PARENT WORKSHOP: SUPPORTING EARLY LITERACY

Goal: Support parents and caregivers in promoting early literacy learning.

Use these Parenting Minutes videos, discussion questions and suggested activities to guide parents and caregivers through a short workshop that will support families in promoting early literacy skills and creating a literacy rich environment. This workshop is intended for parents and caregivers of Preschool and Pre-K children. Have fun!

SUGGESTED TIME
30 minutes

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- Chart paper and markers
- Screen for projecting Parenting Minutes videos (*you will need internet access to stream these videos)
- Copies of literacy handouts for each parent: “Early Literacy Book Bingo,” “Seven Tips for Early Literacy Learning,” and “Every Day is a Reading and Writing Day”

VIDEOS
Having Fun with Words: (https://www.wnet.org/education/video/having-fun-with-words/)
Reading with your Child: (https://www.wnet.org/education/video/reading-with-your-child/)
INTRODUCTION

Begin the workshop by allowing parents and caregivers to introduce themselves and tell how old their children are. If you’d like, include the icebreaker question: “what was your favorite book or nursery rhyme as a child?”

DISCUSSION

Introduce the goal of the workshop as a discussion about the development of early language and literacy skills for preschoolers and the importance of creating a literacy rich environment. Remind attendees that literacy involves more than just reading. Emphasize that there are many ways to help children build language and literacy skills that can be integrated into everyday activities. In this way, literacy learning can happen anytime and anywhere, always!

VIEW VIDEOS

Play the 2 Parenting Minutes videos, “Having Fun with Words” and “Reading to your Child” (each video is approximately 1:15 minutes long).
*The videos are available in English, Spanish, Bengali and Chinese

VIDEO DISCUSSION

Allow some time for comments on the video. Prompting questions may include:

- Why do you think reading with your child is important?
- Where can literacy learning take place?
- What are some things you might do to help children build their vocabulary?
- What activities might help children notice new letters and words around them?
- Did you ever consider how songs, rhymes and conversation can help lead to better reading skills?
**BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY**

Using chart paper and markers, ask attendees to brainstorm the following questions:

- What are some activities you and your children enjoy doing together?
- What are some ways you can turn everyday moments into an opportunity for building language and literacy? For instance, how can you support your child’s literacy development:
  - At the grocery store?
  - In the car or on public transportation?
  - At the playground?
  - Walking down the street together?
  - At a restaurant?

**DISTRIBUTE ATTACHED LITERACY HANDOUTS**

Allow time for attendees to read them over. [Note: There are also additional handout links in the PBS KID'S Resources for Parents and Caregivers section]

Mention that these are sample language and literacy activities and recommendations for children that they can use as inspiration when they are both in and out of the home or even on the move.

**CREATE A LETTER BOOK**

Allow parents and caregivers the opportunity to develop their own Letter Books to take home and continue learning with their children. Have parents follow the instructions below and explain that the books can be read and used in ongoing activities.

**Materials:**

- Construction Paper (cut in half into 8 1/2” x 5 1/2" pieces)
- Markers
- Hole Punch
- Yarn
Instructions:

1. Choose 14 sheets of the 8 1/2” x 5 1/2” colored construction paper
2. Stack the pages and punch two or three holes down the left side
3. String a piece of yarn through each hole and tie a knot
4. Decorate or create a title for the cover page (e.g. My Book of Letters etc.)
5. Starting with “A”, write one large letter on each page at the top or in the middle, leaving half the page blank. Continue writing one letter on each page through “Z”.
6. The letter book is now ready to be used for a variety of letter recognition and letter sound activities with children!

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Share these optional Letter Book Activities with parents. (Demonstrate to parents or have them begin a few themselves if you have the materials.) Suggest the following to parents:

1. Look through magazines or catalogues with your child and have them cut out pictures of various things they find (assisting younger children with cutting if needed). Say the names of the items and emphasize the beginning letter sounds. Ask what letter makes that sound and have the child find the letter in the book. Next have them paste the images on the corresponding letter page.
2. Children can also draw things that begin with a letter on its corresponding letter page or, if they are able, they can write words that begin with each letter.
3. Take this book with you on-the-go and see if children can spot the letters around them or find them in words or other text (e.g. “S” for stop on a stop sign).
4. Read the letter book often with your child, pointing out the letters, letter sounds and beginning sounds of words and pictures. Children will be so proud and excited to read a book that they created with you!
RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

SESAME STREET READING AND WRITING TOOLKIT

A special guide full of resources to help parents and caregivers turn daily activities into rich opportunities for talking, reading, and writing together.

PBS KIDS FOR PARENTS: HELP YOUR PRESCHOOLER GET READY TO READ
https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/help-your-preschooler-get-ready-to-read

Tips and suggestions that will help lay the foundation for future reading success.

PBS KIDS FOR PARENTS: FIVE TIPS TO MAKE READING FUN FOR YOUR CHILD
https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/five-tips-to-make-reading-fun-for-your-child

Some ideas and suggestions to make reading more fun and engaging.

SESAME STREET IN COMMUNITIES: READING AND WRITING TOPICS
https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/reading/

Nurturing an early love of reading helps kids build vocabulary and comprehension skills, which prepare them to succeed in school...and in life!

SESAME STREET IN COMMUNITIES: BUILDING LANGUAGE SKILLS TOPIC
https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/language/

Lots of rich, back-and-forth conversation with grown-ups helps kids make sense of the world and everything they’re learning about it. Language also helps children express their thoughts and lays the foundation for success in school.
PBS KIDS LITERACY GAMES AND APPS

SESAME STREET: Abby’s Sandbox Search
(https://pbskids.org/sesame/games/abbys-sandbox-search/)

SESAME STREET: Grover’s Rhyme Time!
(https://pbskids.org/sesame/games/grovers-rhyme-time)

SUPER WHY!: Super Why! Power to Read

SUPER WHY!: Alpha Pig’s Paint by Letter
(https://pbskids.org/superwhy/games/alpha-pigs-paint-by-letter/)

DANIEL TIGER’S NEIGHBORHOOD: Daniel Tiger’s Storybooks
(https://pbskids.org/apps/daniel-tigers-storybooks.html)
PARENTING MINUTES:
EARLY LITERACY PARENT WORKSHOP:

BOOK BINGO

Play this game with your children to help get them excited about reading a variety of books. This is a fun, new way to experience reading together and can help children track their accomplishments and feel like confident, successful READERS!

![Book Bingo for Every Reader](image)
Seven Tips for Early Literacy Learning
From Knowing Your ABCs to Learning to Read

By Amy Mascott

Hooray! Your child can sing the alphabet like a pro! Now what? Once your child has mastered letter recognition, what can you do to help her get on the path to literacy? Here are seven important tips to consider after your child has learned the letters of the alphabet, but before she’s reading fluently.

1. **Focus on the letters of her name.** Names are the most important words for children, so it makes sense to begin literacy learning with the child’s name. Acknowledge the “child’s letter”—the first letter of his or her name—by pointing it out whenever and wherever you see it. Then do some letter scrambles using blocks, magnetic letters or letters on index cards. Mix up the letters of the child’s name and work together to put them back in the proper order. Repeat this often with your child’s name, and then introduce “Mom,” “Dad,” and the names of siblings, friends, family and pets.

2. **Recognize each letter and know their sounds.** It’s one thing for the child to know the letters in order, but it’s a bit harder for her to recognize each letter individually. When you see “her letter” on a sign, cereal box, or book, remember to point it out. Say, “Hey! Look here! I found your letter, Maddy! Here’s an M for Maddy. Mmmm, mmmm, Maddy!”

Talk about the sounds that letters make and return frequently to easily relatable objects or things that interest the child. For example, say: “There’s a letter B for ‘blankie.’ I know you love blankie and sleep with it every night. Blankie begins with the letter B, like ‘ball’ and ‘butter’ and ‘baby bear.’ What else can you think of that begins with the B sound?”

For more ideas and tips visit pbsparents.org/summer
3. Introduce uppercase and lowercase letters. Your child will not likely be reading books that have all uppercase letters, so it’s imperative that you talk about uppercase and lowercase letters early on. Play games that involve matching uppercase and lowercase letters and spell her name using both cases.

4. Practice early writing techniques. If children practice creating several simple letters, they will most likely be able to write the majority of the alphabet. Begin with X and O and then move on to a square and a triangle. Encouraging kids to “write” on sand, paint with water, or use their finger in shaving cream will make creating these shapes fun, and before you know it, they’ll be ready to move on to the letters of their names.

5. Connect objects with words. Because reading involves creating meaning by combining words, pictures and prior knowledge, early readers lean on illustrations when reading—and that’s okay. Label everyday objects and point to the word as you say it. Play games where children connect simple words with pictures, like “cat” with a photo of a cat and “dog” with photo of a dog, etc. Model how to do it by pointing out the first letter of the word and saying the sound that the word makes, followed by the word, and then pointing to the picture.

6. Practice print referencing. Print referencing is a simple yet meaningful way to enforce early literacy skills. It involves pointing out print elements in texts: pointing to the title of the book as you read it, running your finger under the words as you read the text on a page, or talking about anything related to the text. This helps children learn the basics: every book has a title and an author (and sometimes an illustrator), and we read from left to right, followed by a sweep down to the next line. Later, consider touching on basic grammar conventions and punctuation marks, differences between fiction and nonfiction texts, and different genres (news, magazines, poetry, short stories, etc.).

7. Read, read, read! Read with your child every day, many times a day. Read books, signs, posters—anything with words. Read in the morning, in the afternoon, and at night. Read at the park, in the living room, at the pool. Read print everywhere you can find it!

Most importantly, make an effort to celebrate your child’s successes, because learning to read is something to smile about!
Every Day is a Reading Day

Exploring books and print together is fun for any child at any age both because he likes to learn new words and because he loves being close to you! Reading aloud together every day makes the biggest difference in helping him become a reader and writer.

Everyday Reading Tips:

» Let your child see you reading. You are your child’s role model, so let her see that you enjoy reading books, magazines, newspapers, and other print materials. This will motivate her to read too!

» Cuddle up! Your child loves to be close to you, and reading provides wonderful opportunities to bond and spend quality time together.

» Let your child enjoy the same book again and again. It’s an important way for him to remember information and learn new words.

» Visit the library. It’s a wonderful place for your child to find and borrow all kinds of books and magazines.

Fun & Games:

» From Trash to Treasure: Instead of throwing “junk mail” away, pick out the ones with interesting pictures and words to look at with your child. For example, you can explore all different types of tools in a hardware-store catalog!

» Surprise Notes: Write a short and sweet note or make a simple drawing (like a heart or happy face) to put into your child’s backpack or lunch box each day.

» Our Very Own Recording: Using your computer or smartphone, create a recording of a family member reading the story. This way, your child can enjoy listening to your voice anytime and follow along.

» I Spy Letters: Play a game of “I Spy Letters” by looking for letters and words around you.
Reading Together On the Go: Words Are Everywhere!

Reading doesn’t just have to happen at bedtime. You and your child can read anytime, anywhere! There are words all around you, so take time to point them out and read them together.

As you...
- walk down the street
- shop at the grocery store
- drive along the street
- eat at a restaurant
- walk through the mall
- go through a building

you might read...
- store names / traffic signs / letters
- food labels / coupons / shopping list
- traffic signs (e.g. stop signs) / street names / billboards
- the menu as you order / receipt as you pay the bill
- store names / sale banners / store directory
- exit or enter signs / restroom signs / building directory

Reading with Babies:

It's never too early to start reading with your child! She loves to hear the sound of your voice and new sounds. Letting her explore, chew on, and play with the pages can get her excited about books at an early age too!