

Letter Knowledge

Learning Different Shapes & Letters

- Babies learn about letters by learning about shapes & how things are alike & different.
- Babies love looking at other babies. Read books featuring baby faces to help babies compare & contrast differences.
- Read alphabet books; sing alphabet songs.
- Share books featuring geometric shapes with sharp color contrasts.
- Play with simple puzzles & toys with shapes.
- Hang mobiles with different shapes in your baby's crib area.

Studies show that if reading is a negative experience, kids will associate the negative interaction with books. Reading should always be pleasurable for you both. Stop reading if your baby loses interest.

Print Motivation

Enjoying Books & Loving to Read

- Begin reading books early— even when your child is a newborn.
- Make book sharing time special. Turn off distractions; make it only about you & your baby. Hold your baby close as you read.
- Visit the library often. Attend baby storytime.
- Many babies see books as toys. Allow your child to play with books & become comfortable with them.
- Read plastic books in the bathtub.

More early literacy skills:

Print Awareness

Using Books & Seeing Print All Around

- Let your baby handle board or cloth books.
- Allow her to turn the pages as you read together. This gives babies control, helps them develop fine motor skills & helps them understand how books are read. If babies are comfortable with books, they will want to read more often.
- Point to words as you read them aloud.
- Read lift-the-flap & touch-and-feel books. These books draw babies into the story as they make sensory connections to the print.
- Write your baby's name on a piece of paper. Have him decorate it using finger paint. Point to his name as you say it. Children love to hear their names being said aloud and this will help them start to learn that print represents what they hear.



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Babies



Prepare your baby to read by helping him or her develop these key skills:

*Learning new words

*Learning different shapes & letters

*Hearing the sounds in words

*Describing events & telling stories

*Using books & seeing print all around

*Enjoying books & loving to read

Help babies develop early literacy skills:

Success Starts Early

Your baby loves to be close to you and hear the sound of your voice. A loving relationship develops between you and your child when you share books, sing songs and recite rhymes with him or her. The bond you create with your baby through books and music will support his or her learning for a lifetime.



What is Early Literacy?

Babies are born ready to learn, and you provide the opportunities for learning through everyday experiences— including talking, reading, singing and playing.

Through these interactions, babies develop a knowledge about reading, writing and learning before they even know how to read, write or talk. This knowledge is called **early literacy**.

There are six early literacy skills you can practice with your child to help her develop language and learning skills: **vocabulary, print motivation, print awareness, letter knowledge, phonological awareness and narrative skills**.

Vocabulary Learning New Words

- Use positive language to speak to your baby. Use a variety of specific words & a lot of repetition. The more you talk to your child, the more words she will learn.
- Talk about your baby's feelings. This will help him understand how he is feeling & when he starts to talk, he will know the words to describe his feelings.
- Speak in the language most comfortable for you. The more words kids hear in any language, the more comprehension they will have.
- Read to your baby every day. This will expose her to more new words you don't usually use in daily conversation.
- Talk about the pictures in books.
- Narrate your activities. If you are changing diapers, talk about that. If your baby is eating, talk about the different foods.
- When your baby babbles or talks, listen carefully & then respond.

Ask babies lots of questions. Even if babies don't have the words to answer, it does not mean they are not thinking about the answer. Babies also learn that questions are invitations for response.

Phonological Awareness Hearing the Sounds in Words

- Recite nursery rhymes, read rhyming books & make up silly nonsense rhymes.
- Listen to music. Move to the music. Add instruments to tap out rhythms in songs.
- Sing throughout the day. This helps babies hear the sounds in words because each syllable usually has a different note.
- Bounce your baby on your lap as you recite rhymes. This way, he feels the rhythm of the words & hears them at the same time.
- Add actions as you sing or recite a poem. This helps children break language down into separate words.

Narrative Skills

Describing Events & Telling Stories

- Read books about baby signing. Help your baby learn sign language. Baby sign language increases your child's understanding of language & accelerates language development.
- Talk to, sing to & tell your baby stories.
- Label things your baby sees & uses.
- Talk about what you are doing all day.
- Ask questions when reading together.
- Read your favorite books again & again. Stories help kids understand that things happen in order- first, next, last.

