



Literacy Objects as
Cultural Tools:
Effects on Children's
Literacy Behaviors in
Play

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Presented by,

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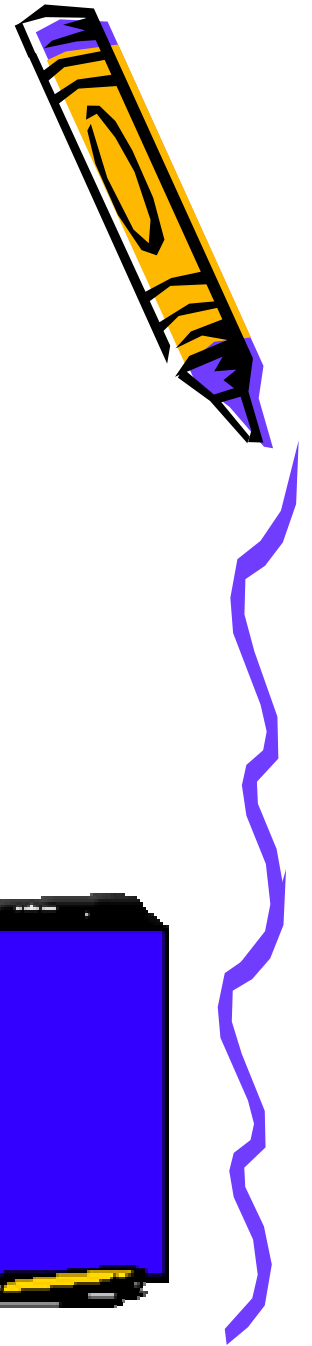
Purpose of the Study:

To investigate how changes in the physical design of the play environment affect preschooler's literacy behaviors and spontaneous free play.



This study was designed to answer the following questions:

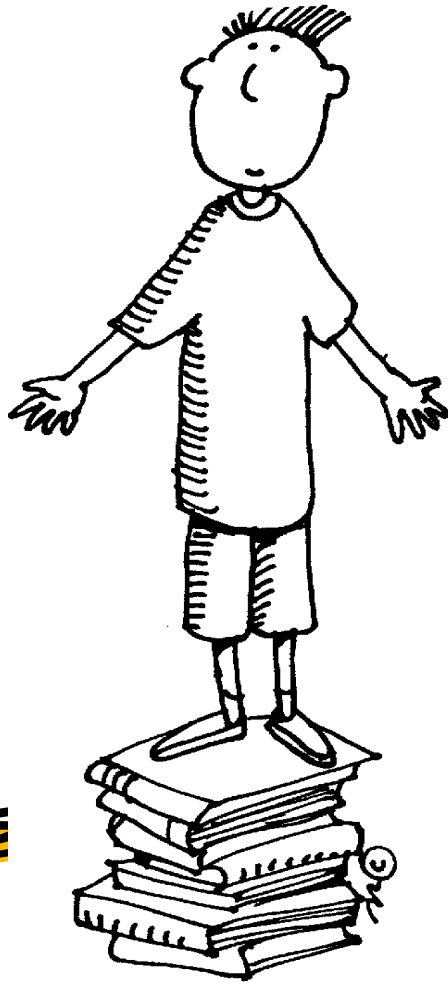
- 1. Do play settings enriched with literacy objects influence the frequency of literacy demonstrations in the spontaneous play of preschoolers?*
- 2. Does the inclusion of literacy objects in play environments influence the duration and complexity of literacy-related free play?*
- 3. How are literacy objects used in children's spontaneous play?*

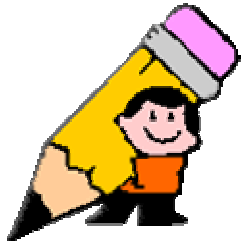


Participants in the Study:



- Ninety one preschoolers, 3-5 years old, from two day care centers in an urban metropolitan area.
- Each center serves families from diverse ethnic backgrounds; including 62% Caucasian, 31% Black, 5% Southeast Asian and 2% Hispanic





Procedures:

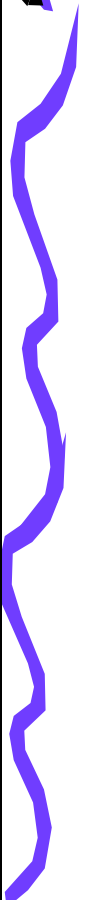
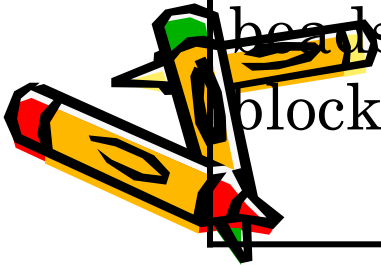
Over a two week period, each child's play was observed and the number of literacy demonstrations was tallied during four 15 minute segments of spontaneous play, for a total of 60 minutes of play observed per child.



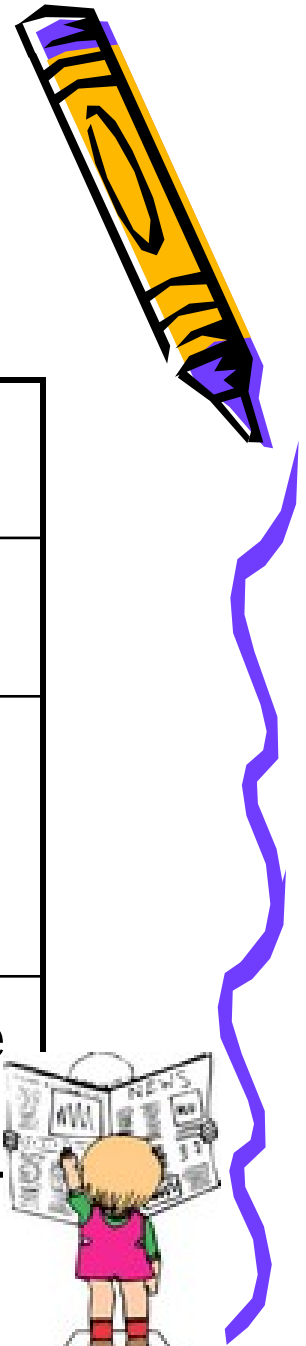
Nonliteracy Objects Before Enrichment:



Site A	Site B
<u>Kitchen:</u> kitchen setup, pots/pans, plastic fruit, tableware	<u>Kitchen:</u> kitchen setup, pots/pans, plastic fruit, tableware
<u>Book Corner:</u> bean bag, chair, small chairs	<u>Book Corner:</u> bean bag, chair, child's rocker, book rack
<u>Manipulatives:</u> Legos, beads, straws, small blocks, plastic animals	<u>Manipulatives:</u> Legos, beads, straws, small blocks, plastic animals



Literacy Objects Before Enrichment:

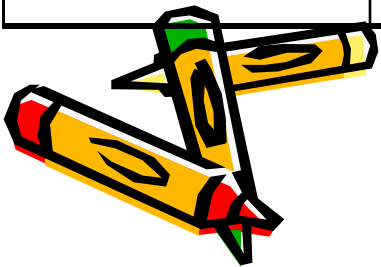
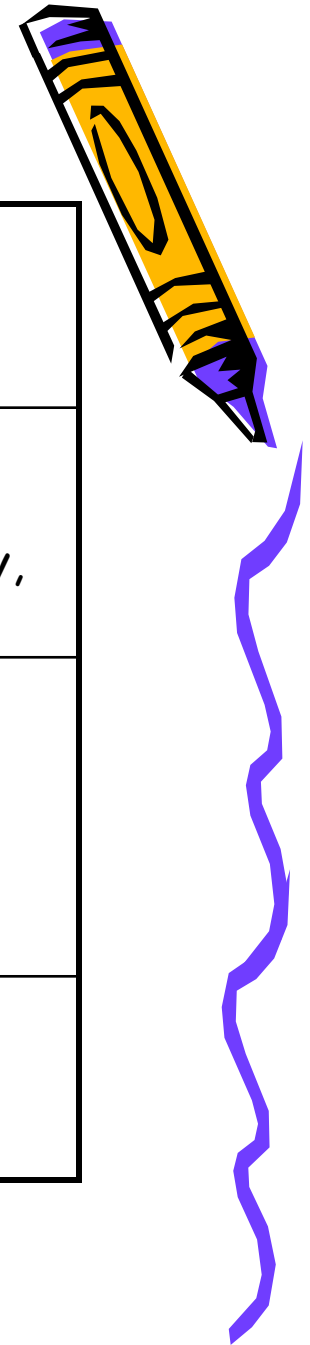


Site A	Site B
<u>Kitchen:</u> None	<u>Kitchen:</u> None
<u>Book Corner:</u> Books, ABC chart	<u>Book Corner:</u> Books, wall poster
<u>Manipulatives:</u> None	<u>Manipulatives:</u> None



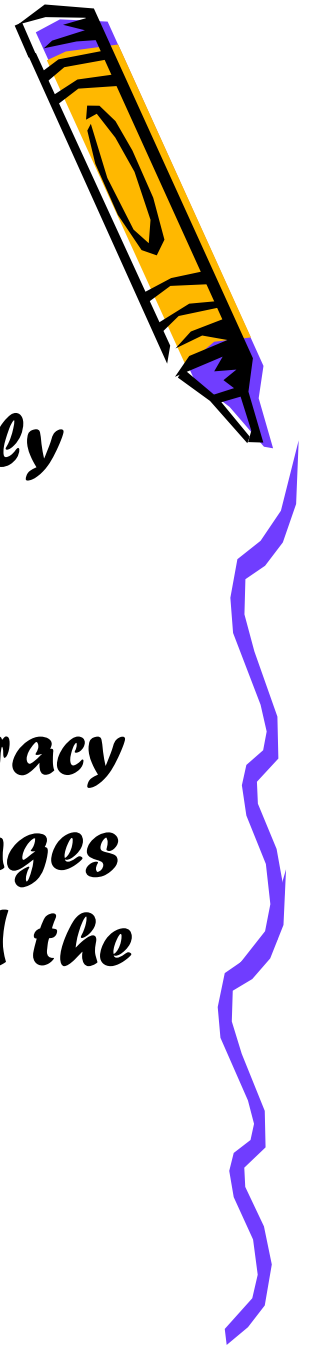
Nonliteracy Objects AFTER Enrichment

Site A Nonliteracy objects	Site A Literacy objects	Site B Nonliteracy objects	Site B Literacy objects
<u>Kitchen:</u> same	<u>Kitchen:</u> same	<u>Kitchen:</u> Same + tree telephone	<u>Kitchen:</u> books, telephone book, cookbooks, stationery, pens, pencils, etc
<u>Book Corner:</u> same	<u>Book Corner:</u> same	<u>Book Corner:</u> Couch, area rug, table, tree tele	<u>Book Corner:</u> Return cards, library stamps, books, mags, paper, markers, calendars, etc
<u>Manipulatives:</u> same	<u>Manipulatives:</u> same	<u>Manipulatives:</u> same + buttons	<u>Manipulatives:</u> Labelled bins, mags, maps, paper, pencils



RESULTS!

- *Children in Site B engaged in significantly **MORE** handling and writing demonstrations than children in Site A.*
- ***THUS** indicating that the infusion of literacy objects, along with physical design changes in play settings, significantly influenced the nature of children's literacy behaviors.*



Conclusion!

- If preschool children are provided with literacy objects, they naturally gravitate to them .
- Site B tended to rely more on language in communicating with others in literacy related play than the nonintervention group; only 14% of the play in the intervention group was dominated by nonverbal action, compared to 41% in Site A!
- These demonstrations became more sustained and more interconnected as literacy was increasingly integrated in children's ongoing play themes over the 7 month period of study.



Finally,

Contrary to some teachers' beliefs that play with real objects encourages more "real-life" play, children in the intervention group actually engaged in more object transformations with the literacy props than those in the nonintervention group.



THE END

