



Information and ideas about early literacy for parents of toddlers

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
- 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 a variety of materials, books, magazines, videos, DVDs and tapes. Check for story times, parent sessions or special programs for families.

How to guide

- Let your toddler snuggle on your lap for reading – closeness is part of learning to love reading and books
- Use a variety of voices to bring stories alive when reading aloud to your toddler, especially to show different emotions
- Let toddlers turn pages and point to pictures
- Ask questions about the pictures and answer toddlers' questions as well as you can. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know. Let's read to find out."
- Let active toddlers handle a toy while

listening to stories. Continue to read if they move away - they may still be listening and will return to see the pictures

- Ask children to predict what might happen next
- Sometimes point to the words as you read and, if a child is interested in the words or letters, you might talk about them
- Use print in the world around and in daily routines to support the importance and purpose of reading
- Talk to toddlers as much as possible about routine events and activities, labelling and describing what is happening
- Tell stories such as fairy or traditional tales, made up stories or favourite stories
- Give your toddler crayons, paints, water-based markers and paper to scribble, draw and write
- Write their name on pictures in the top left-hand corner to encourage directionality
- Encourage all efforts to write
- Write their stories or descriptions of their pictures on the picture
- Display their artwork
- Use any chance to encourage writing, such as sending artwork "letters" to friends or family.

Great toddler books...

- are simple, rhyming and about things that happen in their own lives such as toileting, bath time, bed time and babies
- have flaps that are great for curious toddlers with busy hands
- are predictable or repetitive to allow children to join in 'reading'
- can be wordless books for making up a child's own stories
- can be made by you with your own pictures or photos.