

STORYTIME COMMENTS FOR CAREGIVERS

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Phonological Awareness is the ability to hear sounds in words. Children demonstrate phonological awareness by rhyming words, breaking words into syllables and hearing the beginning sounds in words.

BREAK WORDS INTO SYLLABLES:

- Singing slows down language and there is often a separate note for each syllable.
- Playing games that break words into parts, like clapping out the parts of words or a child's name, will help your children later when they have to break words into syllables as a way of sounding out words.

WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN RHYME:

- When you read a rhyming book with children, come back to a page with rhyming words and talk about two words that rhyme.
- Sometimes children like to fill in the rhyming word, especially if they have heard the book before.
- Rhyming is one way that children learn to hear that words are made up of smaller parts. By saying rhymes and singing songs with them you are supporting phonological awareness.
- Remember that children can recognize a rhyme before they can make a rhyme.
- Make up nonsense words that rhyme to help children hear smaller sounds in words. This will help children sound out words when they are ready to read.

HELP CHILDREN HEAR THE SOUNDS IN WORDS:

- Playing with animal sounds and encouraging children to make animal sounds helps them hear the smaller sounds in words.
- Have your children think of other words that start with the same sound as the first sound their names. Children learn best by doing activities that have meaning to them.

PRINT CONVENTIONS/PRINT AWARENESS

Print Awareness includes knowing how to handle a book, noticing print all around us and recognizing that print has meaning.

HELP CHILDREN LEARN HOW TO HANDLE A BOOK:

- Keep books easily accessible to let children learn how books work and how to turn the pages.
- From time to time, hold the book upside down or backwards. See if children notice that it is upside down.

SHOW CHILDREN THAT PRINT IS ALL AROUND THEM AND THAT PRINT HAS MEANING:

- Signs, t-shirts, banners, fliers are all examples of environmental print.
- Engaging in writing activities. Writing can be anything from drawing to scribbling to writing captions on made-up stories.
- Run your finger under the words of the title of a book or a repeated phrase as you say it.
- When you do things like make grocery lists or use name tags, the children see that print has purpose.
- Show children real objects that are mentioned in books. By showing children the real object, you are helping them realize that pictures represent real things. Later they will also understand that printed words represent real things.

LETTER KNOWLEDGE

Letter knowledge is knowing that letters are different from each other and that the same letter can look different. It also includes knowing that letters represent sounds.

HELP CHILDREN IDENTIFY DIFFERENT LETTERS:

- Talk about shapes and compare things – figure out what is alike and different.
- Have children look for different letters in their names.
- Identify letters by their shapes.
- Make letter shapes with their bodies.
- Sing the alphabet song to different tunes.

HELP CHILDREN HEAR THE SOUNDS OF LETTERS:

- Naming the letters and their sounds based on things you are doing throughout the day.
- Research indicates that children benefit the most from learning both the sound and the letter name, at the same time. When you teach them letters, explain that the letter is called ____ and makes the sound ____.

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary is knowing the meanings of words. Researchers have noted that children with large vocabularies find it easier to read when the time comes.

HELP CHILDREN BUILD THEIR VOCABULARIES:

- Talk to them throughout the day and narrate what you are doing.
- Explain words that unfamiliar to your children. When you encounter a word you don't know, talk through your process of figuring out its meaning through context clues.

- Read true books – they often have words that are not found in story books, so your children are learning more words.
- Children’s books have about 31 rare words per thousand words. That’s 3 times more than in conversation and 25% more rare than what is heard from television programs.
- Use words that describe spatial relationships. Children need language to be able to think about mathematics.

NARRATIVE SKILLS

Narrative skills include the ability to describe things, talk about events and tell stories.

PRACTICE DESCRIBING THINGS AND TALK ABOUT EVENTS:

- After you read a book, go back and talk about what is happening in the pictures.
- Asking your child questions uses a different part of the brain than formulating answers, so make sure to slow down and let your child think of a response.
- Help children understand the concept of sequencing by telling them what you are going to do and the order you will do it in.

HELP CHILDREN LEARN HOW TO TELL STORIES:

- Stories have a structure – a beginning, middle, and end. Exposing kids to storybooks helps them become familiar with how language is written.
- Use props to retell a story.
- Ask children to tell you about the story you just read to them.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Background knowledge is information children are taught and gain through experience. It is easier for children with strong background knowledge to understand what they read when they are older.

HELP CHILDREN GAIN BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:

- Encourage them to enjoy reading and sharing books together.
- Read the same book many times – children need repetition.
- Read books about ideas and concepts like opposites, or those that involve problem solving or predicting.
- Read books with repeated phrases that involve children in the storytelling.
- Share books that explain a child’s world.