Improving Your Child's Literacy

Family Tip Sheet | Primary and Elementary School

Introduction

Have you ever found yourself singing "The Alphabet Song" under your breath to try to remember where a certain letter falls in the alphabet? Do you remember when you first heard that song? It was probably one of your first lessons in literacy. Two of the most important skills your child will ever learn are how to read and write. To fully participate in society, your child needs to be able to communicate with others. How can you help your child develop literacy skills? Read on for some suggestions.

Table Talk

Talk with your child about what literacy means and why it's so important. Ask your child:

- What book do you most enjoy for me to read to you, or do you most enjoy reading to yourself?
- Why do you like that book? How would your life be different if that book had never been written?
- What besides books do we read? How many kinds of things can you think of that we need to read every day?
- How does reading help us? Why is it good to know how to read? What would it be like if I couldn't read to you?

Tips & Tricks

Literacy starts in the home. You are modeling literacy for your child from the moment he or she arrives in your life.

- **Read.** It's never too early to start reading books to your child, and it's never too early for your child to see you reading to yourself.
- **Set aside time for reading.** Set aside 15 or 20 minutes in the evening as a reading time for your family. If your child hasn't learned how to read, yet, use this time to read to him or her. If your child has learned how to read, let this be a time for silent independent reading.
- **Write.** Your child sees you typing on the computer, and handwriting letters, notes, and lists, and comes to realize that these are important activities.

Plan & Practice

Practice reading and writing in your home:

- Practice singing the "alphabet song" with your child to help him or her become familiar with the order of letters.
- Encourage your child's interest in writing. There's something new to learn about writing in every grade. Your kindergartener can practice writing letters of the alphabet and his or her own name, while your fifth grader can practice writing by keeping a diary, and writing fun stories, or a letter to family members.
- Practice reading in the home. Switch roles with your child and ask him or her to read to *you*. Ask your younger child to read to you from a big picture book. Ask your older child to read chapter books out loud to you. Your older child can also practice reading informational texts (newspapers, magazines, biographies, books about animals, history, etc.).

Learn More

To learn more about literacy, check out the URLs below:

- ***Literacy Center Education Network***
  http://www.literacycenter.net/

  An interactive site that helps young students learn letters of the alphabet and other basic literacy skills in English and Spanish.

- ***The Literacy Site***
  http://theliteracysite.greatergood.com/clickToGive/lit/family-resources?&utm_source=ctg&utm_medium=home-feature&utm_term=20131110&utm_campaign=lit-familyresources

  A site where you can find fun activities, online resources, and great books for all ages.

- ***How to Create a Literate Home***
  http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/reading-language/reading-tips/how-to-create-a-literate-home/

  An article with suggestions for parents on how to create a "literate home".

- ***Reading Is Fundamental***
  http://www.rif.org/us/about/literacy-issues.htm

  A site that discusses the importance of literacy to well-being and citizenship.

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