

What is Early Literacy?

Early literacy is everything children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write. The most important thing you can do to foster early literacy is to provide an atmosphere that's fun, verbal and stimulating. Rather than thinking about teaching your child, have fun with your child. When you read, talk, and play – you are stimulating the growth of a child's brain, building the connections that will become the building blocks for reading and learning.



According to child development researchers, there are six skills that children need to have in order to learn to read:

- **Vocabulary:** knowing the names of things
- **Print Motivation:** interest in and enjoyment of books
- **Print Awareness:** knowing how to follow the words on the pages of a book
- **Letter Knowledge:** recognizing letters and knowing their names
- **Narrative:** being able to understand and tell stories and being able to describe things
- **Phonological Sensitivity:** the ability to hear the smaller sounds in words

What can you do?

Narrative Skills

Encourage your child to put on a puppet show, to make up stories or to make up an ending for a book you are reading.

Have your child relate what is happening in a story to their own experiences: "What happened at your birthday party?"

Letter Knowledge

Sort objects by color, shape and size. Children need to be able to see similarities and differences among letters, sounds, and shapes.

Print Awareness

Point out print everywhere in your child's environment. Let your child turn the pages. Show your child how the words read from left to right.

Vocabulary

Read to your child everyday. Talk to your child about things that interest them.

Print Motivation

Find books that interest your child.

Phonological Awareness

Play rhyming games like the name game: "My name is _____.
It rhymes with _____."
Name a letter and think of other words that start with the same sound.

When you are reading:

- Read favorite stories again and again.
- Follow your child's interests in choosing books.
- When reading rhyming books, pause to let your preschooler guess the rhyming word.
- Share some books by having your child tell you the story using the pictures.
- Ask your preschooler "what do you think will happen" questions during the story.
- Using puppets, retell the story that has just been read.
- Ask "what" and "where" questions about details in the pictures.
- With books that have fewer words, use your finger to point at each word as you read it.

- Start a funny sentence...for example, "I like big fluffy ____" and then fill in the blank.
- Make your own ABC book.
- Show your child how to make letters with materials such as pipe cleaners or play dough.
- Substitute new rhymes for old ones.
- Make a point of reading other printed materials like cereal boxes, menus, placemats.

Take a book with you wherever you go with your child. You will have time to read while waiting in the doctor's office, pushing your child through the grocery store, taking a break at the mall, or having your oil changed.



Make learning fun:

- Encourage any attempt at "writing," regardless of how messy
- Let your child make shapes or letters in shaving cream on a table top
- Sponge paint letters
- Play Eye Spy with letters or words in a book on a cereal box or on signs.

Websites for Early Reading Activities:

www-personal.engin.umich.edu/~ajdrake/toddler/open.htm#1
www.totcity.com
www.thepotters.com/ltrain/activities.html — for activities by the letter
www.top100familysites.com — for more website information
www.ed.gov/Family/RWN/Activ97/early.html

Early Literacy Activities for Preschoolers



 **Grace A. Dow Memorial Library**
A Service of the City of Midland
Youth Services 837-3466