

**Practicing the Scripts**  
**Every Child Ready to Read @ your library**

**Early literacy**

You may have heard this term. What is it? The definition we are using is this--early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read or write.

Early literacy is NOT the teaching of reading. It is laying a strong foundation, so that when children are taught to read, they are ready. There are six skills that all help our children get ready to learn to read.

One of them is **print motivation**. Print motivation is a child's interest in and enjoyment of books. Why is this skill important? Children who enjoy books and reading will be curious about how to read. They will read more! Studies show that when the interaction around the book is negative—"sit down and listen, I'm reading to you"—then the child associates books and reading with something negative. It is more important for the interaction around the book to be positive than it is to be long.

One of them is **phonological awareness**. This is the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words. So, for example, being able to rhyme is one part of phonological awareness. Why is this skill important? Children who can hear the smaller parts of words will be able to sound them out more easily when they later learn to read.

One of them is **vocabulary**. Vocabulary is knowing the names of things—of things, of feelings, of concepts, and later of ideas. It is important for children to know the names of things for a couple of reasons. First of all if they know lots of words, they will be better able to understand what they read. Also, when they are sounding out words, they know they've "got it" if they have heard the word before.

One of them is **narrative skills**. Narrative Skills is the ability to describe things and events, and to retell stories. This skill is important because it will help children understand what they read. This skill starts with being able to talk. As children get older we want them to be able to tell things in order, in sequence.

One of them is **print awareness**. Print Awareness is noticing print everywhere, knowing how to handle a book, and knowing how we follow the words on a page. Why is this important? If children already feel comfortable handling a book, then they won't have to think about it so much when they are learning to read. It is important for children to know that print has meaning, even when they see a sign as you are driving along (McDonalds or Pizza Hut) and they "read" it That is part of print awareness!

One of them is **letter knowledge**. Letter Knowledge is knowing that letters are different from each other, that the same letter can look different, and that letters are related to sounds.  
What is the most important word to a child? His or her name! So start with the letters in your child's name. Don't worry about starting with the beginning of the alphabet.