

Building Language and Literacy at Home

For very young children, try these simple activities:

Name things in their environment, such as bottle, Mommy, Daddy, blanket, diaper, book.

Describe routines in their environment.

“Let’s sit in your high chair so that you can eat some peas and carrots.”

Sing songs about routines in the environment.

“Your diaper is wet; your diaper is wet.

Now we’re going to change it, and you’ll be dry.” (To the tune of “Farmer in the Dell”)

Talk about what you are doing during routine activities, such as changing diapers, feeding, getting dressed, etc.

“First let’s put on your red striped T-shirt.

This T-shirt comes over your head first.

Put your arms up, up, up.

Next let’s put one arm through the sleeve.

Now we have to put the other arm through the sleeve.

Let’s pull the shirt down over your stomach. Tug, tug, tug.

Now you’re wearing your red-striped T-shirt!”

Read simple board books and discuss pictures.

Brown Bear, Brown Bear by Bill Martin *Goodnight Moon* by Marcia Wise Brown

DK color, shape, texture, animal, and simple objects books nursery rhyme books

As your child gets a little older, you might want to encourage your child as follows:

Talk about pictures in books.

“What do you see in this picture? What do you think is happening?”

Listen to a variety of books.

fairytale, nonfiction (with real photos), nursery rhymes, books with favorite story book characters, feelings, or family stories

Compare and contrast objects with words such as *big/little, hot/cold*, etc.

“My shoes are big. Your shoes are little.”

“Your teddy bear is soft. The rock is hard.”

Listen for environmental sounds to build listening skills.

While riding in the car, turn off the radio and listen for sounds heard outside.

“Listen, I just heard the big truck go by. What do you hear?”

Use more detail when describing things.

“The wagon is red and shiny. It is made of metal. It holds things.”

Listen to longer books with more developed story lines and vocabulary.

Count, sort, and pattern common objects, such as clothing, silverware, etc.

Look for letters of the alphabet in environmental print, such as stop signs, cereal boxes, and store signs.