



Early Literacy Skills – Making Books Fun

Book reading activities are incredibly important to children. Exposure to books builds important foundational skills for reading (alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, exposure to rhymes and sound play) in addition to helping to build your child’s vocabulary, understanding, and creative thinking.

Some children can be reluctant to participate in book reading activities. Below are strategies to help create positive and motivating relationships with books.

Choose the Right Book

What is interesting to your child?

Select books with bright illustrations that include your child’s interests. Select books with favorite characters or toys (example: princesses, construction vehicles, letters). Silly books like “101 bums” can be a great way to add motivation for books. Encourage your child to choose the book. It’s ok if your child wants to choose the same book many times – multiple exposures to a book can have many benefits.

Make it Interactive

Look for books with flaps, music, different textures, or items to search for on each page.

Repetitive books

Children enjoy predictable books with lines that are repeated on each page. For example: ‘Brown Bear’, ‘The Very Hungry Caterpillar’, ‘The Pout Pout Fish’ or ‘Dear Zoo’. Some books such as ‘the Napping House’ have a similar event happen on every page before an exciting ending. These repetitive books help children to predict what is coming and increase their confidence in participating in the book. Encourage your child to finish the sentence and help tell the story.

Look for Books with Songs or Rhymes

Songs and rhymes are appealing to children, help capture their interests, and help teach the concept of rhyming. Pete the Cat books can be a great way to add simple songs to your reading activity.

Let your Child Lead

If your child is not yet interested in books or does not like to have another adult involved in their reading your first step is to *read the book their way*. This might mean turning the pages the wrong way, spending most of the time talking about one page, or only getting through part of the book.



Other strategies include:

- Talk about what your child is interested in and what they are looking at – even if it's not part of the text. You can talk about the pictures instead of feeling like you always have to get through the text.
- Allow them to lead the activity by turning the pages and talking when something captures their interest. This may mean getting through the story more quickly in the beginning.
- Make it interactive: use funny voices and add physical movement. This might include stomping like a dinosaur, pretending to eat food on a page, or acting surprised or scared like a character in the book
- Engage their senses by tracing pictures on the page or touching textures in the book
- You can slowly add in text and simplify the text on the page as their interest in books grows. The first goal is to make books rewarding and fun.