

Literacy development is more than the ABC's

- Teachers use play to support children's oral language skills and desire for reading.
- Once children have strong oral language skills, their literacy skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking, representing and viewing) develop quickly.
- Understanding typical oral language and literacy development helps adults provide opportunities and experiences to support children's learning.

Stages of Literacy Development

All children go through stages of literacy development at their own pace, in a variety of ways.

| | LITERACY SKILLS | INFANT | TODDLER | PRESCHOOL/ PREK/K | GRADES 1 TO 3 |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Playing Supports literacy development | Speaking Talking Singing | coos, babbles, cries | first words, 2-word phrases | phrases/sentences, takes turns, questions | storytells, inquires, predicts, infers, retells, reflects |
| | Listening | rhymes, songs, music | words, phrases, conversations | various texts, rhymes, poems, songs, stories, digital media, conversations | listens to a variety of texts varied in length and purposes |
| | Viewing Looking | board books, environment | objects in texts & environment | names, letters, common environmental print | views books as sources of information & pleasure |
| | Reading | observes illustrations | requests re-reading stories | makes up stories, explores books on own | independently reads (home & school), understands different text types |
| | Representing Showing Ideas | imitates; signs; gestures | scribbles, copies | draws, creates, builds, paints, sculpts, dramatizes | re-enacts, displays and creates stories both orally and written |
| | Writing | explores writing materials and tools | | role-play writing, creates lists & cards, copies letters or writing | attaches meaning to text; expresses thoughts, develops interest in story structure |



Literacy development begins at birth. It is supported by the stories, conversations, and experiences children have with their families through talking, singing, playing, reading and writing together.

Recommended Websites

For more information on supporting your child's emerging literacy skills check out the following links:

- www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/education-and-learning/literacy-in-saskatchewan
- www.growwithstories.org
- www.hanen.org
- www.child-encyclopedia.com
- <http://families.naeyc.org/>



Talking:

Children learn how to use and understand spoken language when their families talk, share stories and have everyday conversations. Talking with children provides opportunities for them to practice language by:

- Listening
- Discussing
- Explaining
- Describing
- Questioning
- Sharing
- Storytelling & retelling

Why?

Talking with adults increases children's vocabulary and knowledge of language to help them when they begin to read on their own. "The words children know, say, and read, can only come from those used by others around them" (Neuman and Roskos, 2007).



Reading:

Children increase their vocabulary, strengthen their relationships and are motivated to read on their own when their families read together. Reading with children provides opportunities for them to explore print in a variety of ways through:

- Storybooks (e.g. fiction and non-fiction)
- Environmental print (e.g. signs, labels)
- Maps
- Recipes
- Boxes and labels
- Greeting cards
- Instructions
- Menus
- Text messages and Email

Why?

Reading with children engages them to remember characters, words, and events from stories to build their comprehension skills. When children make personal connections to reading and print, they become motivated to learn to read themselves.



Singing:

Children play with sounds, words and languages when they sing with their families. Singing with children provides opportunities for them to explore language through:

- Songs
- Rhymes
- Lullabies
- Poems
- Finger plays
- Jingles
- Movie soundtracks

Why?

In songs, the sounds of words are often slowed down, stretched out, and repeated differently than when we speak. When children sing, they practice hearing sounds of letters in words and with speaking in sentences.



Writing:

Children understand that print has a message when families draw their attention to the ways print is used. Writing provides opportunities for children to express their feelings and ideas by:

- Pretend writing/ Scribbling
- Drawing
- Painting
- Building
- Dictating stories
- Taking photographs
- Printing
- Making lists
- Writing letters
- Sending a message

Why?

Through writing, children are able to make connections between the words they say and the words they write. To read fluently, children will need to be able to recognize letters in many forms and combinations.



Playing:

Children solve problems, use imagination, and play with everyday print materials in meaningful ways when they play with their families. Playing with children provides opportunities for them to understand language and print using:

- Dress-up props (e.g. capes, hats)
- Pretend play using real world materials (e.g. recipe books, maps, newspaper)
- Natural materials (e.g. sticks, sand, leaves)
- Games (e.g. I Spy, 20 Questions)
- Props/Toys (e.g. blocks, dolls, puppets)
- Board games (e.g. Memory, Dominos)

Why?

Play offers children the opportunity to practice and use language with peers. In play, children practice language by asking, explaining, describing, directing, wondering and exploring print.

Books to Explore with Children

While visiting your local library, check out the following titles:

Talking:

- *Moo!* by David LaRochelle
- *Open Very Carefully-A Book With Bite* by Nick Bromley

Singing:

- *Nighty-Night Cooper* by Laura Numeroff
- *Sing* by Joe Raposo

Playing:

- *Windblown* by Edward Manceau and Sarah Quinn
- *Max's Castle* by Kate Banks

Reading:

- *Open This Little Book* by Jesse Klausmeier
- *Don't Read This Book!* by Jill Lewis

Writing:

- *The Things I Can Do* by Jeff Mack
- *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi

Reading regularly with young children strengthens adult-child relationships and builds language, literacy and social emotional skills.

Families can be confident their children's literacy development will be supported as they talk, sing, play, read and write together.