What is Early Literacy?

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they actually learn to read and write. Helping your child develop early literacy skills will build a foundation for reading so that when they are taught to read they are ready. You can start at birth!

Reading with your preschooler every day and teaching them about the world around them are practices that help prepare children to learn to read. This monthly newsletter will help you become more familiar with early literacy skills, and contains tips and activities you can try at home with your child. The Bookworm is published monthly for three age groups: Birth to 2; Preschool (3-5); and Kindergarten. You can find more Bookworms, as well as versions in Spanish, at http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/bookworm.

Book of the Month

Maybe a Bear Ate It! by Robie Harris, illustrated by Michael Emberley

After a sleepy yawn and big stretch, a young creature finds his book missing from his bed. He imagines all sorts of horrible things that could have happened to it, and when he calms down he finds it buried under the bed—where readers will note it’s been all along!

Author Robie Harris and illustrator Michael Emberley have teamed up on these other books:

Mail Harry to the Moon! Harry’s older brother, unhappy that the new baby seems to have taken over, dreams up imaginative ways to get rid of him.

Hi, New Baby! A father recalls for his preschooler the many feelings she experienced when her new baby brother arrived and her world changed forever.

Happy Birth Day! Children read about the day they were born, describing how loud they cried and how they could see light, hear sounds, and even sneeze. But most of all, how much they were loved.

Reading Tips for Parents

- Choose a quiet spot for you and your child to read aloud 15 - 20 minutes each day.
- Keep books and other reading materials where your child can reach them.
- Take books and writing supplies with you when you leave home so that your child can read and write wherever you go.
- Show your child how you read every day for fun and work (novels, newspapers, magazines, etc.).
- Visit the library or bookstore with your child to attend storytimes and choose books to read at home.
More fun with
Maybe a Bear Ate It

I spy... There are lots of things in these illustrations for your child to "spy." Go back to the first illustration, on the title page. Where is the book? Ask your child to spy the book on each page. Which stuffed friends does the creature take to bed with him? Help your child make the connection between the animals he takes to bed and the animals in his imagination.

Talk about it... Look at the pictures in this book with your child. The illustrations show the character with lots of different emotions. Talk about these with your child and help give her words to name the feelings. "Look at Creature's face on this page. He sure looks worried!" "He looks very upset in this picture. How do you know he is upset?"

Music and Movement... Sharing songs, rhymes, and fingerplays with your young child help develop important early literacy skills. Clapping to a beat can help your child separate words later, and rhymes help your child learn about word parts. Try the rhymes and songs in the Bookworms at home.

Rhyme
Read to Me
by author Jane Yolen

Read to me riddles and read to me rhymes.
Read to me stories of magical times.
Read to me tales about castles and kings.
Read to me stories of fabulous things.
Read to me pirates and read to me knights.
Read to me dragons and dragon-book fights.
Read to me spaceships and cowboys and then
When you are finished-
please read them again!

If You’re Happy and You Know It

If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands.
(clap, clap)
If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands.
(clap, clap)
If you’re happy and you know it,
then your face will surely show it.
If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands.
(clap, clap)

Sing it again with these actions:
...stomp your feet (stomp, stomp)
...shout "Hurray!" (Hurray!)
...do all three (clap, clap, stomp, stomp, Hurray!)

Suggestion:
Make up verses and actions for other emotions
(excited, sad, angry, scared)

What your library can do for you...
Your library offers many free resources to help you build your child’s early literacy skills: age-appropriate books, music CDs, storytimes, parent workshops, booklists, take-home information, and events for the whole family!

Funding for this project is made possible by the Idaho Commission for Libraries’ Read to Me program, and the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under a provision of the Library Services and Technology Act.

Printed 2011