EVERY CHILD READY TO READ

What is Early Literacy?

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing *before* they can actually read and write.

Research shows that children get ready to read years before they start school. You can help your baby and toddler learn important skills *now* so they can become good readers.

Why parents are so important in helping their children get ready to read:

- You know your children best.
- Children learn best when they are in a good mood, and you know their moods best.
- You can help your children learn reading skills in ways that are easiest for them.
- Children learn best by doing things—and they love doing things with you. Take every chance you have to read with your children, tell and talk about stories, say nursery rhymes and sing songs.

Ask your public library for the names of books to read to babies and toddlers.

Ask about library programs that you and your child can enjoy together.

THE EARLY LITERACY INITIATIVE
A PARTNERSHIP AMONG THE PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION,
THE ASSOCIATION FOR LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN, AND
THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CHILD HEALTH & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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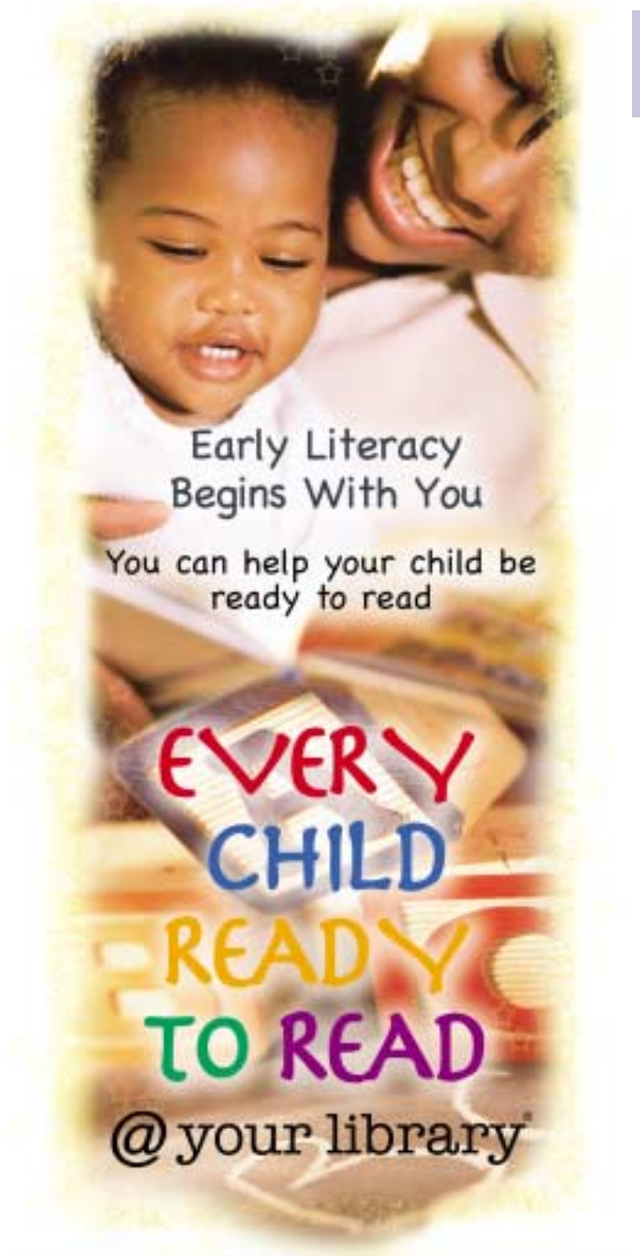

Parent Guide to Early Literacy for Early Talkers: Birth to Two-Year-Olds

EVERY CHILD READY TO READ

Six Pre-Reading Skills your child can start learning from birth!

Narrative Skills
Being able to describe things and events and tell stories.

Print Motivation
Being interested in and enjoying books.

What You Do Helps Your Child Get Ready To Read

Vocabulary
Knowing the name of things.

Phonological Awareness
Being able to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words.

Letter Knowledge
Knowing letters are different from each other, knowing their names and sounds and recognizing letters everywhere.

Print Awareness
Noticing print, knowing how to handle a book and knowing how to follow the words on a page.

A

According to research, there are six pre-reading skills that children must learn in order to learn to read.

Activities you do to support each of these skills will change as your child grows.

B

Every Child Ready to Read @ your library is a project of the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children, divisions of the American Library Association.
www.pla.org
www.ala.org/alsc

C

Every Child Ready To Read @ your library
www.pla.org/earlyliteracy.htm

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Vocabulary

- Talk with your baby or toddler about what is going on around you.
- When your baby babbles or your child talks, listen carefully and answer.
- Ask your baby or toddler lots of questions. Even if she does not have the words to answer, she learns that questions are invitations for her to respond.
- Speak clearly. Use short sentences. Repeat yourself when your child shows interest.
- Speak in the language that is most comfortable for you.
- Read together every day. Books have pictures of things you may not see often. Name the pictures as you point to them—this helps children learn new words.
- ***Research shows that children who have larger vocabularies are better readers. Knowing many words helps children recognize written words and understand what they read.***

By the time children are two years old, they understand 300 to 500 words. You help your child learn new words by talking and reading together.

Print Motivation

- Begin reading books early—even when your child is a newborn.
- Make book sharing time special time—just you and your baby or toddler.
- Let your baby or toddler see you reading.
- Visit your public library often.
- ***Children who enjoy being read to will want to learn how to read.***

Print Awareness

- Use board books or cloth books and have your child hold the book.
- If there are only a few words on the page, point to each word as you say it.
- Read aloud every day—print labels, signs, menus. Print is everywhere!
- ***Being familiar with printed language helps children feel comfortable with books and understand that print is useful.***

Narrative Skills

- Talk to your child about what you are doing.
- Tell your child stories.
- Encourage your toddler to tell you about things. Listen patiently and ask questions.
- Read favorite books again and again.
- ***Talking with children develops comprehension skills that will help them understand what they read.***

Phonological Awareness

- Say nursery rhymes so that your child hears words that rhyme. Emphasize the rhyming words.
- Add actions as you sing a song or recite a poem. This helps your child break down language into separate words.
- Singing songs is a good way to help your child hear syllables in words. In most songs, each syllable in a word gets a different note.
- Make up your own silly, nonsense rhymes.
- Say rhymes and sing songs in the language that is most comfortable for you.
- ***Being able to hear the sounds that make up words helps children sound out written words as they begin to read.***

Letter Knowledge

- Help your baby and toddler see and feel different shapes as you play. (Say, "The ball is round.")
- Read alphabet books.
- Point out letters on toys, food boxes and other objects around the house.
- Talk with your toddler about what is the same and what is different between two things.

Make sharing books something your baby or toddler wants to do often. Children learn best when they enjoy what they are doing.

- Look for books with clear and simple pictures.
- Choose a good time to read, when you and your child are relaxed and happy.
- Point to pictures. Talk about them in an excited voice.
- Notice what your baby looks at, and then talk about it.
- It is natural for babies to play with books, even to chew or tear them.
- Stop for a while if your baby loses interest or gets upset. A few enjoyable minutes at a time is better than a longer unhappy time together.
- While you read, make your child feel loved and special.
- Share books with your baby *every* day. Even a few minutes are important.

Talk and have fun!