

## The Importance of Reading and Talking about Books with Preschoolers

Research shows that Children who are read to from an early age have a larger vocabulary and better language skills when they start school. They also have a greater interest in books and enjoy reading activities to a greater extent. A child's interest in reading is an important predictor of later reading achievement.

Listening to and looking at picture books provides children with many of the skills that are necessary for school readiness: vocabulary, sound structure, the meaning of print, the structure of stories and language, sustained attention, the pleasure of learning, and on and on.

It is important to read frequently with preschoolers. Children who are read to three times per week or more do much better in later development than children who are read to less than three times per week. How we read to preschoolers is as important as how often we read to them. When most adults share a book with a preschooler, they read and the child listens. We know now that In Children learn most from books when they are actively involved. Asking "what" questions, asking open-ended questions, and expanding upon what the child says are all ways to teach vocabulary and encourage children to tell more complete descriptions of what they see.

Some helpful tips:

- Young children learn best by doing things, and love to do things with YOU.
- Use lots of expression when reading aloud.
- Young children often have short attention spans and enjoy repeating favorite activities. You can read to your child and share early literacy activities for short bits of time throughout the day.
- Parents are tremendous role models—If your children see that you value and enjoy reading, they will follow your lead.
- Find time to read with your child every day. Make it a special time when you both can relax and enjoy books.
- Learning depends on repetition. It is good when children ask for favorites to be read again and again.
- Encourage your child to “read” picture books to you.
- Talk and read with your children. Reading to children is especially important in building a larger vocabulary because children hear more new words when you read books.
- Label more than just things; label feelings—yours and your child's. This will help your child express how he feels and become less frustrated.
- Explain unfamiliar words rather than replacing them with familiar ones.
- Point to words from time to time as you read so your child learns that you are reading the text, not the pictures
- Let your child turn the pages as you read a book

- If a book has a word or phrase that repeats, point to it on the page and let the child say it.