

PROMOTING LITERACY AT HOME AND IN THE COMMUNITY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN



Emergent literacy, or the beginning stages of literacy development, can begin before a child enters school. Reading can be fun for some children and daunting for others, but there are ways to cultivate a love for reading:

Make opportunities for literacy. Literacy is all around us. When you are out in the neighborhood, you can create opportunities for literacy by pointing out and discussing the signs you see along your walking route, e.g. store signs, street signs, or chalk messages on the sidewalk. When commuting, you can engage your child with the words seen on the route or read a book along the way. At home, you can display words/letters in picture frames, on the refrigerator, or even point them out on TV. You also can label household items, which should be at their eye level.

Create stories together. Storytelling together can be a great family literacy activity. Storytelling can be done in various ways, including acting out a story, painting, writing, or singing. We also can tell stories using technology, like augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, or in more than one language, including sign languages. Creating stories together can be a fun, imaginative way to engage your child in literacy. Families also can use stories to explore the concept of sequencing, or order of events, and information recall.

Make space for books. Create a special place for your child to store their books or books borrowed from the library. If possible, allow your child to choose and to decorate that space. Most importantly, put their books at eye level, so they can access and view them. You can be creative with creating a family bookshelf. You can model the reading behavior that you would like to see in your child.

Make literacy audible. Audiobooks, nursery rhymes, songs, and storytime can be engaging ways to motivate your young child. Allowing your child to listen to stories and engage in songs and rhyme, will help them develop their phonological awareness, or the ability to detect and use sounds in spoken language.

Use a variety of learning styles. Get to know your child's favorite ways to learn and explore literacy with different approaches. Examples:

- Visual learning (seeing): Look at and discuss pictures in the book.
- Auditory learning (hearing): Listen to audiobooks and songs.
- Tactile learning (touching/interacting physically with material): Hold household items pertaining to the book.
- Kinesthetic learning (body movements): Build breaks or movement into storytime.