Reading and Writing Skills Begin Early

Research has shown that learning begins at birth! Children need environments that encourage healthy development and learning. All young children deserve the opportunity to succeed. Helping your child get ready for school begins long before kindergarten. Give your child a great start!

2 years–3 years:
Visit the library often with your child. Ask your child questions about the story. Look at different books. Ask your child to tell you about the pictures. Talk with your child about the cover of the book, where the story begins, and what might happen next. Encourage your child to write and draw with crayons and copy shapes you make.

3 years–4 years:
Provide your child with opportunities to follow written directions. Encourage your child to write letters, make lists and talk about letter sounds. Talk about the letters in your child’s name and in simple words. Limit your child’s TV time and look into local preschools.

1 year–2 years:
Be sure to play with your child–this is the time to repeat words and encourage your child to sing songs and learn the names of body parts. Remember your child needs opportunities to practice talking without a pacifier. Join a story group at your local library.

For more information about early literacy workshops and resources, contact PEATC.
Captivating Your Middle School Reader

As a parent, you can do so much to increase your child’s enjoyment of reading. It’s not uncommon for middle school students to complain about having to read. But problems with reading are not always due to lack of motivation. They can stem from short attention span, comprehension problems, poor reading skills, peer pressure, and other factors. Be willing to ask for help if your child is struggling. You can help your teen enjoy reading by introducing him to books and articles that excite him, and by getting him to think and talk about the subjects he likes most.

How to Create Positive Family Reading Habits

* Reading for enjoyment improves reading fluency, making it easier for your child to tackle more difficult reading demands from middle and high school academics.
* If the words are too difficult, your child may not enjoy reading. Ask your child to read a passage from a book aloud. If your child seems to stumble, find a book at an easier reading level.
* Offer a variety of reading materials: short stories, magazines, comics, how-to books, the Internet, and audio tapes.
* Keep books on tape or comics in the car for trips.
* Set an example for your child by reading every day. Choose to read instead of turning on the TV. You will be surprised how much your example makes a difference.

* Build your child’s vocabulary. For example, use a new word every day, then have your child practice using it in a sentence or a short story.
* Help your child get involved in a book club or discussion group, and try getting involved in one yourself.
* Explore ways to interact with each other by sharing facts, perceptions and opinions related to things you read. Learn to ask questions and share thoughts that promote “critical thinking.” Respect each other’s thoughts and ideas.
* Challenge your child to read the book before seeing the movie.
* Be willing to learn from your child, and express your appreciation for the gift of his knowledge and enthusiasm.

If your child is having difficulties with reading, talk to your child’s teacher for more ideas and call PEATC.

For more information or workshops on parent involvement, contact PEATC.

PEATC Workshops and Events: December 2012

Dec. 6-7, 2012 - State Special Education Advisory Committee, Richmond, VA

December 17 - Visión General del Centro de Recursos para Padres del condado de Fairfax (FCPS Parent Resource Center Overview for Spanish-speaking parents)

Dec. 19, 2012 - “Gobbledygook or Understanding: Does Your Child Comprehend What She Reads?” staff in-service training, PEATC, Falls Church, VA
The basic question posed by The Literacy Writing Connection is how is the writing of compositions, essays, short stories etc connected to the various forms of literacy for a child? Is any one form of literacy enough to get the job done?

Essentially no. Since there are a number of forms of literacy, no one form can do all that is needed. However, the exciting aspect is that the written works of a child are a key indicator as to his or her literary skills. By writing a short story, a child is exercising many different skills. For my purpose, the term ‘writing’ will be associated with today’s society, thereby involving computers as well as paper and pencil.

Of the many literacy forms including, but not limited to, Media, Global, Multi-cultural, Scientific... the ones that stand out with respect to children are Functional, Information, Mathematical and Computer.

Functional is the easiest to understand. Can the child use basic reading and writing skills to get crucial ideas across or to interpret incoming ideas in order to stay safe. By crucial we can focus on the essentials of life and expand from there. Can they communicate verbally and on paper?

Information refers to the child’s ability to understand that he or she requires additional knowledge on a subject and to go and get it. Once retrieved, can the child process and evaluate that knowledge?

And finally, can the child apply the new knowledge effectively to solve a problem or otherwise? Let’s call this the ability to research.

Mathematical is straightforward enough and does not involve higher math skills. This points to a child’s understanding of the most basic mathematical symbols and operations. You might say it also helps with drawing comparisons, such as ‘he has more than I do’ or ‘this is darker than that’. It can assist with spatial awareness as well, but we’ll leave that alone for now.

Finally, Computer Literacy. This is, in its simplest form, the ability of the child to turn on the computer, run a word processor, type a story, print it and save it for later. You would be surprised how many adults can’t do this. Let’s call it keyboarding.

If a child can produce a short story that involves any opinions, knowledge he or she did not possess before, regard for what could be considered adequate flow, balance or word volume, and get it across in a clear way; you have achieved a great victory. The child has communicated, researched, made comparisons and keyboarded to produce a meaningful story.

Focusing your attention on keeping these four forms of literacy (or parallel terminology) in good balance will build a solid foundation for learning the many complex subjects to come in their future. Try to imagine where the child would be if any one of the four forms was way out of balance. You may actually find you can apply whimsical names to each type of child.

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A father of two, and coach of hundreds, I take a special interest in the well-being of children and attempt to show parents how to guide their kids in meaningful, productive endeavors. And I am keenly aware of what might get a youth’s attention and how to hold it. For more information you can visit my website at Short-Stories-Help-Children.com

Special Apps for Special Needs

The National Institutes of Health estimates that one in five children has serious difficulties learning to read. These children are potentially among the most troubled kids in society. With early identification and a lot of help, however, children who struggle to read can flourish; without it they are at risk for failure in school and in life.

Launched in 2001, Reading Rockets is an education initiative of WETA, the flagship public television and radio station in the nation’s capital, and is funded by a major grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Reading Rockets’ mission is to take research-based and best-practice information and make it available to as many people as possible through the power and reach of television and the Internet.

The following are just a few literacy-focused apps Reading Rockets recommends:

Same Sound Spell Bound (Homophones) By NRCC Games
With this app children apply their knowledge of homonyms by determining the correct word from a list of terms with the same sound, but different spellings and meanings that best fits each sentence puzzle.

Same Meaning Magic (Synonyms) By NRCC Games
In Same Meaning Magic students help Luna and Leo, young magicians at magic school, toss word stones into the wishing well to earn gold coins and jewels by choosing the best synonym.

Aesop’s Quest By NRCC Games
Aesop’s Quest is a learning game where the student must remember elements of a story to complete a level. At the end of each story segment or level, the student is rewarded with puzzle pieces.

Opposite Ocean (Antonyms) By NRCC Games
This reading comprehension app reinforces the child’s understanding of opposites as they complete activities geared for learners with a second through fifth grade vocabulary base.

You can find more apps and learn more about Reading Rockets here:
http://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/reading101/readingapps/
The Importance of Stimulating Literacy Activities in the Classroom

The days of children being bored in class are, or should be, long gone. These days there are many free aids and resources that are available to every school or home schooled child. Reading skills are actually the most important of all because if you cannot read you really cannot function in today’s society. It is therefore important to incorporate all kinds of literacy activities into the classroom to help children learn to read well and quickly.

* To read fluently, children need to be able to recognize many words or sight. Words such as the days of the week and the months of the year, as well as all those little words such as but, get, had and so on need to be identified quickly without the child having to spend time working them out through sounding them. There are many board games and card games that help this process and make learning more fun and interesting.

* Activities that enhance reading skills can include puzzles and games that teach about certain facets of literacy such as contractions, plurals and so on. When children love to play the games they will find learning just happens almost without any effort on their part. There is no longer any need to force children to read lots of long and boring text so that they will become good readers.

* With the aid of modern technology, many classroom resources can be found to enhance lesson time and make it more stimulating. While books are still important, there are DVDs, CDs, computers, white boards, puzzles and games of all kinds, educational websites and more to be explored.

* Children love doing quizzes and competing against each other in teams or solo. Many teachers find that they do particularly well in a general knowledge quiz and enjoy taking part in it. Not only is it fun for the children, but the teacher can use such a quiz to find out just where the children are in their learning and what kinds of things they need to have more lessons about.

* Activities that enhance and aid literacy skills in children should always form a big part in every curriculum. When teachers ensure that there is plenty of variety in such games, their job of teaching is made a lot easier and the results will speak for themselves.

Slow learners will be helped with their skills to become more proficient and fast learners will be kept interested in their lessons as they forge ahead.

SOURCE:

LATINO CORNER

Entendiendo y Apoyando la lectura y la alfabetización

Los Programas de Educación Individualizados (IEPs) requieren que las escuelas midan los rendimientos académicos tanto como funcionales y usen investigaciones revisadas por expertos, a la medida de lo posible. Afortunadamente, avances recientes en alfabetización e investigación del cerebro han validado métodos efectivos para enseñar a leer y escribir a los niños. La alfabetización es imperativa para alcanzar acceso al currículo general para la educación de estudiantes con necesidades especiales. Instrucciones basadas en ordenador y en la web se están volviendo más cotidianas hoy en día, lo cual permite un currículo efectivo y hace los instrumentos de aprendizaje más accesibles. La tecnología de asistencia incrementa la accesibilidad a nuevos currículos e instrumentos de aprendizaje para todos. Al usar estos instrumentos para ganar la habilidad de leer y escribir, las personas con discapacidades pueden tener un mayor acceso al éxito.

Sitios web de lectura y alfabetización

La lectura es fundamental: Semillitas de aprendizaje
http://www.nrf.org/kids/leadingtoreading/es/leadingtoreading.htm

¡Colorín, Colorado!
http://www.colorincolorado.org/?langswitch=es

BrowseAloud
http://www.browsealoud.com/page.asp?pg_id=80319