



# Family Literacy Tip Sheets

## Literacy and Language Links

- Literacy begins at birth – long before children start school. It begins at home, in families!
- Literacy, learning and healthy child development are interconnected.
- Children learn best when they feel loved and cared for.
- It's never too early or too late to talk, sing, and read with your children. Even babies are ready to start learning about language and books.
- To learn to read, children need to first experience language.
- To learn language, children need to hear it spoken frequently and fluently – use your first language to help them!
- Help children learn through *rhythm*, *rhyme* and *repetition*. Rhymes, chants, songs and storytelling create a rich environment for language development.
- Children learn language best through *interaction* with others.
- Children take cues from facial expressions, intonations, inflections and their environment.
- Talk *with* your children rather than *at* them. Let them ask questions, and don't forget to *listen* to what they have to say!
- Use open ended questions (not just yes/no questions) to find out what your child thinks and to check for understanding.



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## Language Learning

**A strong foundation in oral language is the basis for future success in learning to read and write.**

- Consistency is the key. They need to hear the same word used in the same context to learn what the word means.
- Children need to hear language to be able to learn it and to understand how language works.
- Make time for language playtime. Sing songs, do rhymes, play games, tell stories and talk about your day.

**Language learning should be fun.**

- Children experiment with language while they play.
- Learning through play creates an emotional attachment.
- Storytelling is a great way to increase language skills.

**Language has a purpose.**

- Language is a way to get ideas and feeling across and is a means of getting needs met.
- It should be relevant to the child.
- First a child experiences language, then understands it, and finally, is able to use it.

**Learning language is a social process.**

- Conversations are great ways to learn new words and concepts.
- Give children the time to process what is said before answering for them.
- Make learning language a hands-on experience. Link words to pictures, sounds and actions.
- Let children take the lead and direct conversation.