Encouraging Reading/Writing Literacy with Young Children in the Home

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WITH YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE HOME

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How can parents encourage attaining skills in literacy in the young children in their homes? Here are ten practical suggestions and literature sources for parents to use with their children.

1. Create a "reading and writing corner" in your children's room. Stock it with pencils, pens, magic markers, chalk, chalkboards, paper pieces of posterboard, erasers, and most importantly, BOOKS! Children can experiment with reading, coloring, drawing, scribbling, forming letters, words, sentences, letters, diaries, and stories. Suggested literature sources to create motivation are:


2. Develop sight word vocabulary through the creation of a PICTODICTIONARY. Let your children design a picture for each letter of the alphabet and write its meaning underneath the illustration. Staple the pages together and title it. (Child's name)'s Pictodictionary. If your children are too young to caption the pictures, write it for them. Have your children identify and talk about the pictures with you. Nancy Willard's book titled Simple Pictures are Best (1977) is highly recommended. It is illustrated by Tomie de Paola and published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., New
York. Also, read a variety of alphabet books to stimulate interest; for example:


3. Take your children to Story Hour in the library. Read Anne Rockwell's book *I Like the Library* (1977) published by E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, to develop curiosity. Have them choose books to be read aloud at home during bedtime story hour. Suggested "bedtime stories" are:


4. Locate wordless text books in the library. They are
picture books without captions. Let the children become storytellers. Have them look at the illustrations in the story and interpret them in their own words. Use a cassette recorder to tape their stories or write them on a piece of paper. Here are several examples:


5. As an alternative to wordless textbooks, have your children create stories based upon their own experiences. Let them dictate their stories into a cassette recorder. Write out your children's stories on pieces of construction paper. Have them draw pictures to accompany the stories. Let them read their creations aloud to other family members.

6. Stimulate your children's imagination through questions. Develop and ask "What if . . . ?" or "Would you . . . ?" questions with them. Let them answer each question in a sentence with a reason. For example, "What if you were as fast as a jet?" or "would you like to be as hard as a rock?" "Why or why not?" Encourage
them to describe what they would see, feel, hear, smell, and taste. Recommended books are:


7. Develop the basic skill of sequencing with your children. Have them put in correct order their normal daily activities. Ask them: "What did you do first, get out of bed or eat breakfast?" After shopping, taking a family trip, baking, or doing other family activities, have the children recall the steps in the order in which they occurred. For example, "What did we do first?" "Then what did we do?" As an alternative, have your children help you cook. Ask them "What did we put into the bowl first, flour or milk?" "Then what did we do?" Use recipe books to get your children involved, such as:


8. Save magazines. Cut the magazine pages apart. Have your children paste their favorite illustrations to a piece of construction or posterboard paper. Let them identify and label each person, place, or thing which appears on that page. For example, a child can label the parts of a tree: roots, trunk, bark, limbs, branches, and leaves. Read Clyde Bulla's book A Tree Is a Plant (1960) to stimulate interest. It is a Harper, Row book illustrated by Lois Lignell.

9. Collect and save the food section of the newspaper. Have your children cut out the food items. Give them categories such as meat, fruit, and vegetable, and let them sort the pictures into the correct category. Have them paste each category and sorted pictures into a scrapbook. Before you take your children to the supermarket, read the following books:


10. Create an art center in the basement, garage, or kitchen area of your home. Place paint, crayons, felt-tip markers, play dough, paintbrushes, and other supplies in an "art box." Let the children feel free to create murals or other pieces of art. Display their creations in the house and let them talk to you about their artistic works. Good books for creating are:


The ten suggestions and literature sources can be effective tools for developing reading readiness with children. They can be easily implemented within the home to encourage behaviors leading to literacy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LITERATURE SOURCES


NEWSLETTERS FOR PARENTS

News for Parents from IRA is published three times a year by International Reading Association members. It contains a practical list of suggestions for motivating children to read and a recommended booklist. Write to the IRA, 800 Barksdale Rd., P. O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware, 19711.

Parents' Choice is published four times a year. It reviews media—movies, games, records, toys, television, story records, and books. Write to Parents' Choice Foundation, Parents' Choice, P. O. Box 185, Waban, Mass. 02168
Why Children's Books? is published quarterly and gives parents sources relating to selecting and sharing books with children. Write to The Horn Book, Inc., Park Square Bldg., Boston, Mass. 02116

LEAFLETS AND BROCHURES

Choosing a Child's Book contains criteria for selecting books for children of various age levels, booklists, and periodical listings. Write to The Children's Book Council, 67 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

The International Reading Association produces a series of pamphlets which are available for a small cost. The titles include: Why Read Aloud to Children?, What Books and Records Should I Get for My Preschooler?, What is Reading Readiness?, How Can I Help My Child Get Ready to Read?, How Can I Encourage My Primary Grade Child to Read? and others. Write to the International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, P. O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware. 19711.