Building Literacy Every Day

Every time you read a book, write a note, sort the laundry, check the TV listings, or recount the day’s happenings, you are using skills young children need to read and write. Here are some simple activities you and your child can do together at home.

Learning New Words

Name Games
Play simple naming games with your child. You can ask, “What is this?” or “Where is he/she going?” when you go to the grocery store, go on a walk, or sit and look out the window.

Everyday Words
Talk to your child as you do everyday tasks such as sorting the laundry or thinking about what to cook. Explain the piles of laundry, for example: “Here are the dark clothes and here are the white clothes.” Show your child the ingredients for making a meal and name them together.

Read
Read and reread books about topics in which your child is interested. Repeat the names of animals, vehicles, plants, and games together.

Field Trips
Take your child on short trips to new places, such as a flower shop or a park. Talk about what you see along the way and what you see when you get there. When you get home, have your child draw a picture of something he or she saw. Decide on a caption for the picture together.

Job Talk
Go to a familiar place and look at the people who work there. Talk with your child about what jobs they do and what tools they use.
Listening for Letters and Sounds

![Nursery Rhymes]
Read, sing, or say nursery rhymes from your childhood. Help your child learn them. Point out the parts that rhyme or the words you like to say or hear.

![Beginning Sounds]
Point out how words begin or end. Compare words that start with the same sound, for example, tomato and taco. Say: “Tomato and taco begin in the same way. Can you hear the tuh in tomato and taco?”

![Rhyming Books]
Read books with rhyming words, such as those by Dr. Seuss. Let your child fill in the words as you read them again and again.

![Rhyming Riddles]
Make up riddles and guessing games using words that rhyme or words that start with the same sounds. For example, “What kind of cake would a snake make? He might make a lake cake.” The rhymes can be silly and fun and will get your child thinking about words and listening for rhymes.

Beginning Reading and Writing

![Letter Search]
Point out words on signs and in stores. Begin a search for the letter that begins your child’s name. Read the stop signs and the other traffic signs aloud when you are driving with your child. Find letters on products, on signs, and on television. Match the letters with the child’s first or last name. Play "letter of the day," in which you decide on a letter and go on a hunt for it.

![Labels]
Label a few belongings with your child’s name, for example, a cup or a favorite book. Read the labels together.

![Notes]
Write simple notes to your child. For example, write “I love you” or “Let’s take a walk.” Your child can “write” notes back to you using words or pictures. Take turns reading the notes to each other.
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