

## Literacy in the preschool in Costa Rica

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## Preschool in Costa Rica

- Covers children ages 0 to 6 years, 5 month olds.
- § Different levels.
  - Infants- young babies (0 to 1year olds)
  - “Ciclo materno” (ages 1 to 3 years, 6 months)
  - “Ciclo Interactivo (3 years 6 months to transition)
  - Transition cycle- kindergarten – transition to primary school

- Classrooms in the interactive cycle have 25 students to one teacher
- Classrooms in transition cycle have up to 35 children.

- Our work has been done with teachers in the second part of “ciclo interactivo materno” (3.5 to 4.5 year olds) and transitional cycle (kindergarten- 4.5-5.5 years old).
- We also understand that schools suppose to have an articulation plan between preschool and first grade

## Learning about the school system and the curriculum

- What is important in the Costa Rican curriculum (motor development, cognitive development, values, aesthetics, language)
- Issues related to continuity between the preschool and the primary curriculum
- Preschool vs. primary curriculum

## Creating a collaboration with administrators and teachers

- Different visions of schooling (play vs. academic)
- Preschool and primary- role of literacy
- Mandate to keep preschool as play
- Spanish vs. literacy in elementary school

## Emergent literacy

- Developing a literacy component as an integral part of the preschool curriculum
- Training and self-efficacy
- Teachers reactions to change

## Teachers and curriculum ownership

- A shared vision:
- “Change is brought to the curriculum when teachers take ownership over what and how they teach”

## Six months after first discussion and training

- Sharing experiences about ownership of curriculum
- Focus on what, why and how in relation to what teachers do in the classroom

## Authentic literacy activities and materials

- Activities reported by the pre-school teachers in Costa Rica six months after they learned to integrate emergent literacy principles into their every day school activities are relevant to the children, the teachers and the families.

- **They are authentic and valued to Costa Rican culture and support the school climate.**
- Teachers feel ownership over the curriculum and the activities impact the classroom and the community.

## Perspective on working cross culturally

- You can not just import materials, ideas or methods at will.
- Need to know about the curriculum and the educational system.
- Need to collaborate with Ministry of Education and teachers in creating an accepted climate for change.

## Emergent literacy and the preschool in Costa Rica

- Ministry of Education supports the infusion of emergent literacy activities in the curriculum.
- Teachers are creating emergent literacy activities into all the preschool activities and are taking ownership over their curriculum.
- Two teachers are presenting some of the literacy activities they created as they took ownership over the curriculum

- Teachers will speak in Spanish.
- I will translate to English
- Some of the teachers, children and families' materials can be seen around the room.