



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.

Learning about Letters

Tip Sheet #7

Why?

To learn to read and write, children must understand that words are made up of individual letters and that each letter has its own name and sound. Learning to tell one letter from another involves being able to see the differences in letter shapes. Help your child learn about the alphabet during play.

Starting at Birth:

Point out shapes. Help your baby see and feel different shapes as you play together. *"The ball is round."*

Hang mobiles where your baby can see them.

Sing the alphabet song. It's never too early. This is how most children begin to learn about letters.

Additional Tips for Toddlers and Preschoolers:

Talk to your child about how things are the same or different. *"Both of these are cars but this one has a round shape and this one is square".*

Play with letters. Let your child play with a variety of alphabet toys makes learning about letters fun (alphabet blocks, magnetic or foam letters, alphabet puzzles...).

Keep alphabet play fun. Try not to make it seem like work. Your child may not be paying attention to the letters, but he is still becoming familiar with them.

Read alphabet books. Talk about the letters as you point to them. *"A is for apple. The word apple begins with the letter a. Let's listen to the sound - /a/ apple. Hear the /a/ sound?"*

Talk about the letters. Point out letters that are most interesting to your child – usually the letters of his own name. *"Ketchup starts with the letter "k". Kim starts with the letter "k" too. Let's see if we can find another letter "k".*

Additional Tips for Kindergarten Children:

Make an alphabet book together. For each letter of the alphabet, have him draw pictures or cut out pictures from a magazine, or use family photos. Be sure to print the word under each picture (A a – apple, ant, Andy...) *For more suggestions on making books with your child, please visit the Emergent Literacy link at www.sudburybeststart.ca*

Stay involved in your child's learning. Support what your child is learning in school. Talk to the teacher. Help your child complete take-home activities.