



Information and ideas about early literacy for parents of school-aged children

Parents teach their children many skills and attitudes in their early years including how to talk, get on with others, show and read emotions, and to have a positive sense of self.

Parents spend time talking, listening, playing, doing day-to-day chores about the home, shopping or on outings. Parents can also develop many early literacy skills in their children, including recognising the purposes of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Parents who invest time each day to read with their child can foster important positive attitudes and a love of reading. Children need to want to read and write.



What children need to know to succeed in reading and writing

- Print (text) is different to pictures but may be related
- Meaning comes from the print
- Print or symbols always say the same thing
- English print goes from left to right
- Print is made up of letters, words, sentences and punctuation
- Written language has structure
- Books have authors and illustrators
- Print is found in many places and forms, not just books, and it does not always tell a story.

What parents and carers can do

- Read aloud with your child every day from the day they are born
- Use a range of reading materials with a variety of purposes
- Talk about your shared reading
- Support your child's understanding of more complex language patterns and vocabulary – understanding and enjoying language is more important than the ability to read independently
- Take books with you in the car, to the supermarket and on outings
- Join your local library – it is free and a great source of books, magazines, videos, DVDs and tapes. Check for story times, parent sessions or special programs for families.

How to guide

- Make sure your child can see the pictures and discuss them
- Encourage your child to ask questions, make predictions and give opinions
- Ask “how” and “why” questions and stimulate thoughts and ideas
- Run your finger under the words sometimes as you read
- Dramatise stories with different voices, expression and sounds
- As concentration and interest develops, try chapter books to be read over time
- Use a variety of reading materials such as photo albums, magazines, newspapers
- Discuss aspects of text such as different print types and sizes or punctuation marks
- Use your child's interests to find books.