



## Early Language and Literacy-Key Points

- Early Language and literacy (reading and writing) development begins in first 3 years of life, from infancy. This is the critical time for brain development overall. It is a continuous developmental process.
- Early literacy skills develop in a context of social interaction and positive interactions in real life settings utilizing strategies and materials to promote the development of important skills.
- It is a natural unfolding of skills in a context of literacy rich experiences, exposure to new things and new words, and what they mean.
- Closely linked to child's earliest experiences with books, stories, language, talking.
- Children gain significant knowledge of language, reading and writing long before they enter kindergarten. These skills develop at similar time and are linked.
- Early Literacy does not mean early reading!
- Exploring, playing with books, singing, babbling, nursery rhymes, listening to stories, hearing and recognizing words, and scribbling are the building blocks for language and literacy skill development.
- Parents can *Talk, Listen, Read* to their children:
  - Tell stories, including family stories, encourage conversation, ask questions, act out characters in books, sing songs and make up rhymes, use all opportunities (signs, lists, shopping, etc), talk and sing about pictures too, not just words, encourage child to tell stories and act out characters, use stories to engage in conversation and talk about everyday activities

- A few minutes a day can accomplish a lot, you don't always have to finish a book, take everyday moments where you can, find ways to incorporate into words and language into daily routines.
- Scribbles are really important. They're actually samples of early writing. Parents should celebrate the child's experiments with writing. Cultivating a child's willingness to express herself through scribbles or inventive spelling will yield benefits in her long-term social, emotional, and intellectual development.
- Early vocabulary and language development are strong indicators of future success in school word usage and vocabulary size at age 3 was found to be a strong predictor of accomplishments on language skill assessments at age 9 and 10 in a longitudinal research study
- An important study known as the "30 million word gap" study showed that children not exposed to language/literacy rich environments, heard 30 million less words by the time they went to Kindergarten. This lack of knowledge of words created a deficit that remained making it hard to catch up
- While there are many things parents can't give their children, there are things a parent can give in terms of early literacy skill development that can have a measurable effect on their child's ability to succeed in school and in life.
- All parents can engage in more "extra talking" and positive interactions with their children that can absolutely have an impact on language development, early literacy skill and school readiness.
- The broader pattern of parent-child activities and interactions that support children's language and literacy development is equally important as the frequency of reading together.
- Reading to children, and encouraging reading and a love of books is important as well and just a few minutes a day can make a difference.
- The development of early literacy skills starts at birth and is a crucial component of early learning experiences. These skills impact a child being ready for school at kindergarten, and impact a child meeting grade level expectations later on as well.

