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Literacy events in the constitution of toddlers' identities

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This paper aims to understand the identity processes of Valéria, a twenty-two-month-old child, regarding literacy in an Early Childhood Education Center in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. In order to understand these processes, the theoretical-methodological foundation of cultural-historical psychology (Vygotsky, 1983/1995) and ethnography in education (Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group, 1992) were essential. We analyse a literacy event in which Valéria cried a lot when she saw her former teacher leave the playground. The researcher held Valéria in her arms and she was able to scribble in the researcher's notebook. While Valéria was scribbling and crying, she said: "Titia, come back, Titia." As Valéria scribbled and spoke, she calmed down, stopped crying and went back to play with the other children. We argue that emotions, cognition and language were tied together in this event, as a culmination of a series of literacy events that Valéria had participated in since she was a ten-month-old infant. It demonstrates the processes of her identity constitution as a child interested in literacy.

Keywords: literacy events, identities, infants, toddlers