As a parent, when I... my child learns...!

I sing songs to and with him… →	He develops his phonological awareness skills.
I point out the words as I read to him... →	He learns the direction of reading.
I kneel to be at his level... →	He develops his self-esteem.
I say out loud the actions we do, the things that surrounds us… →	He discovers and understands the world his is living in.
I repeat after him using the proper words to model good pronunciation ... →	He develops his listening and vocabulary skills.
I let my child play dress up and use dramatic play... →	He refers to the environment he knows and sees around him.
I do the grocery list with him... →	He learns the utility of reading.
I read in his presence… →	He associate knowledge with pleasure.
I display his drawings and paintings so everyone can see them… →	He feels proud of himself.
I make books, paper and pencils available... →	He develops fine motor skills necessary for writing.
I count out loud.... →	He learns about numbers ...
I play with words and rhymes... →	He learn to play with words, he learns the sounds of letters and he has fun!

Having Fun With Early Literacy!

Celebrating Family Literacy Day

A guide for parents

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To celebrate Family Literacy Day, the Early Literacy Specialists of Eastern Ontario have created this handbook to assist parents in supporting their child's development of early literacy skills. This parent handbook offers tips and provides activity suggestions that will enhance children's pre-reading, writing and numeracy skills.

Parents are children's first and most important teacher. By taking the time to instil the joy of learning, parents are providing their children with the self-esteem and security they need to succeed in life.

Learning to read, to write and count….

This is the first step to reading, writing and counting!

Tips for school:

- Be positive! If you view school as a good experience your child will as well.
- Get to know your child's teacher.
- Ask the librarian for some help in selecting books for pre-readers.
- Participate in community activities (park, public pool, community centre) to help develop your child's social skills.
- Take time to talk about each other's day.
- Encourage your child to "teach" you some of the lessons they learned.
- Take some time everyday to practice writing skills (by coloring, cutting, lacing or writing).
- Be proud of your child's accomplishments. Praise them and offer lot's of encouragement.

**Inspired by the document: Let's play literacy Project READ Literacy network*

What can I do if my child is between 3 and 6 years old?

- Rotate your book selection on a regular basis but continue reading their favourite books.
- When reading together, follow the words with your finger this will help your child understand the direction of the written words (a sentence is written from left to right).
- Enhance your writing corner. Add rulers, a calculator, some pencils and pens as well as stencils and geometric shapes to work with.
- Visit your local library to seek out specific books about the world.
- Experiment with simple science activities (mixing colors, cooking, what floats or sinks…).
- Ask them to guess the word that will finish a sentence by looking at the picture. *The little boy is listening to the sound of the …seashell.*

- Encourage them to come up with a different ending to a well know story.
- Go on a letter and sound hunt around the house. Ask your child to name the letter and make it's sound.
- Have fun and enjoy the time you spend together!

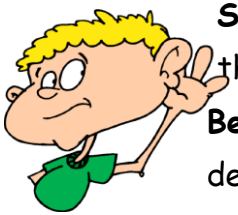
What are the most important things to do with my child?

- The most important way to create and establish a bond with your child:

  Talk with them to establish contact [illegible] them understand the world around them.

  Make yourself available to let them know, they are important!

  Look at them in the eyes when speaking with them to show how interested you are in what they are saying.



Smile to reassure them and make them feel safe.

Be attentive to their needs to help them develop trust and confidence.

What else can I do?

- **Sing songs, practice finger plays or rhyming games** to help them learn sounds, rhymes and words.
- **Read stories to your child** to stimulate their imagination and increase their vocabulary.
- **Be a model** read in front of your child for your own enjoyment so he can see that reading is pleasurable and useful!

What can I do when...

I don't have much time to play with them? When I have things to do around the house or when I am just too tired...

- Use a timer so your child can see how much time you have to play with them. After your playtime, encourage your child to play a game or read a book on their own. Stay in proximity to them and praise them for playing well on their own.

- Children can help with a variety of house-hold chores, they can sort the utensils, set the table, they can sort and fold the laundry, our homes provide many learning opportunities and it allows you to spent time together.

I am not comfortable reading...

- You can look at the pictures and make up your own story. You can encourage your child to "read" to you or talk about something in the book that you like.

- Try a book on CD. You can follow the story and still have that special time together.
- You can access help with adult literacy centres (contact 211 Ottawa Services).

What can I do if my child is between 2 and 3 years old?

- Encourage your child to use their imagination. Children love to make up stories.
- When reading together, ask your child questions (Where is the car? What is the boy afraid of ?).
- Ask your child to tell you what will happen next (predicting is an important skill to practice).
- Ask your child to describe what they see on the pages.
- Encourage your child to turn the pages.
- Help them make the connection of the written word with the spoken word by Pointing to the words as you say them!
- Your child likes reading the same stories… Great! This will help them recognize written words and experience pre-reading.
- Provide puzzles and blocks to help develop numeracy and fine motor skills.

- Encourage your child to find and name different shapes and colors within his environment.
- Have a variety of writing materials available. (crayons, paints, markers…)
- Allow your child to choose the book to read.

What can I do if my child is between 1 and 2 years old?

Language develops rapidly between the ages of 18 months to 30 months.

- Read books with them to increase their vocabulary.
- Your child will say many words and will begin to make short sentences. (do not expect them to speak in complete sentences).
- Encourage your child to manipulate crayons and paint brushes.
- Encourage your child to play with different blocks. (cubes, flat or little containers) and encourage them to fit or stack them one into the other.
- Talk about different concepts (in-out, up-down, hot-cold, soft-hard etc..).
- Share books that talk about everyday routines:

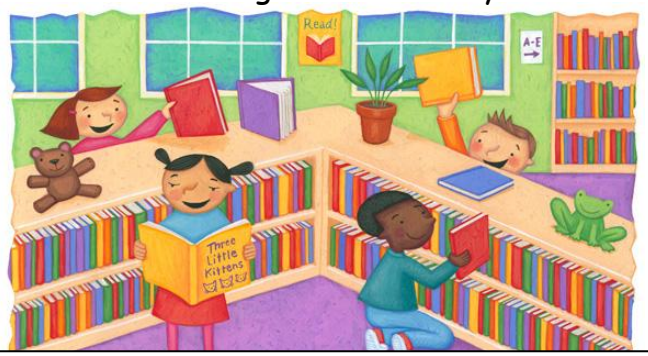
  Bath time, bedtime, dressing your self or cooking etc...
- Regularly talk together.
- Count out loud (steps, buttons, toys…).
- Provide different sized containers for your child to play with in the tub (sorting, measuring, pouring…).

My child has a hard time sitting still when we read together…

- Your reading time may be too long. Children have short attention spans (1 yr = 1 min, 2yrs = 2 min, etc…).
- Every child is different, follow their lead. The important thing is to be available to read with them!
- Choose an area that is comfortable and free of distractions.
- Remember, reading is for pleasure.
- If your child walks away, you can finish the book later.
- Choose books that are age appropriate and interesting to your child.
- Talk about the pictures in the book and if possible associate them to life events or their toys.

How do I choose a good book?

- Follow your child's interest.
- If your child really likes a book, try to find another title from the same author, illustrator or collection.
- Choose books that have large print and bright colors.
- Choose books that have rhyming words and words that are repeated often along the box. This will allow children to read (recognize) the words.
- Make up your own stories and build your own book with pictures, drawings or cut-outs from flyers and magazines.
- Try different types of books, such as, pop-up or peek a boo books. For younger children you may want to look at textured books.
- Ask your local librarian to help you in making a good selection and don't forget to mention your child's age.

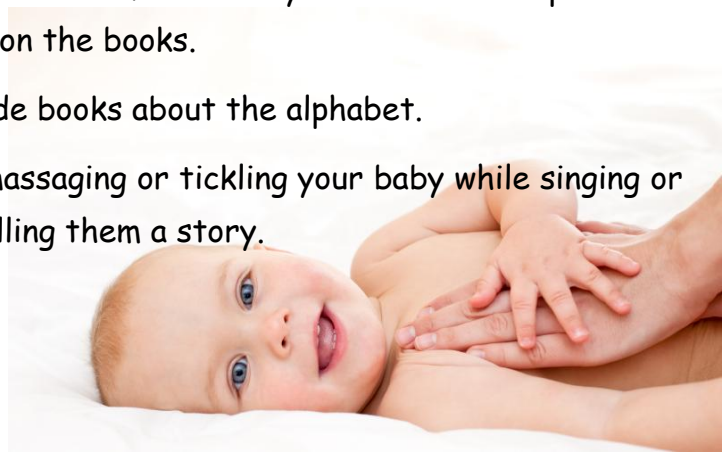


Don't hesitate to read and re-read your child's favourite story, this will help them recognize the words and start "reading" themselves.

My child is not one yet, is he too young to start doing literacy activities?

There are so many things you can do with baby to help develop literacy skills:

Help them learn through their senses:

- Talk, describe what's around them and whisper with them, change the tone of your voice.
- Imitate the sounds your baby makes. (shrieks, babbling and cooing).
- Sing.
- Share stories.

- Give your baby different toys to play with (colourful, textured and various shapes).
- Point to the objects you are naming.
- Have soft, textured cloth books as well as vinyl books for bath time fun. Allow your child to manipulate and chew on the books.
- Include books about the alphabet.
- Try massaging or tickling your baby while singing or telling them a story.