



Learning to speak, read, write and communicate well begins at birth. Here's what you can do to build your children's language and literacy skills in fun everyday activities.

Point Out Print

Tip Sheet #6

Why? During the preschool years, children need to become aware of print. They learn that print is different from pictures, words have meaning, and that we read words. Children who have experience with books and print have an easier time learning to read and write.

Starting at Birth:

Share books with your baby. Babies love board books or cloth books that are easy for them to handle.

Additional Tips for Toddlers and Preschoolers:

Talk about the cover. Point out the title and the pictures and talk about what the book might be about. Soon your child will recognize favourite books.

Let your child hold the book. She can turn the pages as you read. Occasionally, use your finger or hers to follow the words as you read so your child learns that print is what we read.

Point out words. If a book that has some words that repeat, point to these words as you read and let your child say them with you.

Look for print. Print is everywhere. Point out letters and words on food boxes, signs, menus, buildings...

Talk about how print is used. Point to a stop sign and say, "We need to stop when we see a stop sign".

Additional Tips for Kindergarten Children:

Read favourite books again and again. When your child knows the story, have her pretend to read it to you.

Make books with your child. Let your child draw or cut out pictures then add print to make a book.

Write together. Make a grocery list or send a card and your child will learn that we can write what we say.

Find print. Make a game of looking for familiar words everywhere.

Learning More than One Language

Communicate, read to and teach your child in the language you speak best (Mom speaks French and Dad speaks English). Strong first language skills make it easier for children to learn another language.

Find ways to expose your child to the language(s) you want them to learn (attend playgroups, community or library programs, provide CDs and books).