

Early Literacy in the Home



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11/15/2012

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Children's first literacy experiences occur at home.

- “Conventional reading and writing skills that are developed in the years from birth to age 5 have a clear and consistently strong relationship with later conventional literacy skills” (NELP Report, 2009. p. vii).
- Parents can encourage reading by being readers themselves.

- “Experts now know brain development and the acquisition of language begin at birth, and early language and literacy experiences have a direct and profound impact on the child’s ability to read (Nottingham, J., Bess, S. & Stark, V. 2011. p. A7)
- The best thing parents can do to help their children achieve academic success,...is to read to them early and often (Adams, M.J., 1990).

Benefits of Reading to Children

- Increased vocabulary
- Improved knowledge of story structure
- Enjoyment of reading
- Better listening skills

Important Areas for Early Literacy Development

- Alphabet knowledge
- Phonological awareness
- Rapid automatic naming of objects or colors
- Writing or being able to write one's name
- Phonological memory
- Concepts about print
- Reading readiness
- Oral language
- Visual processing

Alphabet Knowledge

“The notion that words are made up of letters, that the letters stand for the sounds we make when we say the words, and that by putting them together in various ways we make different words” (Bennett-Armistead, V.S & Duke, N.K., 2005. p.36).

Phonological Awareness

- The awareness of individual sounds and groups of sounds to make words.
- Important for decoding and spelling unfamiliar words by segmenting and blending letters and sounds.
- Recognize and build new words with the same beginning, middle, or ending sound.

Rapid Automatic Naming of Letters or Digits, and Objects or Colors.

- Being able to identify the aforementioned items with speed and accuracy
- For example being able to identify a “red balloon”, the number 7, or letters from a story

Writing or Writing A Name

- Can the child write a letter when prompted?
- Can the child write his or her own name?

Phonological Memory

- Can the child recall things that were discussed earlier, for example characters from a story, or the problem and solution in a book?

Concepts About Print

- We read from left to right
- Words give meaning
- Words are separated in books, poems, and other forms of writing

Print Knowledge

- A combination of alphabetic knowledge, concepts about print, and decoding.

Reading Readiness

- A combination of alphabet knowledge, concepts of print, vocabulary, memory, and phonological awareness

Oral Language

- The ability to communicate using spoken language as well as comprehending language when spoken to.

Visual Processing

- Using pictures to support the understanding of written words

What can you do to promote literacy in your home?

- Read aloud to your child
 - Ask questions about the story before, during , and after reading
 - Point to the words as you read them
 - Read with excitement, change your voice for different characters
 - Talk about the different parts of the book, cover, spine, author, illustrator, table of contents, etc.

- Write with your child

- Use objects that make writing more fun, such as clay, noodles, shaving cream and blocks

- Encourage scribbling

- Send letters to family and friends

- Make a literacy play environment

- Create an office that includes notepads, pens, post it notes, magazines, and other reading materials

- Make a grocery store, use old news paper ads for the “store”, write out receipts.

- Create a post office, have different types of paper for letters, include envelopes and boxes to be addressed and “mailed”

- Create a restaurant where menus can be read and cook books are available

- Make outdoor activities a literacy opportunity
 - Play games by finding different words or letters
 - Have a book picnic
 - Sing songs and create dances
- Make grocery shopping another literacy opportunity
 - Write grocery lists together
 - Cut coupons
 - Read labels
- Make frequent visits to the library, bookstores, and yard sales
 - Borrow books
 - Buy books
 - Trade books

- Talk to your child
 - Ask questions
 - Share ideas and stories
 - Share new words and their meanings
 - Reward them for asking questions and sharing new knowledge
 - Do not force the use of complete sentences or correct children constantly

How to choose appropriate books?

- Choose reading material from many different genres
 - “Narrative- books that “entertains or conveys an experience
 - Expository books- (that provides verifiable information about the natural or social world
 - Mixed books- (that) includes elements of both narrative and informational texts” (Pentimonti, J.M., Zucker, T.A., Justice, L.M., & Kaderavek, J.N., 2010, p. 659).
 - Include books with vivid colors and pictures (Caldecott and Newberry honor books)
 - Include books with rhyming words (Dr. Seuss books)
 - Books on poetry and songs

Final Thoughts

- Remember to work as closely as possible with your child's teacher. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns do not hesitate to ask.
- Your child will benefit from as much exposure to print as possible.
- “Find time to read each day, make a special place to keep your child's books, talk about what you read, and relax and have fun” (Edwards, P.A. 2009. p. 26).

Discussion/Questions/ Comments

- What are some things that you found helpful?
- Share some experiences that you have with your child in regards to literacy.
- See Handouts 1-4 from Literacy and the Youngest Learner: Best Practices for Educators of Children from Birth to 5.

Resources

- Bennet-Armistead, V. S., Duke, N. K., & Moses, A. M. (2005). *Literacy and the Youngest Learner: Best practices for educators of children from birth to 5*. New York: Scholastic.
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