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# ★ Outcomes for this workbook

## Emergent reading and writing

- Describe the characteristics and behaviours of an emergent reader and writer.
- List how we create environments and routines that support drawing, emergent writing and emergent reading.
- Describe how you can support emergent reading and writing across the daily programme.
- Describe how you can support emergent reading and writing through story-based activities.
- Explain the meaning and importance of **Shared writing and reading** in Grade R.
- List the different ways you might support a child who is attempting to write about what they have drawn.

# ★ 1 What is emergent reading and writing?


When children watch adults reading and writing, they learn that the marks they make on paper carry a message and have meaning. They begin to understand what writing is for and this motivates them to want to read and write themselves. Their reading may not be accurate; they may 'read' from memory or make up stories to go with pictures. We call this emergent reading. Their writing may not look like grown-up writing, but they are becoming writers as they try to communicate their ideas on paper and use writing for different purposes. We use the term 'emergent writing' to describe the mark making and writing that young children do before they learn to write in a conventional way.

**Facilitator notes**  
Read this introduction to start your session.

15 mins

## Activity 1.1 Examples of emergent reading and writing

Work in the big group:

- 1  **Examples of emergent reading and writing**
- 2 What did you notice about the skills, understanding and behaviour of the children in the videos? Brainstorm ideas while the facilitator writes these on a flipchart.
- 3 Are there any children in your class that enjoy 'reading' and 'writing' like this?

**Facilitator notes** Listen to the teachers' suggestions and engage with their ideas. Make a list on a flipchart. The teachers will compare this list to the infographic, so don't worry if the list on the flipchart is not comprehensive.

25 mins

## Activity 1.2 Characteristics of emergent readers and writers

Work in the big group:

- 1 Follow the facilitator as she talks about the infographic, focusing on *Listening and speaking*, *Drawing and emergent writing* and *Emergent reading*.
- 2 Put a tick (✓) next to things that you have seen in your classroom.
- 3 Put a '1' next to things that you think children might only be doing in Grade One. It is fine to put both a (✓) and a '1' in some places.
- 4 Give feedback and discuss in the big group.

**Facilitator notes** You may feel you want to provide some guidance as participants study the infographic for the first time. Ask them to identify the different sections of the infographic. Can they see how they align with the flow of the training workbooks?  
Talk about the language of the infographic. It is written from a Grade R child's point of view.  
Link the 'I' in all the sentences to the child in the middle of the graphic who is a confident reader and writer.  
Point out that all the behaviours are linked to and build on one another. For example, phonological awareness is only possible for a child who listens carefully.  
Children need plenty of opportunity to develop and practise these behaviours if they are to learn to read and write with understanding and enjoyment.

*Emergent reading and emergent writing are not isolated skills. There are many behaviours, skills and attitudes that show that children are emerging as readers and writers. These skills develop over time, in language- and print-rich home and school environments. We need to observe and celebrate this development – and support children who are not showing evidence of these behaviours, skills and attitudes.*



### Drawing and emergent writing

I draw pictures of things I see around me, of stories and things that happen.

I try to write about my drawings or I ask someone to write what I say.

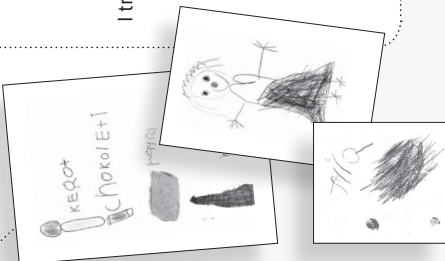
I write with marks and scribbles.

I make letters and cards for my family and friends.

I copy writing I see around me.

I try to listen to sounds in words and write letters for the sounds I hear.

I know how to write some common words correctly.



### Emergent reading

I like books and enjoy reading!

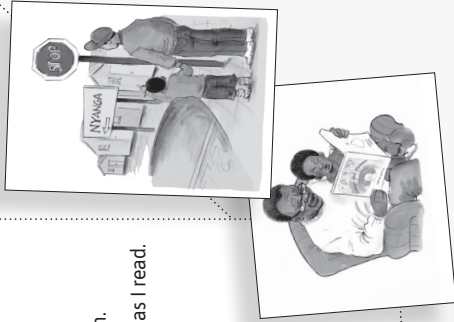
I notice signs, logos and labels and try to read them.

I know how to turn the pages of a book and point to words as I read.

I use the pictures in books to help me read in my reading voice.

I look for letters I know to help me guess what words say.

I try to sound out words I don't know.



### Letter-sound knowledge

I can write my name.

I am interested in letters.

I write letters in the sand, with crayons, with a paintbrush and water.

I know the sounds that different letters make.



### I AM CONFIDENT TO EXPRESS MY IDEAS IN WRITING AND I CAN READ AND UNDERSTAND WHAT I READ.



When I grow up want to be a...

*Nachir conservationist  
to save the mivoze*

### Phonological awareness (awareness of sounds in words)

I enjoy songs, rhymes and listening games.

I can hear when words have the same sounds or different sounds.

I play "I spy..." and I know what sounds words start with.

I can put syllables and sounds together to make words.

I can break up words into syllables and sounds.



### Listening and speaking (oral language)

I understand the meanings of lots of words.

I love listening to stories. I can tell my own stories too!

I learn new words every day and I use these new words when I talk.

I know my own language well and I am learning to understand and speak other languages.

I ask questions and give answers when people ask me questions.

I talk about my ideas and I can explain what I think.

I understand and use quite long sentences.



**Facilitator notes** Ask for feedback from the group on each section of the infographic. Begin by checking if there are any ideas that participants didn't fully understand or were surprised by. Then engage in discussion about what they have seen in their classroom, and what is appropriate for Grade R and Grade 1. Remind participants that children develop at different rates, and while there are some things that are important to have mastered in Grade R and others that would only be expected in Grade 1, many of the ideas listed are characteristic of both Grade R and Grade 1 learners.

### Activity 1.3 Observing and tracking the development of emergent reading and writing

Work on your own and then in pairs:

- 1 Think of two children you have taught and know well, and write their names in the blocks next to Child A and Child B.
- 2 Put a tick in their column if you have seen them doing any of the things listed.
- 3 Now choose one of your children and describe their reading and writing behaviours to your partner, giving examples wherever possible.

CHILD'S BEHAVIOURS, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES	EVIDENCE OF THIS IN THE CLASSROOM	
	Child A	Child B
	_____	_____
Understands the meaning of many words and has a good spoken vocabulary.		
Asks and answers questions and shares ideas and thoughts.		
Listens attentively to stories and has good comprehension.		
Can sequence and re-tell stories.		
Starting to use words and phrases in an additional language.		
Often looks at and 'reads' books and has knowledge of how books work.		
Aware of and interested in print in the environment.		
Interested in and able to interpret pictures.		
Draws pictures relating to stories and events and talks about what she/he has drawn.		
Asks for someone to write about what he/she has drawn.		
Makes marks, scribbles and some letters next to her drawings.		
Pretends to write during pretend play (e.g. lists, phone messages, letters) and enjoys making cards or letters to give to people.		
Can write his/her name (some letters may be reversed).		

# ★ 2 Creating spaces for emergent reading and writing

**Facilitator notes** Read this paragraph to introduce this session.

Learning to read and write is not something that happens overnight, but is a process that takes many years. When we use the term 'emergent reading and writing' we mean that learning to read and write starts early in children's lives, rather than being something that begins when formal reading tuition begins in Grade One. Children don't need to wait for reading lessons to discover the magic of printed words and to learn about why we read and write! We can create opportunities for children to read print in their environment and experiment with writing across the daily programme in Grade R.

25 mins

## Activity 2.1 How can I create an environment that supports emergent reading?

Work in small groups:

- 1 Discuss what we mean by a 'print rich environment'. Focus on both the quantity and the quality of the print.
- 2 Write down five ways in which you can create and use environmental print in your classroom. Two have been done for you.

1. I can write children's names on a birthday calendar and check it with the class.
2. I can put labels on storage boxes, such as blocks and puzzles. Whenever I take out resources, I will make sure to read the labels out aloud with the children. (Consider writing labels in the different languages spoken by the children in your class.)
- 3 I can create a poster that illustrates the daily programme with pictures and words. I can encourage children to 'have a go' at reading the poster to find out what activity is next.
- 4 I can display hygiene posters next to the sink or toilet reminding children to wash their hands. I will use pictures and words for these posters.
- 5 I can read posters on the walls. I can make a weather chart that I read with the children every day.

**Facilitator notes** You could also discuss what is meant by a print-rich environment at home. In a print-rich home:

- It is easy to access pencil, pens, crayons and paper.
- People regularly write notes, lists, signs, cards and letters.
- There is a wide selection of fiction and non-fiction books, magazines and newspapers. People spend a good deal of time reading these and engaging with written work, study or religious texts.
- Reading material might be owned, or could be borrowed from a library.
- People often refer to books and the internet to find out information.
- People read daily to themselves and to others for pleasure.
- People play word games.

We know that many children in South Africa don't come from print-rich homes, and so it is particularly important to make our classrooms print-rich.

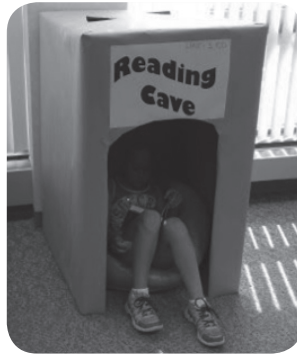
**Facilitator notes** Ask one of the teachers to read this as a sum-up.

The more you encourage children's emergent reading, the more they can engage with environmental print. This develops their literacy skills even more. For example, one Stellar teacher said: "There was a market at the school and the Grade 6s made posters. The Grade Rs could access these – what was for sale and how much each item cost. Usually they would just walk past the posters but now they could look and interpret."



Work in the big group:

- 3 Think about what opportunities are available for independent reading in your classroom. Where do children read? When do they read?
- 4 Look at the Stellar two-week planner in your *Teacher's Guide* to find out when and how often time has been set aside for independent reading.
- 5 Look at the images below and discuss what these teachers have done to create exciting and welcoming reading corners and spaces. Share some ideas of what you have done in your own classroom to create a welcoming reading corner while the facilitator writes all the ideas on a list.



**Facilitator notes** The list might include the following:

- boxes or baskets to create contained space for reading
- carpets or cushions to make it inviting and comfortable
- a small shelf or baskets for books
- a curtain or shelf that separates this area from the rest of the classroom.

Talk about the importance of having interesting and beautifully illustrated books – including some that are locally published and have pictures that children can identify with.

Encourage teachers to share more of their own creative ideas!

Work on your own:

- 6 Imagine that your school has allocated budget to improve the reading corner in your classroom. Your principal has asked what you think is needed to make a good reading corner. Use the ideas generated by the group and complete the letter to your principal.

Dear Principal

As you know, it is really important for young children to have opportunities to engage quietly and independently with books in an inviting space. We are very grateful for the budget that has been allocated to improve the Grade R book corners. These are the three things we would like to buy:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,  
The Grade R teachers

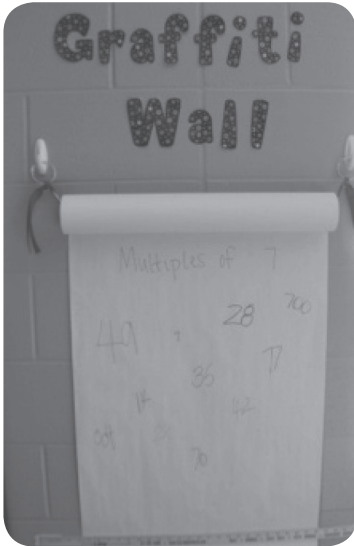
## Activity 2.2 How can I create an environment that supports emergent writing?

Work in small groups:

- 1 Discuss the pictures.
- 2 Share ways that you arrange and equip your classroom to encourage drawing and emergent writing.
- 3 Make a note of three new ideas that you would like to try.

**Facilitator notes** Walk around the groups and listen to ideas generated by participants. Here are some ideas you might want to suggest:

- Put up flipchart paper and a marker where children can write freely (graffiti wall).
- Include crayons and scrap paper in free play activities (for example a shop, post office and doctor).
- Display children's drawing and writing at eye level. Change these displays often and include everyone's drawings and writing attempts.



New ideas I would like to try to encourage drawing and emergent writing in my classroom:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

On your own:

4 Read and complete the table below.

	I ALREADY DO THIS IN MY CLASSROOM	I WOULD LIKE TO DO MORE OF THIS IN MY CLASSROOM
I often link drawing and writing to a story or activity in order to make it more purposeful.		
We always try to spend time talking about our ideas before drawing and writing.		
I am encouraging and supportive even if children don't write or draw perfectly. I say things like: "I love the way you have drawn the ...." "I like the way you keep trying." "Tell me about your lovely picture."		
I give children the chance to decide what they want to draw or write rather than telling them what or how to draw or write.		
In my classroom, we try to write for a purpose and use writing in pretend play (like writing a letter or a shopping list) and to communicate with parents and other classes.		

15 mins

### Activity 2.3 Story time: reading aloud for enjoyment

Work in the big group:

Enjoy the story read by the facilitator

**Facilitator notes** Choose a book carefully for this session. Practise reading it beforehand. Follow the steps on page 6 in the Teacher's Guide. This is your chance to inspire the participants to make reading aloud an exciting part of their daily programme!





Work in pairs:

- 1 Look at the Stellar two-week planner in your *Teacher's Guide* to find out when and how often reading aloud is listed in the two-week cycle.
- 2 Read the suggestions for this activity on page 6.
- 3 Discuss what makes a good reading aloud lesson. Complete the sentence below.

I know my reading aloud lesson is successful when:

I know my reading aloud lesson is successful when:

- learners are engaged and listen attentively
- learners don't want the story to stop
- learners' faces show that they are identifying with the characters (laughter, concern, joy)
- learners' responses to questions about the story show that they understand the story
- learners discuss the story the next day.

- 4 Share these ideas within the big group and add more ideas here.

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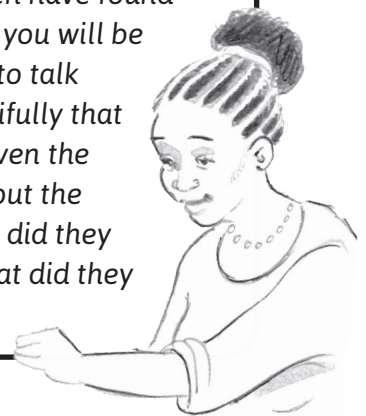
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**Facilitator notes** Ask one of the teachers to read this as a sum-up.

*Reading aloud is one of the best ways to build strong language skills and create a love of reading and books. Researchers studying how we read aloud to children have found that talking about the book is as important as reading the book. Because you will be reading stories right at the end of the day, there may not always be time to talk about the book after you finish reading. Sometimes a story ends so beautifully that it is important to just enjoy the moment! However, where there is time, even the next day, you could ask questions about what the children remember about the story or let the children share their personal responses to the story. What did they like about the story? What didn't they like? What was their best part? What did they learn from the story?*



## Activity 2.4 Selecting great books for young children

Work in small groups:

- 1 The table below lists some criteria to guide your choice of books to read aloud to Grade R learners. Take a look at the table.
- 2 Think of some books that fulfil these criteria and write their titles in the right-hand column.
- 3 Share your list with the facilitator so that a group list can be developed on a piece of flipchart paper.

**Facilitator notes** Try to get as many quality books as you can to display and share with the teachers in this session. If possible, put a few books on each table for the teachers to use to complete the list.

Give teachers a few links to useful websites recommending books for Grade R children.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING STORIES FOR READING ALOUD IN GRADE R	A CHILDREN'S BOOK THAT FULFILS THESE CRITERIA
The book tells about familiar places and people so it is easy for new readers to identify with the context.	
This book builds children's imagination.	
The book is very exciting and grips young children's attention.	
The book teaches new knowledge that is interesting for children.	
The book has a funny sequence of events and amusing pictures that will appeal to a young child's sense of humour.	
The book has rich vocabulary that will stretch the children and teach them to love words.	
The book plays with sounds, including lots of repetition, rhyme, rhythm and/or tongue twisters.	
The book helps children to think about how others feel in different situations.	
The book has a positive theme and/ or a happy ending to give children a sense of hope.	
The book has beautiful illustrations that will inspire young children and build their imagination.	

The Wordworks website has a list of excellent, locally published books that are available in many South African languages ([www.wordworks.org.za](http://www.wordworks.org.za)).



# ★ 3 Story-based reading and writing activities

We know that young children learn best when their learning has meaning. New learning is connected to something they already know about. One of the powerful ways young children make meaning is through stories, so in the Stellar programme, we have structured the two-week cycle around a story. We use oral stories as a basis for introducing children to written stories. The reading and writing activities build on and consolidate the language of a story, which forms a platform for learning about written language. Drawing plays an important role in helping children to begin to express their ideas on paper, and is an important step towards writing.

**Facilitator notes**  
Read this paragraph to introduce this session.

15 mins

## Activity 3.1 Shared reading using a Big Book

Work in small groups:

- 1 Look at the two-week planner in your *Teacher's Guide* to find out when time is allocated for reading a Big Book with the children.

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- 2 Read the steps for the Big Book activity.
- 3 Look at the Big Book in your story pack and notice the level of language, the amount of text and the size of print used. Why do you think the book was designed this way?

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- 4 Discuss the purpose of reading a Big Book to Grade R learners.



**Facilitator notes** Simple language and few words on a page help children to link the words they hear to the printed words on a page as the teacher reads. Simple sentences mean that children can also recite the story while pointing to words and 'reading'. Big print is used so that children can see spaces between words and start noticing letters that are familiar.



Shared reading: Big Books

Work on your own:

- 5 Complete the missing sections in the table below.
- 6 Share your work in the big group and add any ideas you find useful.

<b>DIFFERENCES BETWEEN READING ALOUD AND SHARED READING OF A BIG BOOK</b>		
	<b>Reading aloud</b>	<b>Shared reading of a Big Book</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<i>Reading aloud involves the teacher reading a storybook aloud to learners.</i>	<i>Shared reading is where the teacher reads a text out aloud with learners so that they can follow the words as she reads. The focus is on modelling reading.</i>
<b>What resources would you use?</b>	<i>Exciting and engaging storybooks with interesting language and new vocabulary. There can be lots of text on a page and a small typeface because the teacher will be reading to the children.</i>	<i>Big Books or texts that can be displayed for a group of children, such as posters, stories, song words or lists written on newsprint. Small amount of text with big typeface.</i>
<b>What is your goal when you do this kind of reading in class?</b>	<i>Build a love of reading through exciting storybooks Introduce children to new vocabulary and language that is different to the language they use every day Build children's imagination Inspire children with beautiful illustrations Expose children to new worlds Let children see their own world represented in a book.</i>	<i>Introduce concepts about print; a book has: a title, front cover, author, illustrator, page numbers; pages are turned from right to left and we read from left to right. Demonstrate how the writing on the page corresponds with the words we say when we read. Children can join in the reading when they feel ready to do so.</i>

10 mins

### Activity 3.2 Making little books



#### Little books

Work in small groups:

- 1 Find the activity in Week 2 of the teaching cycle in which children receive a little book related to the story.
- 2 Turn to the resource pages in your *Teacher's Guide*. Find the template for the little book and the instructions for how to fold a little book. Follow the instructions to fold your own little book.

#### Notes

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**Facilitator notes** Ask one of the teachers to read this as a sum-up.

*Making little books is an inexpensive way to develop resources to support independent reading. The templates in your Teacher's Guide are for little books related to the story. You can also fold up blank pages into little books which can be 'written' and illustrated by the children and taken home to read with their families.*



### Activity 3.3 Shared writing and reading

Work in the big group:

- 1 Read the extracts below.

*Shared writing is when teachers write a text together with learners. The teacher guides the process using the ideas and words of the learners in order to give them a sense of ownership of the final product. Shared writing demonstrates the writing process and provides scaffolding towards independent writing.*

*Shared reading is when teachers model the reading process for Grade R learners using reading materials such as books, posters and texts in their environment. During shared reading activities, you the teacher 'think aloud', modelling your thought processes and strategies so that young children begin to understand 'how' the reading process works.*

**Facilitator notes** This is what we hope the participants observe: The teacher engaged the learners in discussion about the topic. She listened to different contributions from learners and then drew out a common theme. She proposed that the class accepted one of the contributions, or she proposed a sentence which captured a number of ideas. She guided the learners to develop a beginning, middle and end for the story. By continually reading back what was written before deciding on the next sentence, the teacher helped learners see the link between reading and writing.

- 2 Participate in the **Shared writing and reading** activity led by the facilitator or watch the video.



#### Shared writing and reading

- 3 Discuss how the teacher involved the learners in deciding what the focus of the writing should be, and on the words and sentences to be used?

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- 4 How did the 'teacher' make the link between writing and reading clear to the learners?

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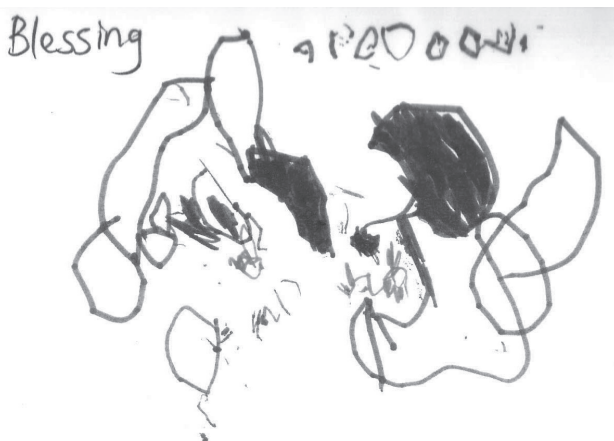


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### Activity 3.4 The importance of free drawing

In the big group:

- 1 Look at the following pictures of a young child's drawing at the beginning of the year and in the middle of the year.



- 2 Brainstorm what you think could have helped this child to make such good progress with his drawing.
- 3 Listen to the facilitator read some notes written by Blessing’s teacher and write down key points below.

**Facilitator notes** Blessing was 5 years old when he drew these pictures. The teacher was concerned when she saw his drawings and realised he needed some special attention. She decided to observe him during drawing time, and then came up with a plan to support his drawing. She gave him a little attention every day during drawing time and chatted to him about what they were drawing.

She said things like: “I can see you have drawn a picture of yourself here. How many arms do you have? Can you show me your arms – yes, they are here on the side of your body. Do you think you can draw some arms for yourself?”

The teacher encouraged him to take more time doing his drawings and helped him to plan which colours to use.

She encouraged him to look more carefully at things when he was drawing, for example: “Look at this apple – what shape is it? Yes, it is round. And what colour do you need to draw it?”

The teacher also discussed what she was doing with Blessing’s parents and encouraged them to support their boy at home.

25 mins

### Activity 3.5 Drawing and emergent writing

Work in pairs:



#### Story-based drawing and emergent writing

- 1 One person should role-play being a child and the other the teacher. The ‘child’ will draw a picture and the ‘teacher’ will follow the steps in the *Teacher’s Guide* for the **Drawing and emergent writing** activity.

Work in small groups:

- 2 Reflect on the experience of role-playing this activity. Share your experiences of doing drawing and emergent writing in your classroom. What worked well and what were the challenges?
- 3 Share the strategies you have used to scaffold or support emergent writing in your classroom. Jot down some ideas shared by colleagues below.

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Most children in Grade R are not yet able to express themselves through writing. The first way they will represent their ideas and thoughts on paper will be through drawing. There are many ways to support children’s drawing without drawing for them, or telling them what to draw, or asking them to colour in someone else’s outline.



- 4 Read through the following notes on how to support young children's emergent writing. Think about which techniques the facilitator used in the demonstration lesson.
- 5 Highlight or underline new ideas you would like to try.

### **Different ways of supporting young children's emergent writing**

- 1 It is normal for children's writing to include scribbles, letters, numbers or shapes. If a child spontaneously scribbles or tries to write, ask them to tell you what they have written and affirm their efforts. For example: "You have done a good job of writing your story. Can you tell me what it says?"
- 2 Don't worry if some children write a long string of letters without spaces. Sometimes it can be helpful to count the child's words on your fingers as they tell you their sentence, pointing to a finger as you say each word. Encourage the child to do the same with their fingers as they are writing. This may help them understand the spaces between words.
- 3 As the year progresses, children may start using single letters to represent some sounds in words. Make a comment about what you have noticed in their writing. For example: "I like the way you used the letter **b** for baby bird in your writing – that was good thinking!" They might still write letters backwards or upside down. Don't correct their writing. They will practise the correct formation in other activities.
- 4 Some children may become aware that they are not writing 'correctly' and may refuse to write at all. This may happen when they have developed a good understanding of letters and sounds but cannot yet use conventional ("grown-up") spelling. This is an important phase in writing development. Support the child by writing some words for them and encouraging them to write words that they can sound out or words that they know how to spell. Soon they will be writing again with more independence.

10 mins

### **Activity 3.6 Read and do**

Work in the big group:

- 1 Participate in the **Read and do** activity led by the facilitator.
- 2 What is the aim of this activity and how will your learners benefit?
- 3 Share your ideas in the big group.

**Facilitator notes** Explain to participants that the **Read and do** activities are different for the first three stories. In *The Green Dress*, *Ali and the paint* and *Spot goes to the shop*, children are given more practical tasks. The other stories have the same kind of activity for **Read and do** which you are going to do with the group. You will need a photocopy of a **Read and do** page from *Baby Bird finds his Mother* for each participant.

### **Notes**

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## Conclusion and wrap-up

**Facilitator notes** Give teachers time to fill in the answers and then go through each answer, making sure to discuss and explain the correct answer in cases where teachers' answers differ.

To remind you of everything you have learned, page back in your Workbook and tick if the following statements are true or false.

STATEMENT	TRUE	FALSE
There are many different behaviours, skills and attitudes that indicate that a young child is developing as an emergent reader and writer.	✓	
It is very important to give children the chance to decide what they want to draw rather than telling them what or how to draw.	✓	
Independent reading shouldn't be part of the daily programme for Grade R children. This is something that children are only ready to do in Grade 1.		✓
Shared reading is where the teacher reads a text out aloud and points to the text so that children can see how the reading process works. The focus is on modelling reading.	✓	
When choosing books for reading aloud to children, make sure to choose books that have very simple text and words the children will understand.		✓
Display children's writing and drawing in your classroom to show that you are proud of their attempts, even if their drawing skills are still developing and their writing still looks more like scribbling.	✓	
There is no need to display print in the classroom environment as it makes the classroom untidy; anyway, Grade R children can't read yet.		✓
It is a good idea to link drawing and writing to a story or activity to make the writing more purposeful.	✓	
Young children benefit from seeing that we write for many different purposes such as letters, lists and cards.	✓	
When young children write letters back to front or upside down, it is important to step in and correct them immediately.		✓