

Ready to Succeed

An Early Literacy and School Readiness Newsletter for Professionals

What Can Child Care Providers Do to Promote Literacy in Their Programs?

March / April
2002

Volume 1, Issue 2

Research indicates it is vitally important that everyone who works with young children do all they can to build a strong foundation for literacy development. Children's future successes depend upon having good reading and writing skills. We know this process begins long before children enter school.

The US Department of Education suggests the following simple things child care providers can do to help:

B Read to infants even before they are able to talk. Make books a part of your one-on-one time with babies. Although they don't always understand exactly what you are saying, babies love to listen to voices. Over time, babies will associate pleasant feelings with books and reading.

B Set up a reading area. Create a colorful or cozy space where children can read or you can read to them. Make sure the area is well lit and that interesting books are

placed where children can easily see and reach them. Include books for all developmental abilities and cultural backgrounds. Plan time when children can look at books on their own.

B Read to children every day. Read with small groups, share illustrations, and change your voice to make stories come to life (see more about this on page 2). Also, read one-on-one with children when they ask you. Use these times to encourage children to talk about the story and characters and to share their ideas.

B Encourage volunteers to read with children. Contact volunteer groups at nearby colleges, high schools, community organizations, religious groups, businesses, or senior centers. In addition to reading with volunteers, children can draw pictures about characters in the book or make up stories of their own. After listening to the child's story,

volunteers might print or type the story for the child to keep.

B Read with children about their native culture. Children often respond well to stories about their own cultures. This practice also exposes other children to cultures different from their own. In addition, offer books without words so children can make up their own stories to go with the pictures.

B Encourage families to read with children. Support family reading times by allowing children to borrow books overnight or for a few days. Sign up for programs that provide free or inexpensive reading materials. Also, encourage families who speak languages other than English to read with their children in their native language. This will help children learn to write and read English as well.

B Teach children rhymes and poems. Make up stories about children in the group and include their names in familiar

(Continued on page 3)



Inside this issue:

Reading A bud to 2
a Group

Suggested Books 2
to Read A bud

What Children 3
Learn from
Cooking

Promoting 3
Literacy Article
continued

Use That 3
"Garbage"

We Want to 4
Hear from You



Reading Aloud to a Group

The first thing to keep in mind when reading aloud to children is to be enthusiastic! If you are excited about the story you are going to read, it will be contagious. Putting life into the story will grab and hold even the youngest child's attention.

If the story is scary, read with a spooky voice. Use a high squeaky voice

for a mouse, but a deep gruff voice for a bear. Give each of the characters a voice that is unique - the children will learn to connect *that* voice with *that* character.

Enthusiasm isn't limited to your voice. Incorporate facial expressions and gestures into your reading. Shrugging your

shoulders or raising your eyebrows can sometimes convey more than the words. If you want to go all out, wear a costume or use props while you read. For example, when

reading *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss, wear a red and white striped hat, large bow tie, and white gloves.

Before you sit down with your group:

select a book with bright and large illustrations that will make it easier for the children to view

choose a book that will appeal to your group and fit their attention span

books that invite the children to participate through repeated verses or rhymes help to

maintain their attention

and finally, be sure that all children will be able to see the book while you read

Once you've set the stage, show the children the book you are going to read. Ask leading questions based on the cover illustration such as, "What do you think the book is going to be about?" "There is an elephant on the cover, what do you think will happen to her?"

You may want to consider providing an alternative activity for those children who lose interest.

Be flexible - you may need to skip or alter parts of a story as the needs of your audience dictates.

For added fun, consider changing the character's names to those of the children in your group.



Suggested Books to Read Aloud

Abuela

by Arthur Dorros

Where's Spot

by Eric Hill

Amos and Boris

by William Steig

Hush! A Thai Lullaby

by Minfong Ho

The Story of Ferdinand

by Munro Leaf

It's Mine

by Leo Lionni

Mr. Grumpy's Outing

by John Burningham

Where the Wild Things Are

by Maurice Sendak

My Very First Mother Goose

by Iona Opie

Jamberry

by Bruce Degen

Have You Seen My Duckling?

by Nancy Tafuri

Julius: The Baby of the World

by Kevin Henkes

The Relatives Came

by Cynthia Rylant

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

by Eric Carle

Book! Book! Book!

by Deborah Bruss

Come On, Rain!

by Karen Hesse

Flossie and the Fox

by Patricia McKissack

Baboon

by Kate Banks

Eating the Alphabet

by Lois Ehlert

A Color of His Own

by Leo Lionni

George and Martha

by James Marshall

Lucky Song

by Vera B. Williams

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom

by John Archambault

Anno's Counting Book

by Mitsumasa Anno

Freight Train

by Donald Crews

Window Music

by Anastasia Suen

Clap Your Hands

by Lorinda Bryan Cauley

What Children Learn from Cooking

When children are included in cooking activities, they are learning far more than how to make the finished product. Here are just a few of the activities that foster language, math, social, motor, and science skills:

LANGUAGE: naming items, time, comparing, following directions, recognizing letters or words

MATH: counting, measuring, sequencing, recognizing numbers, classifying

SOCIAL: teamwork, sharing, self-care

MOTOR: tearing, dipping, scrubbing, pouring, mixing, shaking, spreading, rolling, kneading, juicing, peeling, cutting, grating, slicing

SCIENCE: floating, dissolving, hot and cold concepts, browning, melting, evaporation, thickening, sensory awareness



Cooking with children also provides a good opportunity to discuss the importance of kitchen safety and food safety.

In addition, following the directions for a recipe enables children to see the value of reading in a real-life situation.

Bon appetit!

Promoting Literacy continued

(Continued from page 1)

songs. Ask family members to help you learn songs, poems, and stories in the children's home languages.

B Talk with young children about their own lives. Make a special effort to talk with infants and babies. Responding to their cooing and babbling as if you understand them helps them to learn about language. As children grow older, encourage them to join you in conversation and be interested in what they have to say.

Giving details, descriptions, and telling stories not only helps children learn how stories are written and what they mean, it also builds vocabulary and communication skills.

B Plan a trip to the library. Contact your local library to arrange a guided tour that explains how children can use the library. Learn about the library's services for young children. Ask about bilingual story times, special story hours for child care programs, and workshops for

caregivers. Discuss how children and families can obtain and use their own library cards.

B Help start a community family reading program. Consider inviting families to attend reading and parenting discussions. Make sure these gatherings are held at a time when family members can attend. When necessary, send information home about these programs in the family's native language.

Use That "Garbage"

Here are some suggested uses for those items we often throw away:

NEWSPAPER: Great to use for games and activities that require balls. Crunch the newspaper into balls of various sizes (or shapes) and wrap a few times with masking tape to hold



together. Newspaper balls are lightweight and soft. They come in especially handy

for indoor games on those rainy days!

CARDBOARD TUBES: Save tubes from paper towel rolls and wrapping paper. Use one to make a telescope or many to create tube sculptures. Allow children to decorate with odds and ends.

CONTAINER LIDS: Save and wash the lids from jars and other containers. Use them for cutters when playing

with play dough or for tracing circles. Small lids work well for "rafts" during water play.

PLASTIC BOTTLES: Cut off the bottom portion of clean plastic milk or soda bottles to use for seed planting. Milk bottles with handles can be used for scoops in the dirt or sandbox. Simply cut off part of the bottle below the handle at an angle to form a shovel shape.

University of California
Cooperative Extension

11477 E Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603

Phone: 530 889-7350
Fax: 530 889-7397

Website: ceplacer.ucdavis.edu
Email: pranderson@ucdavis.edu



**Serving Placer County
Since 1917**



We Want to Hear from You

The **Ready to Succeed** Program utilizes many methods to disseminate information in the community. If you choose not to participate in our workshops, perhaps you will benefit from the articles and suggested activities published in this newsletter.

We would appreciate any feedback you have to offer. Tell us what you want more or less of, and how we can get you the information you want and need. If you know of a center,

home day care, or agency that should be included on our mailing list, please let us know.

Have you read an article recently that would benefit other providers? Do you have a great activity that you would like to share? Tell us about it! We would like to include it in our newsletter or publish it on our "Tips from the Trenches" page from our UC Cooperative Extension website: ceplacer.ucdavis.edu.

Sharon K. Junge
County Director

Paula R. Anderson
Program Representative
