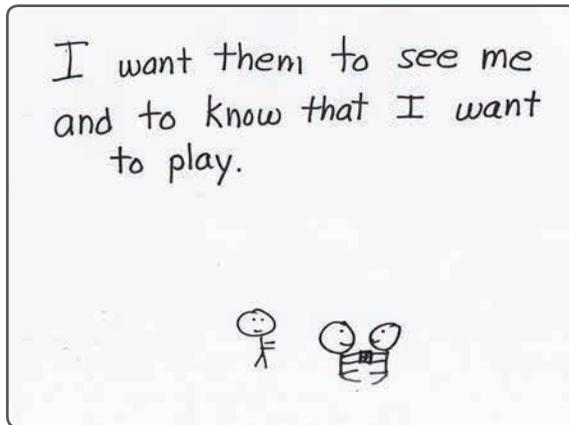
Children make a
plan and start
to play



Sometimes children
are playing and I
want to play too.

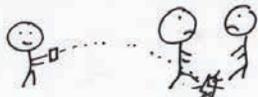


I Want to Play (continued)



I Want to Play (continued)

Sometimes I get really excited. Things break and children get hurt.



It is okay to get excited, but when I hurt children and toys, children get up set



I will keep things and children safe. I will not throw, hit, or break things.



It's fun to play with children when we are all safe.

