

## Early Literacy

There are many ways you can help your child learn to read. The most important thing you can do is READ, READ, READ! Read to your child; read with your child; let your child read to you.

### How to help at home:

1. **Give your child opportunities to use and appreciate spoken language** by speaking, singing, and reading to your child. Increase the length of your sentences as your child grows. Play games that require following verbal directions, and sing fun songs and poems.
2. **Give your child opportunities to expand his or her use and appreciation of printed language** by seeing you read everyday. Read aloud things such as invitations, grocery lists, and notices. Give your child books as gifts.
3. **Give your child opportunities to hear good stories read aloud** by taking your time when reading to your child. Let your child hold the book, look at the pictures, and point at the words while you read. Talk about the story and relate it to personal experiences.
4. **Give your child opportunities to use the building blocks of spoken language** by teaching your child to pick out rhyming words. Help your child identify and separate sounds at the beginning of words.
5. **Give your child opportunities to use the building blocks of written language** by identifying the letters in alphabet books. Allow your child to cut out letters from the headlines of newspapers. Provide your child with pencils and paper so he or she can learn to write the letters and his or her name.
6. **Give your child opportunities to learn the relationship between spoken language and written language** by making letter sounds and having your child write the letter that matches the sound. Point out words that start with the same letter as your child's name. Play letter/sound matching games by saying a letter sound and having your child find the letter on a card.
7. **Give your child opportunities to learn decoding strategies** by touching each letter and saying the sounds when you come to new words. Hide words around the house and have your child find and decode them.
8. **Give your child opportunities to practice accurate and fluent reading** by providing decodable stories. Allow children the time they need to work on a word before offering to help. Give praise and encouragement as you listen to your child read.
9. **Give your child opportunities to read a wide assortment of books** by encouraging your child to read books and other written materials related to his or her interests. Set aside a special time during the week that is just for reading.
10. **Give your child opportunities to develop new vocabulary through reading and direct instruction** by selecting many kinds of books and stories to read to your child. Talk to your child about his or her day and use more difficult words to express meaning. Discuss the meaning of these words.

Children need to see adults read every day. If you value reading, your child will see its importance.

Texas Education Agency (1997, Fall). *Beginning reading instruction: Practical ideas for parents*.  
Austin, TX: Author.