

Here, There and Everywhere! Everyday Ideas for Literacy Development

For most parents, 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 your child's literacy skills no matter where you are:

- Talk, talk, talk! Talk whenever you are waiting in line, as you're making a meal together or even sorting laundry. Talk about what you are doing and why and what you plan to do next.
- Answer your child'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 your child's 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 your child questions too. Be sure to ask your child about his or her day and what he or she did in school. Ask which centers he or she visited, something new he or she learned, or what his or her favorite part of the day was.
- Teach your child new words. Explain what a new word means when you say one, read one, or you hear one together. Use words your child knows 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 your child's name in it and have as many words as possible start with the same sound as the first sound in your 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 your child 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 that 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 your child. Ask him or her to teach you the songs learned in school or sing some of your favorites from your childhood. You can sing songs from the radio (make sure they are appropriate for your child) too.