Talking about Dinosaurs

Dinosaur names provide a rich source for learning new vocabulary. Young children take pride in being able to say Stegosaurus or Triceratops. T-Rex is always a favorite because he is so fierce, but children also like to report that his full name is Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Vocabulary is knowing the names of things. This is a very important skill for children to have when they are learning to read. Most children enter school knowing between 3,000 and 5,000 words.

Why is it important for children to hear a wide range of words?

Children need to know the meaning of words to understand what they are reading. When you think about it, you know if you are reading a word correctly if you have heard it before. The more words children hear, the more ready they will be to make connections between sounding out words and knowing they're pronouncing them correctly.

Some ideas to discuss with your child are:
- What are fossils and what do they teach us?
- Are dinosaurs alive today? If not, how long ago did they live on earth?
- What does the name 'dinosaur' mean?
- How were baby dinosaurs born?

Have fun talking about dinosaurs with your child and learning new words and facts together!

Featured Book

Dinosaurs A -Z, by Simon Mugford

This book is described as being for kids who really love dinosaurs. It lists a dinosaur for every letter of the alphabet. It also gives facts about each dinosaur, and a guide on how to pronounce it’s name. The pictures look like photos, and there is a drawing that compares their size to a man on each page. A great book for exploring dinosaurs!

Favorite Dinosaur Fiction

- Edwina, the Dinosaur Who Didn’t Know She Was Extinct, by Mo Willems
- How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight? (and other 'How Do Dinosaurs...' series), by Jane Yolen

*Many of these books are also available in Spanish.

- Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp, by Carol Diggory Shields
- When Dinosaurs Came with Everything, by Elise Broach

Favorite Dinosaur Nonfiction

- Dinosaurs! and Dinosaur Discoveries, by Gail Gibbons
- Prehistoric Actual Size, by Steve Jenkins
- Dinosaur More! by Henrietta Strickland
More fun with *Dinosaur More!*

**Measure up...** Take a tape measure, piece of chalk, and this book to the sidewalk. Draw a starting line. Have your child lay flat with her feet on the line, and using the tape measure, draw a line the length of your child. Choose a dinosaur from the book and find its length. Have your child stand on the start line with one end of the tape measure while you walk the appropriate distance. Let your child draw a chalk line from the starting point to you. This gives her a better sense of how big the dinosaur was!

**Using your imagination...** Pretend you want a dinosaur for a pet. Talk about or write a letter telling why you should have one. Don't forget to say what you would feed it, where you would keep it and what you would name it. Draw a picture to go with your letter.

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**Dinosaur Song**

*(To the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”)*

Dinosaurs once ruled the earth,  
Ruled the earth, ruled the earth.  
Dinosaurs once ruled the earth,  
Many years ago.

*(Additional verses)*  
Stegosaurus swished his tail...  
Brontosaurus was very big...  
Brachiosaurus lived in the water...  
Apatosaurus stomped so hard...  
Pterodactyl was a winged flier...  
Trachodon had 2000 teeth...  
Triceratops had three horns...  
Tyrannosaurus Rex was the king.

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**Rhyme**

*Carnivore, carnivore, what do you eat?*  
"I am a hunter. I only eat meat!"  

*Herbivore, herbivore, what do you munch?*  
"I enjoy plants and leaves for lunch."  

*Omnivore, omnivore, how about you?*  
"I like meat and plants to chew."

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**Why Kids Need Nonfiction**

- Information books and magazines play an important part in motivating children to read.
- Many kids enjoy information books as much as story books.
- Nonfiction can be a way for parents to share their interests with their children.
- Information books expose children to special words and concepts, which helps build language.

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**What your library can do for you...**

There are some great, high-quality information books available for children of all ages. Your librarian can help you find age-appropriate books about dinosaurs or other fun topics!

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