Why visit the Post Office?

In the early years, two of the most powerful influences on children’s learning are their relationships and their everyday experiences and activities. As early childhood educators support children to actively explore their community, children build concepts and knowledge that last a lifetime.

- **Relationships**
  - Play, play, play
  - Enjoy experiences together
  - Work together in pairs or groups
  - Solve problems

- **Listening and Speaking**
  - Talk, talk, talk
  - Sing songs and recite poems
  - Use new and interesting words
  - Share ideas, ask questions, have conversations

- **Early Reading and Writing**
  - Read, read, read
  - Draw pictures
  - Record thoughts, memories and ideas on paper

- **Early Mathematics and Science**
  - Count, count, count
  - Notice things that are the same or different
  - Sort objects into groups
  - Find and make patterns

So, experience the excitement of a learning adventure right in your own community. Let’s visit the post office!

### Meeting Educational Needs Through Outreach

**Enjoy Books, Songs and Poems**

Books, songs and poems offer rich language learning opportunities. Use your favorites or try one of these:

- *Will Goes to the Post Office*, by Lena Landstrom
- *The Post Office Book*, by Gail Gibbons
- *Dear Mr. Blueberry*, by Simon James
- *To the Post Office with Mama*, by Sue Farrell

A Day with a Mail Carrier, by Jan Hokke

These books are available at your local library.

**Mail Myself to You** (Song)

I’m gonna wrap myself in paper.
I’m gonna dab myself with glue.
I’m gonna mail myself to you.

I’m going to wrap myself in paper.
I’m going to dab myself with glue.
I’m going to mail myself to you.

I’m going to wrap myself in paper.
I’m going to mail myself to you.

I’m gonna be up on a stool.
I’m gonna come up into your mailbox.
I’m gonna mail myself to you.

**The Mailbox Poem**

I need to mail a letter and slide right in the box.
All that you could see of me were my tennis shoes and socks.
I self-addressed my envelope and air-mail stamped my knee.
Soon I would be ready for the next delivery.
I folded like an envelope and in a day or so…
I’ll go with all the letters to Japan or Mexico.

**Sharing with Parents**

- Provide a description of the trip including ideas that will help continue the learning at home.
- Send home the words to the songs so the family can sing along with their children.
- Encourage parents to take their children to the post office when they go.
- Suggest parents share the mail with their children (show them the address on the front of the envelopes, look at the stamps).
Let’s Go... to the Post Office

Planning the Adventure
- Call the post office ahead of time for an appointment. Ask the staff for a short tour of a mail truck and the area where they sort the mail.
- Build on children’s interests and excitement by sharing books, pictures, and songs.
- Invite children to share past experiences related to the trip.
- Engage children in planning the upcoming adventure. Children’s active involvement helps them feel more in control. This can help limit challenging behaviors and increase learning.
- Encourage children to write a postcard or letter to mail to a special person at their home. Let the children help you address the postcard.
- Use focus words in discussions. Hearing a word used repeatedly helps children build their vocabulary.
- Build parent interest and involvement. Provide information about the trip, including focus words and ideas. Encourage parents to join their children on the trip.
- Think ahead about safety considerations and behavior. Encourage children to contribute ideas for a safe and interesting trip.
- Plan for any special items that may be needed.

Getting Ready to Go
- Talk about what you are going to do on the outing.
- Review safety rules and expectations.
- Remind children to use the bathroom.
- Create groups (partners, small groups) for the outing.
- Collect and take:
  - Cell phone
  - Emergency kit (include any special medications)
  - List of children participating
  - Clothing as needed (sweaters, jackets, change of clothes, walking shoes)
  - Water and snacks as needed

On Your Outing
A trip to the post office is a special opportunity for children and adults to learn together. Slow down and try out a child’s view of the world. Shared experiences give adults and children interesting things to talk about. Remember to talk with children throughout the trip, infants and toddlers, too.

- Level 1:
  - Take a tour of a mail truck.
- Level 2:
  - Take a tour of the back area where the mail is sorted.
- Level 3:
  - Explore the post office. Let children add things to the boxes to change the weight.

Words to Spotlight
Could be least six words that may be new and interesting to the children. Use the words over and over and in a variety of settings. When using new words in conversation include child-friendly definitions.

- Address: the number, street name, and other information that describes where a building is or where somebody lives
- Shape: a form or pattern of any kind
- Postcard: a card that can be written on and mailed
- Weight: the amount of something, as measured in pounds or grams
- Number: a symbol used to represent a number

After You Get Back
- Extend the learning and fun through activities that help children retain and expand concepts, ideas and vocabulary experienced during the trip.
- Engage in Dramatic Play
  - Pretend play is a powerful learning experience for young children. Work with children to recreate a post office in your setting. Encourage children to role-play being people they saw at the post office (mail sorter, clerk, mail carrier). As you join in the play, take a small role, use focus words and have fun.
  - Provide the children with as many of the following items as possible:
    - Cash
    - Cash register
    - Envelopes
    - Jackets and shirts
    - Labels
    - Mailboxes (child-sized)
    - Paper
    - Pencils, pens, crayons, markers
    - Pretend stamps or one-cent stamps
    - Scale
    - Rubber date stamps
    - Stamps
  - Let children purchase a stamp for the letter or postcard they brought to mail.
  - Allow children to mail their letters in the big blue mail boxes.
  - Remind children to use the bathroom.
  - Review safety rules and expectations.

After You Get Back
- Express Science and Mathematics
  - Mailing Shapes:
    - Set up a table as a writing center with envelopes, stickers, pens, paper, markers, crayons, labels, stamp pads, and stamps. Let children write letters to their friends and family.
  - You’ve Got Mail:
    - Have children bring a box from home. Point the child’s first name (in large letters) and address (in smaller letters) on small cards and tape the cards onto the box. Let children decorate with collage materials. Encourage children to “mail” notes and cards to each other.

Express Yourself... with Words
- Fill a box:
  - Provide paint and let children decorate a large box to use as a mailbox in the dramatic play area.
  - Card Shop:
    - Provide heavy paper or large index cards for children to create stationary or postcards using stickers, crayons, markers, dox paint, etc.
  - Numbers, Numbers, Numbers:
    - Provide play dough and number and letter cutters to explore numbers, letters, addresses or zip codes.

Express Yourself...through Art
- Mail Time:
  - Provide paint and let children decorate a large box to use as a mailbox in the dramatic play area.
- Card Shop:
  - Provide heavy paper or large index cards for children to create stationary or postcards using stickers, crayons, markers, dox paint, etc.
  - Numbers, Numbers, Numbers:
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