Play Literacy

Play is the work of children and is one of the most effective ways to teach literacy skills. Children love to dress up and pretend they are a doctor, a mom, or a dinosaur. They need the opportunity to explore and act out different roles.

In the classroom, teachers often call this dramatic play. Dramatic play, or play literacy, opens up the way for a lot of talking and writing activities. There are several elements that make this play most effective for learning:

- Having a variety of materials and props — hats, shoes, jewelry, bowls, blankets, writing pads, etc.
- Combining multiple roles and themes — Who is the dad? Can there be more than one dad? Can the dad also be a fireman?
- Creating a play scenario — the who, what, when, where of their dramatic play
- Having the opportunity to negotiate how the play happens — how the child handles it if a play mate is not following the rules of the play scenario. What if one child wants to be Spiderman, but they are playing school?

Dress-up boxes are easy to create at home. Collecting props and materials from yard sales or dollar stores makes the cost of a dress-up box affordable. It will provide endless hours of imaginative play for your child!

Featured Book

*Bark, George,* by Jules Feiffer

"Bark, George," says George’s mother, and George goes: "Meow," which isn’t right, because George is a dog! His mother says, "Bark, George." And George goes, "Quack, quack." What’s going on with George? This is a very funny story that children will want to read again and again.

More Books about Play Literacy...

- *I Want a Pet,* by Lauren Child
- *Sally Goes to the Vet,* by Stephen Huneck
- *Doctor Ted,* by Andrea Beaty
- *Froggy Goes to the Doctor,* by Jonathan London
- *How I Became a Pirate,* by Melinda Long
- *Shiver Me Letters: A Pirate ABC,* by June Sobel
- *Meet the Fireman,* by Joyce Jeffries
- *Firefighters A-Z,* by Chris L. Demarest

Ask your child what they want to be when they grow up. Find books that talk about that interest.
More fun with Bark George...

Vet shop...Kids love playing with animals. Try these ideas to build their imaginations and their writing skills.

- Set up a pretend veterinarian clinic. Make signs, an appointment book, medicine bottles, a nametag for the doctor, etc.
- Call to make an appointment for George.
- Act out the story using stuffed animals or pictures of animals from magazines.
- Open the clinic to other animals that your child can take care of. Show her how to make notes on a medical chart or write a prescription.

Out and about...Take your child to a pet store. Let him walk around the store and see the different types of pets and the equipment used to take care of them. Talk about how to take care of pets — feeding, cleaning, medical care, etc.

Fingerplay

Five Little Puppy Dogs
Five little puppy dogs by the kennel door,
(hold up five fingers)
One left the crowd, and then there were four.
(bend down thumb)
Four little puppy dogs running 'round a tree,
Mother called one home, and then there were three.
(bend down pointer finger)
Three little puppy dogs playing with a shoe,
One ran after a cat, and then there were two.
(bend down middle finger)
Two little puppy dogs having so much fun,
One went to find a bone, and then there was one.
(bend down ring finger)
One little puppy dog sitting in the sun,
She went in the kennel, and then there was none.
(bend down little finger)

Song to Sing

BINGO

There was a farmer
had a dog,
And Bingo was his name-O.
B-I-N-G-O! B-I-N-G-O!
B-I-N-G-O!

And Bingo was his name-O!
There was a farmer had a dog,
And Bingo was his name-O.
(Clap)-I-N-G-O! (Clap)-I-N-G-O! (Clap)-I-N-G-O!
And Bingo was his name-O!

Continue clapping one more letter in each verse, until you are clapping for all five letters.

You can hear the tune and watch a video at http://bussongs.com/songs/bingo.php

What your library can do for you...
Don’t have a library card? You can still visit your library for storytimes or to read with your child. Or you can ask your librarian about how to apply for your own card today!

Books to Go

This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services. Brought to you by the Idaho Commission for Libraries’ Read to Me program and your local library.