

Read Aloud

Children whose parents read to them have a head start in language and literacy skills and go to school better prepared. Sharing stories not only entertains children, it also develops their vocabulary, improves their ability to learn to read, and creates a lifelong love of reading.

Why?

Reading aloud creates a special bond between an adult and a child and helps children connect spoken and written language. It teaches children how to use books- reading from left to right, and from the front to the back of a book- and nurtures their imagination.

Activities

- Talk about the pictures.
- Ask questions as you read.
- Make connections between the story, real life and your child's experiences.
- Point to the words as you read and on signs around town.



Early Literacy Tip:

Read

It is never too early to start reading with your child.

Even young infants can benefit from exposure to books and reading.

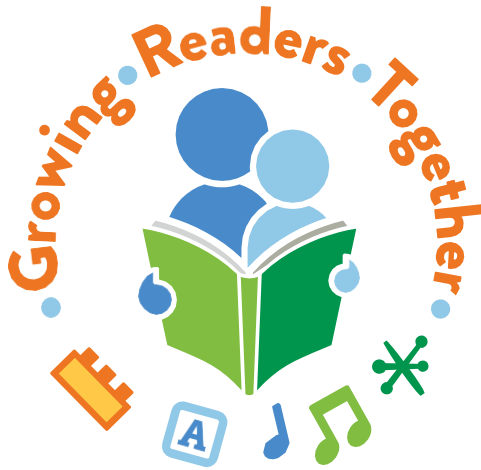
As a caregiver, you are an essential partner in your child's development of reading, writing, and language skills which can lead to school success.



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Early writing

Writing starts with scribbling and drawing. Scribbling is to writing what babbling is to speaking: an early stage of development that should be encouraged. Well before they can write actual letters or words, children's scribbles show they understand that print has meaning. Activities that strengthen fine motor skills are important to developing writing skills.

Why?

By letting young children scribble and pretend to write, they learn how to form and recognize letters. Holding a crayon or squishing playdough develops the small muscles they'll use for writing their name later on. Letters are made from lines and shapes, so the more practice children have with these elements, the easier it will be to write words.

Activities

Use playdough to make shapes or letters, or just squish it to build finger muscles.

Provide a variety of materials to encourage drawing and scribbling (e.g., crayons, paper, markers, finger paints).



Early Literacy Tip:

Write

One of the important connections that come with early writing is helping children become aware that what we say are words, and these words can be written down.

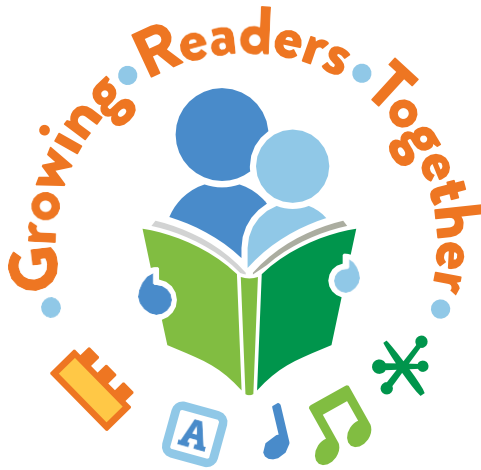
As they continue to scribble and draw children begin to notice what they are doing. As their hands and fingers become stronger and they are better able to control their scribbles.



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Talk to your Child

By talking to your child, you're sharing lots of new sounds and words, which improves their understanding of language. Even babies that are too young to talk are learning about words and talking, just from listening and watching you talk.

Why?

Talking is important to children's early brain development, and has positive effects on early language, vocabulary, reading, and math skills. By talking to children in a warm and gentle way, you're sharing experiences together and strengthening your relationship.

Activities

Use puppets to create an imaginative conversation. Model taking turns in conversation and introduce new and unusual vocabulary.

Comment and ask questions about what they are doing and their environment. Repeat and add new vocabulary to their comments.



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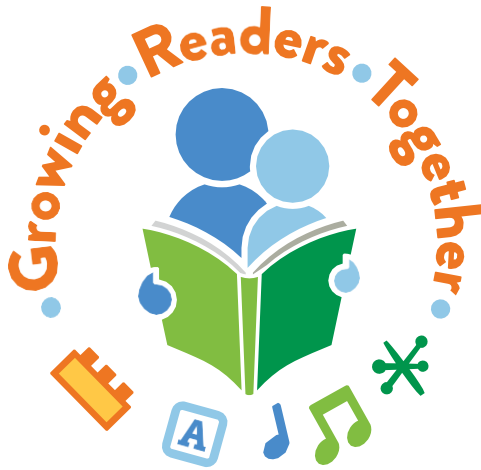
Early Literacy Tip:

Talk

Talking with babies and toddlers is a brain building activity.

Every time you have a high-quality back-and-forth interaction, new connections in that baby's brain are made.

The more you engage with babies and young children in this way, the more they learn to understand and use new words and concepts.



Sing with your Child

Singing is a great way to learn new words. It helps children understand sentence structure by slowing the language down. When new information is attached to a tune, it becomes easier to remember. Children often learn the alphabet by singing, not saying, the letters.

Why?

Singing and musical instruments help children understand tone, beat & rhythm. Singing expands a child's vocabulary and is often comforting to young children; using special songs at special times of day- clean up time, bedtime, etc. helps children feel safe and understand what comes next.

Activities

Using shakers eggs, clapping or stomping as you sing helps them hear the syllables in a word.

Sing along with your child to their favorite CD.

Create songs to go along with their daily routines.



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Early Literacy Tip:

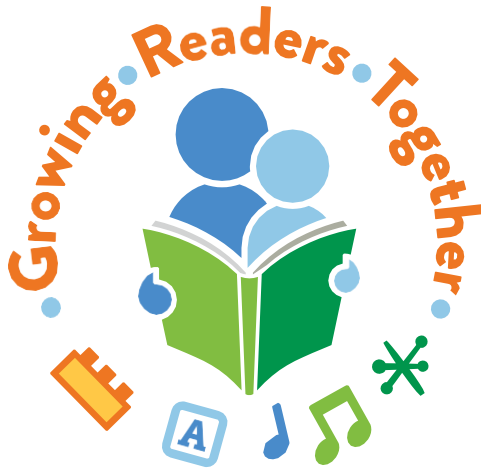
Sing

Babies and children love music!

Singing improves a child's memory and can teach them new words and concepts.

Songs often rhyme and break words into syllables, both necessary skills for reading.

Your child loves your voice best of all- don't worry if you're not always "in tune"- just have fun & keep singing!



Have fun playing!

Children learn best in an environment which allows them to explore, discover, and play. Play builds the imagination, teaches children about getting along with others, and creates opportunities for them to engage in physical activity. Children learn best when they are happy and playfulness sparks joy!

Why?

Children learn about themselves, others, and the world around them by playing with everyday objects and pretending. Play allows children to safely explore new ideas and make new discoveries, which fosters a love of learning. Being silly and playful with children makes everyday routines more fun and meaningful.

Activities

Blow bubbles and count them as they pop!

Playing "I spy" games will help build their vocabulary.

Let them dress up after a story time- it inspires creativity and, best of all, it's fun!



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Early Literacy Tip:

Play

Play enhances language development, social skills, creativity, imagination, and thinking skills.

Playing with your child builds lasting bonds.

Play helps your child learn the rules and what is expected of him or her. As children grow, play helps them learn how to act in society.