

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 have to be ready to learn to read and write. Here are some simple activities you and your child can do together.

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 you have for making a meal and name them together.
- **Read** - Read and reread books about topics your child is interested in. Learn the names of animals, vehicles, plants, and games together.
- **Field Trips** - Take your child on short trips to new places, such as a florist 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. Write a caption for the picture.



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 have words you like to say or hear.
- **Beginning Sounds** - Point out ways words begin or end. Compare words that start with the same sound, for example, tomato and taco. Ask: "Tomatoes and tacos begin in the same way. Can you hear the t in tomatoes and tacos?"
- **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.
- **Picture Menus** - With your child, cut out pictures of food and paste them on sheets of paper to make a menu. You might make pages for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Have your child "read" the menu.

