

Encouraging Literacy

As parents, you are your child's most important teachers. You play an integral role in the development of your child's literacy. There are many ways you can encourage literacy in your home.

- Talk, sing, and play with your child.

Expand on what your child says. Talk as you do simple routines together. Recite nursery rhymes and do finger puppet plays.

- Read with your child every day.

Have a regular reading time together that is relaxed and enjoyable. Let your child pick the story. Remember, you want reading to be a pleasurable experience.

- Surround your child with reading material.

Visit the library, buy inexpensive books at yard sales or second-hand book stores, make handmade books, and subscribe to quality children's magazines.

- Keep adult literature in your home.

By having books, newspapers, magazines, and work-related materials in your home, your child can recognize the importance of literacy.

- Read books again and again to your children.

Repetition is key when reading to young children. They learn to predict what will come next and acquire skills such as sequencing through repetition.

- Point out specific sounds or letters.

As you are driving in your car or riding the bus with your child, point out road signs, restaurant names, and gas stations. For example, you could say, "Mary look, McDonald's starts with the same letter as your name."

- Write notes to your child.

You can put an "I love you" note in your child's pocket and a "Good night" note on his/her pillow. Encourage your child to write notes to you as well.

- Designate a family reading time.

You, your child, and other family members gather in the living room and each read your own favorite book.

Praise your child's reading and writing efforts!