

**Storytime Programs Based on Research  
From Public Library Association and  
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's  
Early Literacy Initiative**

**Pre-Readers: 4 and 5 Year Olds**

*It is the responsibility of the library staff to communicate to parents/caregivers their key role with their children in early literacy development, including providing information and the tools to assist them in this role.*

**What is early literacy?**

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read or write. Young children's early literacy skills are the building blocks for later reading and writing. Children learn these skills before they start school, beginning in infancy. From birth throughout the preschool years, children develop knowledge of spoken language, the sounds that form words, letters, writing, and books. This is the beginning of the abilities that children need to be able to learn to read and write in school.

<b>Research Says</b>	<b>What Parents/Caregivers Can Do</b>	<b>Application to Storytime♦</b>
<p>Parents are the best "teachers" to get their children ready for learning to read</p> <p>Children who are read to 3 times a week or more do much better in later development than children who are read to less than 3 times a week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young children often have short attention spans but enjoy repeating favorite activities. Parents/caregivers can share these activities frequently for short amounts of time throughout the day.</li> <li>• Parents/caregivers know their children well and can take advantage of when their child is in the "mood".</li> <li>• Early literacy is what children learn about reading and writing before they learn to read and write. Children learn these skills before they start school.</li> <li>• Share books/read with your children as often as possible.</li> <li>• Share a book with your child every day. Even just a few minutes is important.</li> <li>• If your child loses interest, try another time.</li> <li>• Encourage your child when s/he pretends to read</li> <li>• Visit the library on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Ask the library staff to suggest ways to share books with your children.</li> <li>• Ask the library staff to suggest good books to share with your children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate to parents/caregivers: the importance of reading to their children at least 3 times a week</li> </ul> <p>that they are the best teachers to get their children ready to read because young children often have short attention spans but enjoy repeating favorite activities.</p> <p>that they can share these activities frequently for short amounts of time throughout the day.</p> <p>that they are the best teachers to get their children ready to read because they know their children well and can take advantage of when their child is in the "mood".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When sharing/reading books explain characteristics of books that work well for this age.</li> <li>• Provide books suggestions through booklists/handouts</li> <li>• Display a variety of books/cassettes/cds appropriate for the parent/caregiver to share with the child</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(continues next page)</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display books you have shared in storytime. It is more likely that books read in storytime will be re-read at home.</li> <li>• Provide ways (for ex. handouts) for parent/caregiver to continue early literacy activities at home</li> </ul>
<p><b>Phonological awareness</b> is the ability to hear and manipulate the smaller sounds in words. Most children who have difficulty in reading have trouble in phonological awareness.</p> <p>Ability to say whether or not two words rhyme  Ability to say words with sounds or word chunks left out  Ability to put two word chunks together to make a word</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play word games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Do two words rhyme</li> <li>--Say words with pause between syllables and have child guess the word</li> </ul> </li> <li>--Categorize words by their first sound</li> <li>--Make up "silly" words by changing the first sound in a word</li> <li>--Say words with chunks of sound left out, for ex. "say bat without "buh"</li> <li>--Put two parts of word together to made a word, like "cow" and "boy"</li> <li>• Relate sounds to child's personal interests and his/her name</li> <li>• What words start same as child's name</li> <li>• Say rhymes, do fingerplays with child</li> <li>• Read nursery rhymes and poetry with your child</li> <li>• Play music for your child</li> <li>• Sing songs together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include books and songs that rhyme</li> <li>• Include song(s) in storytime to help children hear syllables</li> <li>• Include music and rhythm to help children listen to distinct sounds/syllables</li> <li>• Read stories with alliteration</li> <li>• Play rhyming game</li> </ul> <p>Communicate to parents/caregivers the importance of rhymes, songs, and music in language development. In addition to being fun:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of being able to break down words into parts as a skill for reading; being able to rhyme supports this skill</li> <li>• Demonstrate a game that emphasizes phonological awareness</li> <li>• Importance of rhyme through books that rhyme, poetry</li> <li>• Importance of rhymes, fingerplays, songs and music as fun ways to help children with phonological awareness</li> <li>• Songs and music helps children with rhythm and with breaking words into syllables</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vocabulary</b> is knowing the names of things. It is an extremely important skill to have when they are learning to read. Vocabulary begins to develop at birth and continues to grow throughout the child's life. Most children enter school knowing between 3,000 and 5,000 words.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read/share books with your child often; books often expose children to things outside their familiar environment</li> <li>• Ask your child about the book you are reading together, instead of just having the child listen to you reading the story</li> <li>• Ask your child open-ended questions about the pictures; questions s/he must answer with more speaking than pointing or that can be answered with just yes or no</li> <li>• Ask your child to take turns with you in telling about the pages of a picture book that the child knows well</li> <li>• Use sensory-rich, descriptive language, adding adjectives to enrich vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use these guidelines in your storytime and <b>explain to parents/caregivers</b> the importance of expanding vocabulary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use specific vocabulary for concrete objects</li> <li>Give words tangible experiences; words have meaning</li> <li>To concrete objects, to actions, to emotions</li> <li>Use sensory-rich, descriptive language, adding adjectives to enrich vocabulary</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Choose books that will expand the vocabulary of the children; can discuss unfamiliar words before sharing the book or use a familiar word following the unfamiliar one</li> <li>• Talk about book before reading it, giving children an opportunity to talk, using some open-ended questions</li> </ul>

		<p>(continues next page)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have children repeat words that may not be familiar, in a fun way or as a game</li> <li>• Choose books that will expand the vocabulary of the children. Some words are used more in written form than in spoken form.</li> <li>• Allow time for children to speak, but do not force them to</li> <li>• Have children join in saying repeated phrases in books</li> </ul>
<p><b>Print awareness</b> includes learning that writing in English follows basic rules such as Flows from top to bottom and left to right That the print on the page is what is being read by someone who knows how to read</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps child recognize own name</li> <li>• Points out signs</li> <li>• Share books/read with your child often</li> <li>• Parent/caregiver lets child point to words in a book that the child is familiar with while parent/caregiver reads the words</li> <li>• Follows text with finger from time to time</li> <li>• When child tells you an incident or story, write it down using the child's words</li> <li>• Point out signs in the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have words to rhymes and songs written out so adults can follow and children can see. Point to text from time to time as you say the words</li> <li>• Each time a book is opened make a point of holding up the book and showing the cover. Open the book as it is facing the children, not facing the librarian. State the title of the book and the author.</li> <li>• From time to time point to the text as you say the words, especially if word(s) are repeated</li> <li>• Nametags: write out name as child says it; spell it as you write it</li> <li>• Communicate to parents/caregivers ways they can support print awareness with their children (see column 2)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Narrative skills</b> include being able to understand and tell stories and being able to describe things. They are important for children in order for them to be able to understand what they are learning to read.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents/caregivers can encourage narrative skills by encouraging child to recount events in order, for example what happened at a birthday party or on a trip to McDonald's</li> <li>• Parents/caregivers should encourage child to tell you about things that the child has done that have a regular sequence to them; for example, the steps involved in eating breakfast</li> <li>• Parents/caregivers can use books that have a sequence that is easy for the child to follow. When the book has been read together many times, the child can try to tell the story in sequence</li> <li>• When child recounts an incident or story, write it down using the child's words</li> <li>• Use objects for children to tell stories</li> <li>• Talk with children using open-ended questions, not questions that can be answered by pointing or by yes or no</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reads story without much interruption so that children hear entire sequence; helps them learn story structure</li> <li>• Choose some fingerplays or stories that are cumulative or sequential. Repeat them so that children can say what comes next.</li> <li>• Choose at least one story that is cumulative or sequential. Re-read the story with the children saying what comes next.</li> <li>• Before reading a book talk about it or theme and allow children to relate it to their experiences</li> <li>• Give children opportunity to respond orally to simple questions about story and/or pictures, but do not force them to speak</li> <li>• Encourage children to predict what might happen before or during reading book.</li> <li>• Use props, flannel board, etc. for children to retell a story</li> <li>• Allow time for children to relate story to own experiences</li> <li>• Use props, flannel board for children to retell a story</li> <li>• Use creative dramatics as a means for children to retell story</li> </ul> <p>Communicate to parents/caregivers ways they can encourage narrative skills (see column 2)</p>

<p><b>Letter knowledge</b> includes learning that letters are different from each other, that each letter has a name, and that specific sounds go with specific letters. Example: child's ability to tell the name of the letter B and the sound it makes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents/caregivers can point out and name letters in alphabet books, picture books or on signs and labels.</li> <li>• Help your child write and read his/her name and other familiar words using magnetic letters, crayons or pencil and paper, writing in sand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include enjoyable alphabet book in storytime, naming the letter and the sound it makes</li> <li>• Include song like BINGO or others that name letters</li> <li>• Allow children who can to write their own nametags; when appropriate let child spell name as you write it</li> <li>• Have foam or magnetic letters available for play</li> <li>• Communicate with parents/caregivers fun ways that they can support letter knowledge with their children; offer handouts/books</li> </ul>
<p><b>Print motivation</b> is a child's interest in and enjoyment of books. A child with good print motivation enjoys being read to, plays with books, pretends to write, asks to be read to, and likes trips to the library.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make shared book reading a special time for closeness between you and your child</li> <li>• Encourage your child when s/he pretends to read</li> <li>• Let your child see that you enjoy reading</li> <li>• Make visits to the library on a regular basis and make them fun outings. Attend programs for you and your child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the <u>enjoyment</u> of reading, using books or big books</li> <li>• Have parents/caregivers join in as you read or repeat after you.</li> <li>• If program is presented outside the library encourage attendees to visit the library; going to the library supports a child's interest in and enjoyment of books. Consider providing an incentive.</li> <li>• Communicate with parents/caregivers: Share books when parent/caregiver and child are in a good mood.</li> </ul> <p>Positive interactions around books will lead to more regular and frequent book sharing experiences. Conversely, negative interactions make the young child less interested in books and reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have words to rhymes and songs written out so s can follow and children can see. Point to text from time to time</li> <li>• Provide handout that extends activities to the home</li> </ul>

◆ All examples will not be used in every storytime

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