

How to Use Print Rich Materials to Foster Early Literacy

By Cindy A. Thomas

Preschool Literacy Consultant

(408) 779-3876

Website: www.literacy4kids.info

email: literacy4kids@msn.com

Parents and early childhood educators can provide the building blocks to help their preschool children be successful in school. One of the most important way parents and educators can encourage literacy development in their children is to show that reading is fun and enjoyable; and to model what good readers and writers do.

My goal today is to leave you with literacy strategies demonstrated in children’s literature and games, which will create an interest in books, a desire to learn how to read, and help prepare children for elementary school.

A. Read aloud to your preschool children daily, at regular and spontaneous times.

Model concepts such as, how to treat a book carefully, reading from left to right, reading from top to bottom, pointing to each word as you read, title of book, author, illustrator, location of picture, first/last word on a page, etc.

B. Read a variety of books to your preschool children.

1. Read nursery rhymes to your child. It will help your child learn the rhythm of our language. After your child has heard the rhyme several times, pause before your read the couplet (word that rhymes with the previous word) and let your child provide the word. Mother Goose Rhymes can often be found in the JP section at the library under “Mother.”
2. Read folktales and fairytales to your child. Use your voice to become the characters in the story whenever possible. Parents show that reading is enjoyable when they make books come alive for their children. Ex. The Three Billy Goats Gruff
3. Read books which offer extension activities. These books will get your children actively involved in the reading process and show that reading is lots of fun!
See attached list with ideas.
4. Read books which have a rich vocabulary. These books will develop a child’s listening comprehension which is extremely valuable when children learn how to read and comprehend themselves. Ex. Amos and Boris by William Steig
5. Read books with repetitive text which your child can participate in through a shared reading experience. Shared reading will help create a bridge between a parent reading aloud and the child’s ability to read independently. Teachers often use this technique with big books.

6. Read non-fiction books. Read books about subjects your child is interested in. I like to read books in the See How They Grow series about animals which I have read in fictional books. Ex. Read the fictional story: The Chick and the Duckling. Follow up the story with See How They Grow Chick and Duckling Days by Karen Wallace

7. Read and Sing to your child at the same time. The rhythm, rhyme, and repetition of singing encourage speech and listening skills and can help lay the foundations for later reading. Raffi is a great resource for Songs to Read such as Baby Beluga, Down by the Bay and Five Little Ducks.

8. Read books your children enjoy. Keep a list of favorites on the refrigerator. Check these books out of the library regularly. You can place a hold on these books through your local library.

9. Read books your children enjoy in a series. Ex. Sleep Out, Lost in the Storm, The Accident, The Foundling, The Washout, Ben and the Porcupine, Dark and Full of Secrets, Left Behind by Carol Carrick

These stories tell about an adventurous boy named Christopher and his dog who deal with such life experiences as, sleeping out doors for the first time, loosing a dog during a storm, a dog being hit and killed by a car, getting a new puppy, a summer storm washing out a road, swimming in a pond, and being left behind on a school field trip. These situations can bring about important discussions about safety, feelings, and trying something new for the first time.

10. Keep books in baskets in the family room or where you and your children typically “hang out.” This will give your children easy access, and remind them to read often. It’s also a good idea to have a book bag ready for those unexpected times you need to wait, and can easily pass the time by reading.

***Even after your children have learned how to read continue to read to them above their reading level.**

C. Write informal lists such as “To Do Lists” and “Grocery Lists” in front of your children.

As you are writing the list, sound out each word. Ask your child what he/she would like to add to the list. Sound out the word as you write it down for your child.

D. Write a thank-you note for your child for a gift they received.

Have your child draw a picture to go with the note. You may also want to compose the note together. Read the note back to your child pointing to each word. Then read it together or have your child read it back to you.

E. Dictation

After an outing to the park, beach etc., have your child draw a picture about the trip. As your child tells you about the picture, write a sentence or two above or below the picture. Read back your child’s sentence pointing to each word as you read. You may also read the sentence together, or have your child read it to you.

F. Audio and Video Tape your Child Reading

Tape your child reciting a nursery rhyme, singing a song, and reading a book. It will become a lifetime treasure!

