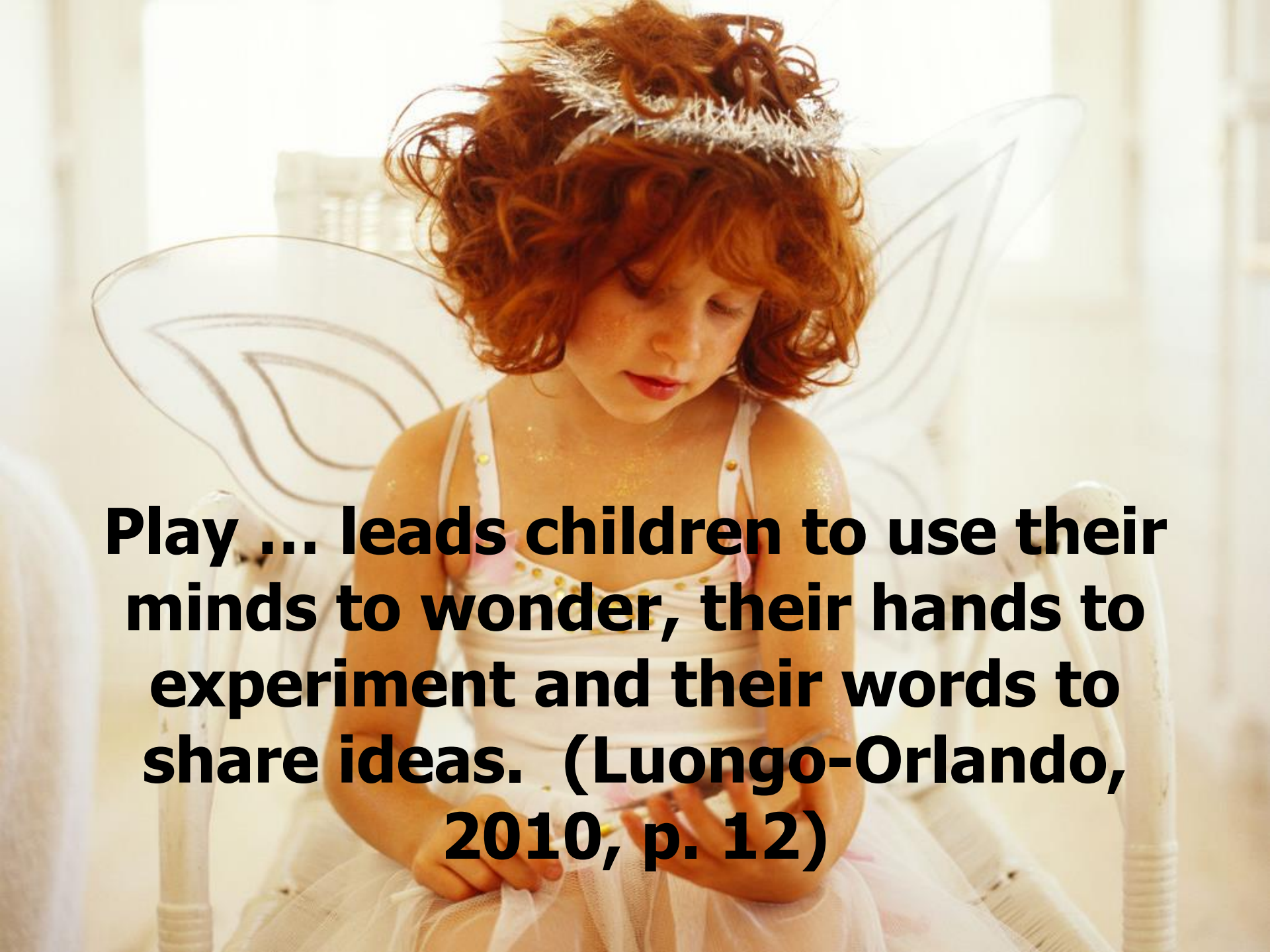


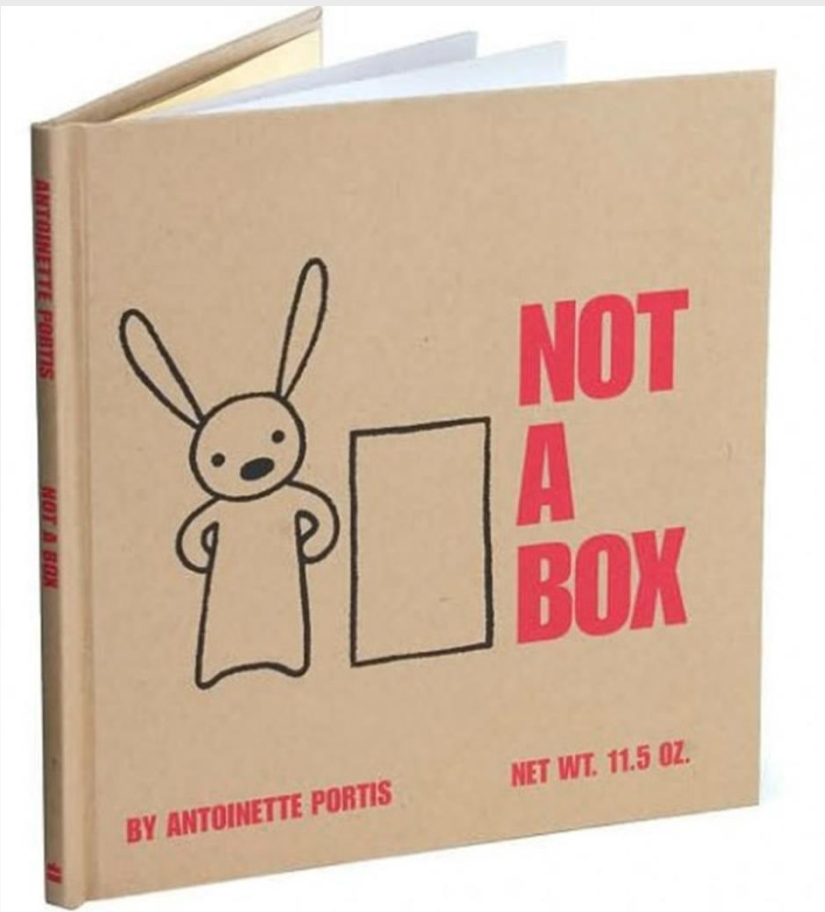
The Dramatic Play  
And  
Emergent Literacy Connection:  
Helping Teachers  
See the Teachable Moment

**Lina L. Owens, Joanna M. Grymes, Diana L. Williams**

Arkansas State University

A young girl with curly red hair, wearing a white tutu and a tiara, is sitting on a white chair. She is looking down at something in her hands. The background is a bright, indoor setting with a window. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, black font.

**Play ... leads children to use their minds to wonder, their hands to experiment and their words to share ideas. (Luongo-Orlando, 2010, p. 12)**



Antoinette  
Portis  
9780061123221

Not A Box

# Agenda

- Review of literature
- Setting up play
- Choosing Literature
- Some Examples
- Closing





Play is  
showing

up

every-  
where!



- *Christian Science Monitor*: Toddlers to tweens: relearning how to play January 2012
- Dr. Pepper/Snapple – Let’s Play Community Partnership (KaBOOM) commercial
- *Scientific American* – Review of Stuart Brown’s *The Serious Need for Play* January 2009
- *New York Times*: Effort to restore children’s play gains momentum, January 2011
- *New York Times Magazine*: Taking play seriously. February 2008
- *The Atlantic*: All work and no play: Why your kids are more anxious, depressed. October 2011
- *NPR*: Old-fashioned play builds serious skills. Feb 2008

- *Smithsonian*: Let the children play, It's good for them. July/Aug 2012
- *US News & World Report*: Learning and play, September 2012
- *USA Today*: Less play time equals more troubled kids, experts say
- *Wall Street Journal*: Playing it too safe? New playground gear promotes risk-taking to boost fitness and brain development. November 2012
- *Chronicle of Higher Education*: The case for play: How a handful fo researchers are trying to save childhood. February 2011



Via Pinterest:  
No matter how big  
and bad you are,  
when a two year old  
hands you a toy  
phone, you answer  
it.



When engaged  
in play, children  
must use  
language to  
communicate &  
negotiate  
meaning.

Mielonen & Paterson, 2009



# Example

May I take your order?



# Play and development?

- Lillard & Colleagues 2013 review of play and child development
- Nicolopoulou & Ilgaz response focusing on play and narrative



“Meanwhile, the lack of existing evidence that pretend play helps development should not be taken as an allowance for school programs to employ traditional teacher-centered instructional approaches that research has clearly shown are inferior for young children. The hands-on, child driven educational methods sometimes referred to as “playful learning” (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009) are the most positive means yet known to help young children’s development.” Lillard, et al, 2013, pp 27-28)



- Enjoyable/pleasurable
- Intrinsically motivated
- Freely chosen by the player
- Active engagement on part of player
- “As if real”
- Non-literal

- Segal, 2004



Defining Play:  
Elements of Play

## Dramatic Play

Symbolic representation of materials

## Sociodramatic Play

Role taking, Verbal communication


## Mature vs. Immature (Bedrova & Leong)

create new scenarios, assign new roles,  
invent props to fit play, immersed

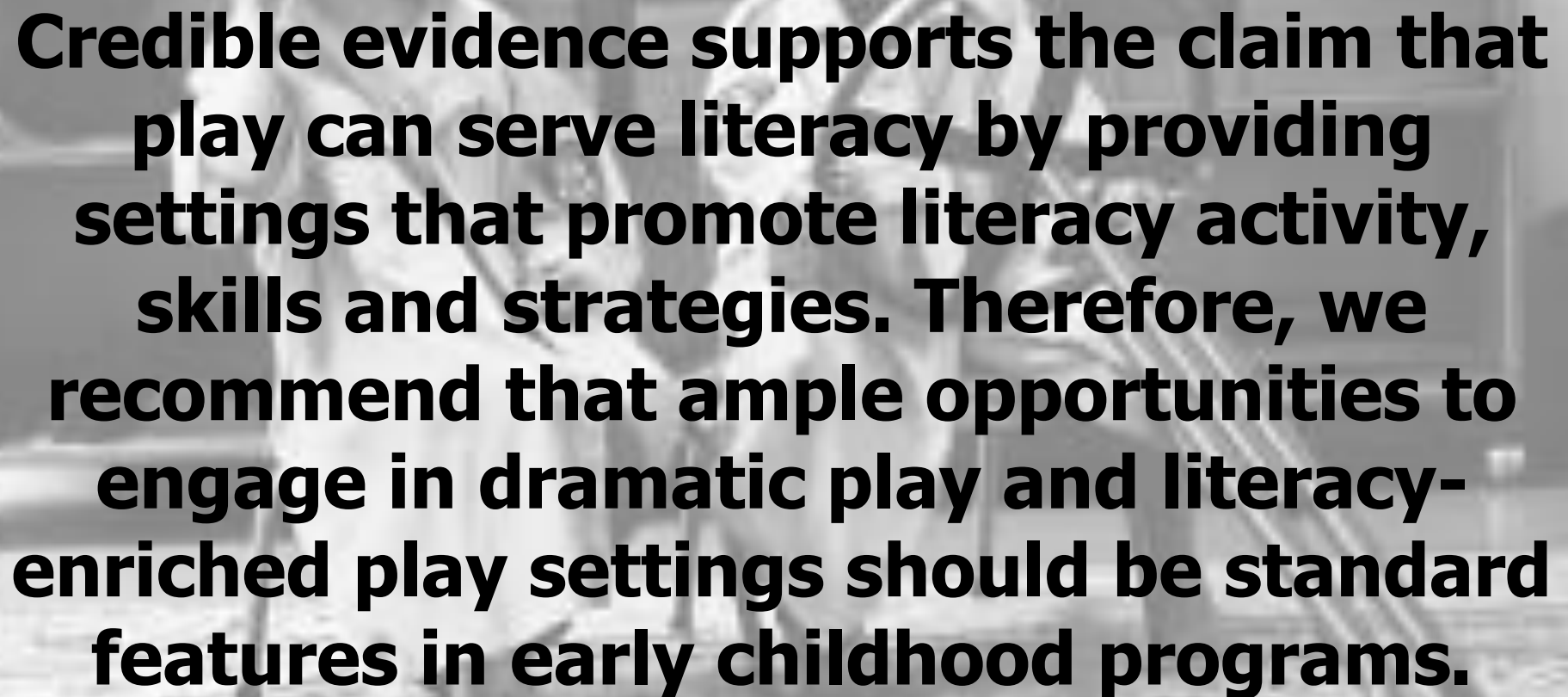


Defining Dramatic Play

- Saracho & Spodek (2006)
  - Piaget/Constructivist
  - Vygotsky/social contexts & symbolic thinking
  - Bronfennbrenner/person-environment dynamic



Theoretical Foundations



**Credible evidence supports the claim that play can serve literacy by providing settings that promote literacy activity, skills and strategies. Therefore, we recommend that ample opportunities to engage in dramatic play and literacy-enriched play settings should be standard features in early childhood programs.**

**Christie & Roskos, 2008, p3.**



# Rosco & Christie review

- Relationship between free play with pretend elements and oral-language skills
  - Syntactic complexity
  - Mental imagery related to reading/writing
- Creative drama play and literacy – meaning making
- Literacy-enriched play areas increase frequency of reading and reading behaviors



Dramatization of stories positive affects story recall  
(esp 3 – 7 year old low to middle SES children)



# Play & Language Connection

- Symbolic thinking/representation
- Language required in social play
- More complex forms of communication in social play
- Motivation for language (play is in the child's control)

(Weisberg, et al, 2013)



# Writing and Play

- Writing attempts in preschool connected to letter knowledge (Gerde, et al, 2012)
- Developmental process



# National Research Council '98

- Play-based literacy learning... (KG) teachers provide:
  - Sufficient time and space for play
  - Material resources
  - Background knowledge developed for play
  - Scaffolding of retelling/dramatization of play
  - Facilitation of children's attention and learning through modeling & interaction (p. 184)



- Common experiences (Morrow, 2007)
- Environment & Materials matter (NRC)
- Choose strategically (Bluiett, 2009)



CHOOSING EXPERIENCES  
& MATERIALS

# 8 Principles Effective Early Literacy Instruction (EL & SBRR)

- Core content --- (oral language, print awareness)
- Oral Language
- Storybook reading
- Carefully planned environment
- Opportunities to engage in emergent literacy
- DAP forms of explicit instruction
- Home supports

• Instruction & assessment guided by standards

• (Vuchelich , Christie, & Enz, 2011, pp. 12 – 14)



# Setting Up the Play Environment

- Writing materials = not just in “writing center” but in all or many centers (Gerde, et al, 2012)
- Adults modeling and scaffolding writing (same)





Using props during storytelling had positive impact on children's dramatic play afterward – increased use of vocab from story (Barton 2013)



# Literacy-embedded play centers

Objectives

Literacy within context

Standards

Accommodations for  
diverse learners

Vocabulary

Assessment strategies

Materials

Children's books

Setting (center)

Roles & Viewpoints

Walker & Spybrook 2011



# Bredekamp, 2004, p. 171

- Take own role seriously
- Recognize play as a key teaching/learning context
- Be skilled in research based teaching strategies
- Incorporate play with other teaching methods



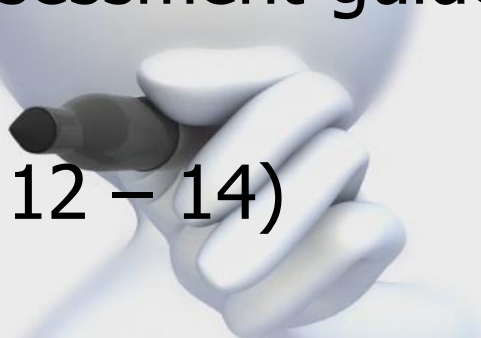
Teacher's Role

# Choosing Literature



# 8 Principles Effective Early Literacy Instruction (EL & SBRR)

- Core content --- (oral language, print awareness)
  - Oral Language
  - Storybook reading
  - Carefully planned environment
  - Opportunities to engage in emergent literacy
  - DAP forms of explicit instruction
  - Home supports
- Instruction & assessment guided by standards
  - (Vuchelich , pp. 12 – 14)



# Kindergarten example

Bowne & Brokmeier (2008)

<http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v10n2/bowne.html>



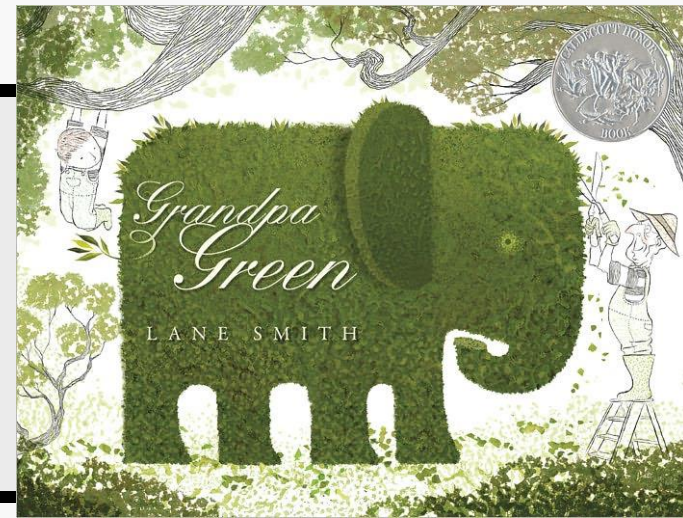
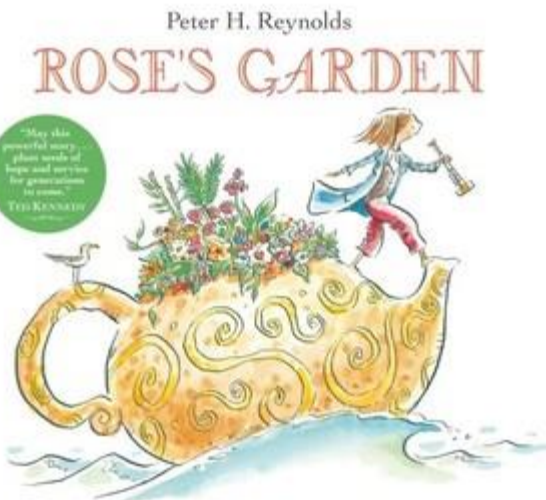
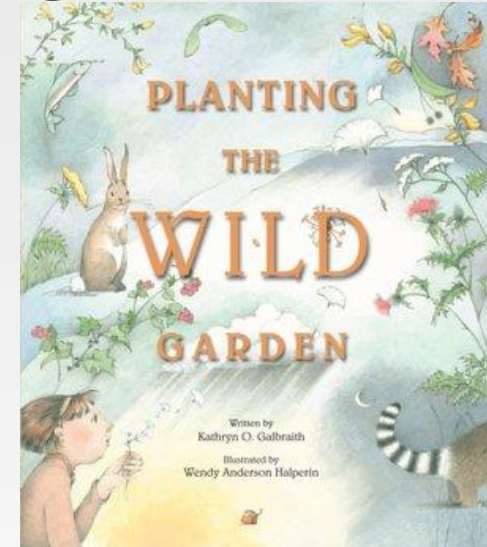
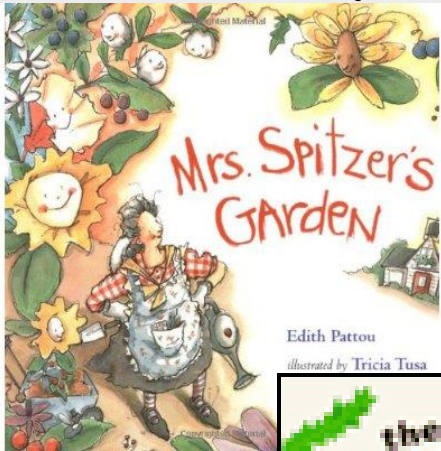
# Gardening Dramatic Play







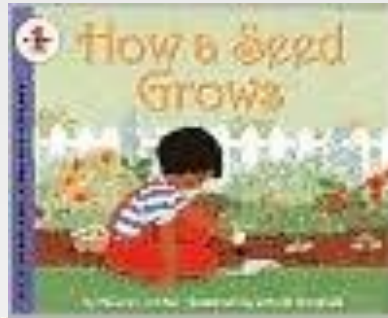
# Books for supporting gardening play...



# Growing Vegetable Soup



Written and illustrated by  
Lois Ehlert

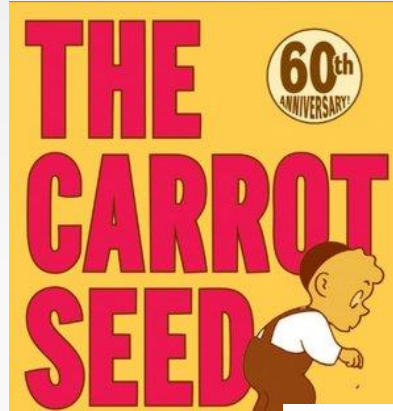
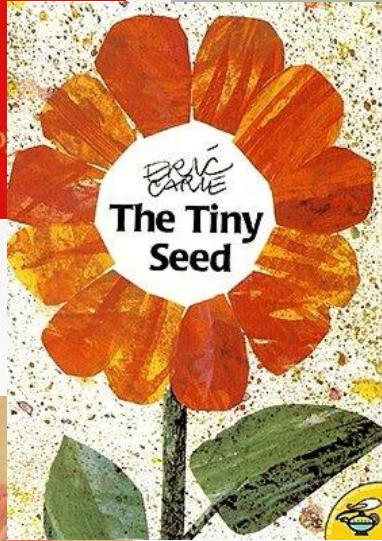


# VEGETABLE



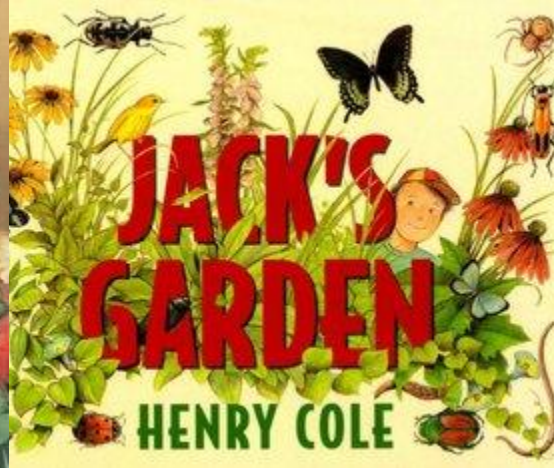
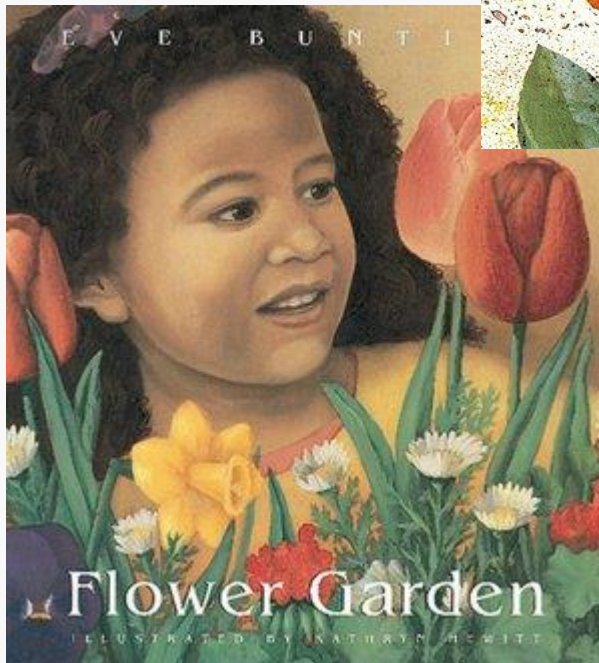
# GARDEN

Douglas Florian



Story by RUTH KRAUSS  
ROCKETT J...  
AND THE PUP...

Planting a Rainbow by Lois Ehlert



# Props

Plastic/silk/cloth/paper flowers

Flower pots

Cut up craft paper dirt

Children's gardening tools

Gardening clothes (aprons, gloves, boots, sun glasses, sun hats...)

“Patio” furniture





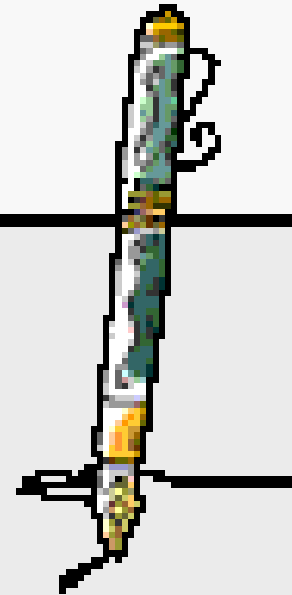
# Literacy Garden Props

Flower/plant note pads & writing materials

Seed packets

Gardening books, catalogues, magazines

Garden planning materials





# Digitally Developed Props



Carrot  
Seeds



Green Beans  
Seeds



Tomato  
Seeds

# Garden Plot Planning Tool





**Florist**

**Nursery**

**Farmer's  
Market**

**Scientist  
Horticulturist**

**Artists'  
Gardens**

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Thank you