



Welcome



Baby



utah county health department
"creating healthy communities"



United Way of Utah County

July 2011 A Newsletter for "Welcome Baby" and "Parents as Teachers" Families



Literacy Building Blocks

It seems every day that we see signs, hear advertisements, and read articles about the importance of reading to children. Many parents are concerned how they can provide a rich literacy environment in their homes. Parents can use simple activities that can be the building blocks for reading readiness.

Emergent Literacy Skills

In the children's book *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, by Laura Numeroff, one thing follows another in a sequence. Teaching your child to read also follows a sequence, referred to as emergent literacy. This process moves from listening to speaking, from speaking to writing, from writing to sounding out words (decoding), from decoding to reading, and from reading to comprehending.

Listening

Tony Stead, senior national literacy consultant for Mondo Publishing in New York, states "Listening comprehension precedes reading comprehension." (<http://www.dannyandkim.com/WhyNurseryRhymes.html>)

This information is one of the most important skills parents can incorporate in their daily routines. Activities such as:

- Talk to your child as if he or she understands everything you are saying. Make eye contact, use facial expression, and vary your voice pitch.
- Get down on your child's level when you interact with him or her.
- Coo and make "baby noises" as they begin to make the sounds themselves. Give your baby many opportunities to make different sounds as you pause and listen.
- Make singing time part of your daily routine.
- Let infants look in mirrors and see their own expressions.

These actions may seem unsophisticated but research indicates that talking to children is the foundation of literacy.

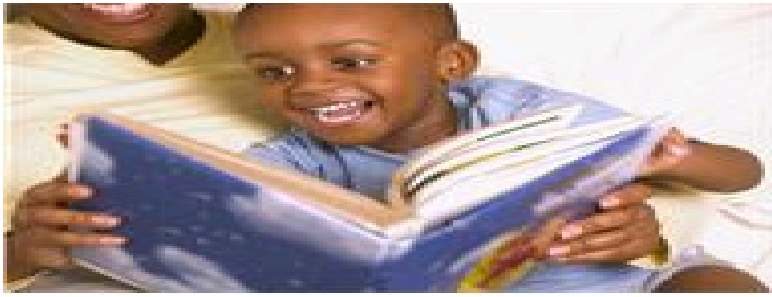
Talking

Between the ages of three and eight, children are considered "Verbal Learners." In this stage children can ask over 10 questions an hour and usually repeat or say everything they are thinking. Be patient and encourage talking. Singing time, story time and play time should include activities that encourage new vocabulary. As you read, find books that children can participate in reading or let them tell their own story. A fun project is to let your child make his own books, with photos, cut out magazine pictures or other types of pictures. Let them tell you a story about the pictures and write what he says.

Writing

Children learn to read from everyday symbols such as stop signs and pictures. These are referred to as environmental print. Letters become symbols, especially letters in their names. There is not phonetic recognition in early childhood. Young toddler's can recognize pictures of familiar items or people. Let children examine objects with all their senses. For example, after reading the book *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault, use food as environment print. See picture below to create your own coconut tree (Original idea from Angie Choate, Mustang OK). Other activities that encourage writing is to let children scribble. Be sure to keep these pictures in a binder. As children's scribbles become circles and then the circles become people, you will see how these pictures are their "words." After older children draw pictures, ask questions about their drawings and write what they say. Your children recognize at an early age that letters are symbols with meaning. Encourage them to find the letters of their names through out books, signs and other print material.





Decoding

When children learn the letters of their name parents can start decoding. This process is teaching children that letters have sounds. Once again the first sounds children can recognize will be those in their names. Once children start school they will begin to learn sounds of individual letters and then begin to sound out words. In this stage parents once again need to be patient while give children time in this process. Pictures in books are still important for children to get the idea of stories' content. Also, parents can read the book before the child starts the decoding process. It is important for parents to understand that even though a child may be decoding words, understanding those words or the storyline may be limited. Children need repetition during the decoding process. Rhyming books are a good choice and books with repetition of words and or phrases.

Comprehension

In the sequence of emergent literacy skills when a parent starts talking to their newborn and providing opportunities for toddlers to talk and provide rich environment print, it is important to allow children to sound out letters and word. Their vocabulary and word comprehension will follow. Although comprehension will be part of each stage, parents can look forward to the time when children have the literacy ability to read and understand what they are reading. Jim Trelease recommends that parents continue a learning environment by reading aloud even when a child can read on their own. In fact, Mr. Trelease recommends that parents read two grade levels above what the child's reading level. This will help children once again hear a real voice, and give children the ability to learn new word and story meanings. Also, parents and children can discuss ideas and stay connected. (*The Read Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease)

Each step in this sequence is important and parents are an important participant during emergent literacy. Mem Fox, popular author, states: “The fire of literacy is created between an emotional spark between a child the book and the person reading. It is not achieved by the book or the person who's reading aloud. It a relationship winding between all three. Bringing the together in easy harmony.”

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **Ready to Learn**—Free parenting class. July 20th at the Utah County Health Department (UCHD), Rm. 1601 from 12-1 p.m. Receive a complimentary book. Children are welcome.
- **Local Farmers Markets**— Provo's Farmers Market (*May-October*), Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., Pioneer Park, 500 West 100 South, Provo.
 - ☞ June-October Main Season: varieties of fruits and vegetables; visitors are encouraged to talk to the farmers about recipes; live music, food vendors, arts and crafts
- **Provo City Library** —
 - ☞ “Monday Night Performances” in the Ballroom on the 4th Monday of each month. Various artists will perform each month and admission is FREE!
 - ☞ Make and Take Crafts: Free crafts on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am-12pm in the Children's Department Program Room
 - ☞ Summer Story Time: Wednesdays from 11-11:30am for toddlers in the Children's Department Program Room
 - ☞ 550 North University Avenue Provo, UT (801) 852-6650
- **Car seat Safety Class**—July 13@ 4:30, at the Utah County Health Department (UCHD), Rm. 2700. Spanish classes are scheduled on a month to month basis please call 801-851-7035 if you are interested. All Spanish classes meet in Rm. 2601. Please come 10 minutes before the start of class. Doors will close at 4:30pm.
- **Freedom Festival Grand Parade**—July 4 @ 9am. The parade begins at 960 N. University Ave. and proceeds south to 100 S. and then turns east to 200 E. From there it turns north to Center St. and then turns east and ends at 900 E.



Thank you to all of our volunteers and families who came to the Orem Owlz game United Way night. It was a great success! We hope you enjoyed it.