**Early Literacy**

Words, sounds, storybooks, songs and nursery rhymes: these are the building blocks of literacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Listening and Talking</th>
<th>Singing</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Babies</strong>...</td>
<td>...like to look at pictures of familiar things, listen to short stories and touch the pages.</td>
<td>...learn by listening to you talk. They imitate you by moving their mouths and making sounds.</td>
<td>...enjoy listening to your voice as well as the calming rhythms and playful beats of music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Toddlers/Preschoolers</strong>...</td>
<td>...can sit and listen to a story, turn pages and talk about pictures.</td>
<td>...share their thoughts and can have a conversation.</td>
<td>...have favorite songs and like to sing along with you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can give your child a head start by beginning now.

- Read or tell stories together every day.
- Teach new words.
- Sing songs and nursery rhymes.
- Ask questions.
- Use play to introduce language.

Help your child explore language and learning by following these simple steps:

- **Read or tell stories together every day.** Read from a book, simply talk about the pictures or make up stories based on what you see. When you read together, you help your child learn to love books — and you!
- **Teach new words anytime you can.** Talk to your child about what you see around you and what you are doing. The more you speak, the more you build your child’s vocabulary.
- **Sing songs and nursery rhymes over and over again.** Add songs and rhymes into all of your routines, sing “Rock-a-Bye Baby” at bedtime, “Rub-a-Dub-Dub” at bath time.
- **Ask questions and watch for their responses.** From day one, ask your child where and what whenever you can — at the store, on a walk, while looking at pictures or reading stories. Ask questions about the past, present and future.
- **Use play to introduce language.** Give your child books, musical instruments and other toys. When you interact with your child in a playful way, you introduce new words, sounds and concepts.

---

**Tips to Boost Your Child’s Language Development**

These ideas offer ways to build your child’s literacy skills, preparing her for success in school and beyond.

### Reading

**Babies**
- Provide your child picture books with simple objects or faces.
- Give him board or cloth books with pages that turn easily and won’t tear.
- Offer him books with soft, rough or bumpy textures to touch and feel.

**Toddlers and Preschoolers**
- Have your child point to familiar objects — numbers, colors, letters.
- Ask your child to tell stories about the pictures.
- Choose books about topics of interest like animals or trains — and big events like toilet training or the birth of a new sibling.

### Talking and Listening

**Babies**
- Talk to your child about what you see and what you are doing.
- Listen as she communicates with coos, smiles, laughs and cries.

**Toddlers and Preschoolers**
- Have conversations where you take turns talking and listening.
- Talk about the events of yesterday, today and tomorrow.
- Play hide-and-seek, talking about what you see as you look. Your child will listen closely while she hides.

### Singing

**Babies**
- Play music and watch as your child bounces and babbles to the beat.
- Sing favorite songs over and over again.

**Toddlers and Preschoolers**
- Teach your child songs that have hand movements.
- Teach him simple sing-along songs like “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.”

### Writing

**Babies**
- Encourage your child to hold soft toys or rattles, which help develop grasping skills.
- Play with puzzles that have oversized numbers and letters.

**Toddlers and Preschoolers**
- Let your child play with and trace magnetic or foam letters and numbers.
- Allow her to draw freely and creatively.