



# Launching into Literacy

## Early Childhood Professionals

### Supporting Early Literacy in Infants and Toddlers

The following activities for infants and toddlers will support Oral Language Development, Vocabulary and Concept Development, Comprehension, and Book Awareness.

#### Talk and sing to your child from birth

- Play peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake.
- Recite nursery rhymes or other verses with rhythm and repeated sounds.
- Sing lullabies and other simple songs.
- Talk to your child throughout the day.

#### Listen to your child and respond

- Be attentive to the sounds your baby makes. Sometimes repeat the sounds.
- Sometimes you can supply the language for him/her. (i.e. “ga-ga-ga,” says baby. Parent responds, “Oh, you are ready for a hug. Here is a big hug just for you.”)

#### Play simple touching and talking games together

- Body parts game: “Where is your nose?” Touch baby’s nose and say, “Here is your nose!” Repeat several times. Do the same with other body parts.
- Point to and name familiar objects and repeat word several times, so that the child learns to connect the spoken word to its meaning. “Let’s put on your jammies. These are your favorite soft jammies. Mmmmm—these jammies feel warm.”

### **Assist your child with building language as she/he learns to talk**

- A child begins to speak by using single words and short sentences. Respond to your child by using longer, more complex sentences. Child: “Cracker” Parent: “Oh, would you like another cracker? OK, you can have just one more.”

### **Encourage your baby/toddler to talk**

- Ask questions that show you are interested in your child. “What would you like to do now?”
- Ask questions that require your child to talk (not just “yes” or “no” responses). “What do you think made that big noise?”
- Listen carefully to what your child says.

### **Listen to your child’s questions and answer them patiently**

- Take time to explain things as completely as you can.
- Keep answering questions that your child asks over and over. (Children learn from hearing things over and over).

### **Read to your child**

- Read in a comfortable place with your child on your lap or next to you.
- Read the story with expression: talk as the characters would talk, make sound effects, make expressions with your face and hands.
- Read to your child often. Reading times can be brief (5-10 minutes), but should be done many times during the day (lunch, naptime, bedtime, on the bus, at the clinic, etc.) The more, the better!

### **Talk with your child as you read together**

- Talk about what is happening in the story by pointing to the pictures.
- When your child is ready, have her/him tell you about the pictures.
- Ask questions that require making predictions and thinking: “Can you find the blue bird in the tree?” “Where do you think they are going?” “What do you think is going to happen next?”

### **Encourage your child to explore books**

- Put sturdy books in a place where your child can see them and reach them.
- Allow your child to hold the book, turn the pages, look through the holes, and lift the flaps.

## **Make photograph books for your child**

- Use small photo albums (4x6).
- Use pictures of your child, your family, and other things that are important to your child.

## **Read your child's favorite books again and again!**

### **Suggested Books for Infants and Toddlers**

- Board books
- Cloth books
- Touch-and-feel books
- Bathtub books
- Interactive books
- Nursery rhyme, song, and poetry books
- Books with predictable patterns
- Books with repeated text
- Books with pictures that support text

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