

Early Literacy

Print awareness

Understanding that print has meaning is the first step in learning how to read and write. Children learn this by observing that reading influences people's behavior. For example, they might see a parent stopping the car at the STOP sign, or getting out flour after referring to a recipe for pancakes.

- Bring your child's awareness to the print and point to the words in your immediate environment (cereal boxes, t-shirts, street signs, books, etc)
- Invite your child to write lists, letters, and books. Accept your child's developmental spelling (scribbles are the first attempts to write letters!)
- Point to and talk about the words in the stories.
- Show your child how print is read from left to write.

Emergent Literacy

Understanding symbols is an important part of learning how to read and write. Letters are symbols for sounds and words. Children begin to discover the meaning of symbols through play. Research has found that as children play they become more competent "symbol-users." When a young child picks up a block and uses it as a car, he/she is using it as a symbol.

- Encourage your child to use symbols in play. You may hide a realistically looking toy phone and ask you child, "What else can we use for a phone?" Have your child discover his/her own symbols!

Supporting Emergent Readers

Research has shown that wanting to read is one of the most important characteristics of successful readers. Enspire your budding reader by reading lots and lots of high quality literature to her/him.

- Match the books to your child's current and changing interests.
- Talk about the title, the author and the illustrator.
- Engage your child's curiosity. Ask, "What do you think the book is going to be about?" Make predictions about the ending of a story halfway through.
- Connect the topic of the book to your child's interests and life to increase comprehension.
- Sound out the initial letters in words and have your child find rhyming words.

Supporting Early Readers

- Help your child learn the sounds that letters make. We recommend using a multisensory approach of matching letters to sounds and body motions.
- Help your child learn sight words.
- Help your child learn about different short vowel word families.
- Practice building CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words.

Supporting Emergent and Early Writers

Nurture your child's desire to write by encouraging her/him to write more!

- Make books with your child. Have your child draw pictures and dictate you the story. Encourage your budding writer to write the first letter in a word, or a word if you know your child can do it. Encourage, but make sure to accept all forms of early developmental spelling to build confidence.
- Have your child practice writing his/her name, and the names of people in your family.
- Practice writing sight words.