

## Here, There and Everywhere! Everyday Ideas for Literacy Development

For many child care providers, the idea of developing literacy skills involves reading books or expensive toys that teach kids how to read. What's important to know is that literacy development can take place anywhere, even without books, and certainly doesn't have to be expensive! Try some of the following to help develop the literacy skills of the children you care for no matter where you are:

- Talk, talk, talk! Talk whenever you are transitioning, as you're making a meal or snack or going about daily routines. Talk about what you are doing and why and what you plan to do next.
- Answer children's questions honestly and earnestly. Sometimes you may feel too busy or like you don't have an answer, but try your best to answer their questions. Avoid the tendency to say, "I don't know" and instead say, "I don't know, but let's find out the answer together." And then make sure you do!
- Ask children questions too. Be sure to ask each child about his or her day and how he or she is feeling. Ask which centers he or she visited, something new he or she learned, or what his or her favorite part of the day was. Record this information for parents too.
- Teach children new words. Explain what a new word means when you say one, read one, or you hear one together. Use words the children know to explain what the new word means. Sometimes it is helpful to use the word in a sentence too.
- Make up tongue twisters. Kids love silly tongue twisters, especially when they have their names in them. Make up a silly sentence with a child's name in it and have as many words as possible start with the same sound as the first sound in the child's name. An example would be "Tucker took ten tangoing turtles to town Tuesday."
- Play word games. Say a letter of the alphabet and have the children tell you a word that begins with that letter. As kids are learning the alphabet, you may want to start with A and end with Z. For kids are already fairly familiar with their letters, try mixing it up! Start with M and move to B, then Q, then F, and so on.
- Sing with children. Ask children to share the songs they sing at home or sing some of your favorites from your childhood. You can sing songs using a favorite children's cassette or cd too.