

Becoming a Reader

Five essential elements of learning to read

Adapted from article by Susan B. Neuman, Ed.D.



Simply Talk – A lot

- Language development plays a key role in learning to read.
- Children learn words and build vocabulary by listening to and engaging in daily conversation.
- The more words you use, the more words your child will know, which by the time she reaches kindergarten will be more likely to become a skillful reader.
 - *Point to objects and label them and talk about their meanings.
 - *Use more sophisticated words in your conversations (“frustrated”, instead of “Mad”)
 - *Ask your child questions to encourage thinking skills.

Play Encourages Narrative

- Play is where reading begins
- It allows children to develop and use symbols (props) to represent life experiences and imaginary worlds.
- Play also encourages conversation when the parent enters into play with the child and gives children words they might not have heard yet or thought of.
 - *Example: Playing restaurant and adding a new menu item brings a fresh new idea and language opportunity.
 - *Set aside time to play with your child on the floor (without the TV on).
 - *Let your child take the lead when playing and try not to take over.



Sharing stories is Key

- Reading aloud to your children and telling stories are gateways to the printed word.
- They provide structure, beginning, middle and an end.
- A child who becomes attuned to stories develops good habits for listening which will ease transition into school.
 - *Read with expression- this will keep things interesting.
 - *Tell your child stories about you or ask your child to tell you stories.
 - *Read to your child every day.



The Song-Language Connection

- Singing songs with word repetition strengthens your child’s ability to hear the sounds and rhythms of speech.
- Songs also help children remember letter and word sounds and discover common word patterns.
 - *Don’t worry about your singing voice- kids love to hear parents sing!
 - *Check out children’s music CD’s to give you inspiration.



Writing Develops Reading

- Reading and writing develop alongside each other, what children learn from one experience actually informs the other.
- Writing helps children connect what they hear in words with the symbols they represent in print.
 - *For young children, allow plenty of opportunities to write and draw.
 - *Help your child write something she/he tell you and then read it back to your child.
 - *Start by printing large capital letters and let your child trace them.

