

What Can I Say? From Skill to Parent/Caregiver

Sometimes when we are trying to become comfortable with new information, it helps to have a kind of “script” of what we want to tell others until we have internalized what we have learned.

Perhaps some of these suggestions will be helpful. They are NOT meant to be limiting. They are meant as a beginning.

ET = Early Talker (newborn - 2 years) **T** = Talker (2 - 3 years) **PR** = Pre-Reader (4 - 5 years)

Early Literacy Skill	Communication to Parent/Caregiver
Print Motivation	<p>Print motivation is an interest in and the enjoyment of books and reading. It is one of the six early literacy skills that researchers say are important for children to know before they learn to read. (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>Researchers have noted one of the six areas of early literacy as “print motivation”. This means having an interest in and enjoying books. Children are more likely to have print motivation when they are involved with the story. As I share the books today, you’ll see different ways you can keep your children interested as you read with them. (T,PR)</p> <p>Having your child say a repeated phrase with you throughout the book keeps him/her involved. This is one way you support print motivation.(T,PR)</p> <p>Choose books that YOU enjoy. Your child picks up on your feelings and understands the enjoyment of books and reading. (ET,T, PR)</p> <p>Young children love to hear the same book read over and over and over again. It is only natural that you would get tired of reading the book. Remember that children learn by repetition. Their brains NEED it. Perhaps that will help as you read it yet again.</p> <p>Young children love to hear the same book read over and over again. It can get boring for YOU. Think of different ways you can talk about what is happening in the book, maybe relating it to your child’s experiences. This might help make it more enjoyable for you. (T,PR)</p> <p>Don’t worry about whether or not your child can see this big book. We’ll read it together. Your child loves the sound of your voice. We use a slightly higher pitched voice and speak more clearly and slowly than we do when speaking with adults. This is called “parentese”. Researchers find that speaking in “parentese” keeps your child’s attention longer than using your regular voice. Your child will respond to your voice and to the rhythm of language. Watch your child as we read the book together. (ET)</p> <p>You may often hear the phrase, “Read with your child 15 minutes a day,” or “Read with your child 20 minutes a day.” No one expects young children to sit and be read to that long at one sitting. It is more important for the interaction between you and your child to be positive than it is to be long.</p> <p>Researchers have found that if the interaction around books is a negative one with impatient words or negative feelings, then the child associates reading with that negative feeling. So . . . the more you share books and talk together, the better, but do it when it can be a positive experience for you and your child. If your child is not in the mood, look for few minutes when your child is quietly alert, not too tired and not too active. (ET,T)</p> <p>Babies use books as they would any other toy. They put them in their mouths and chew on them. They pull at them and sometimes tearing them. We may say “Ohhhhh, noooo, don’t put that in your mouth.” But we want our children to feel comfortable with books. So, just take the book gently from your child’s mouth and start showing him/her the pictures. If he/she still wants to chew on something, give him/her a rattle or something. (ET)</p> <p>Keep some books in their toy box. Having a positive association with books, print motivation, is one of the skills that researchers have shown is an important part of a strong foundation for reading. (ET)</p> <p>One important skill that children need before beginning formal reading instruction is actually more of an attitude. It is called print motivation, or interest in and enjoyment of books. One of the ways of encouraging this is to use books as a jumping off place into children’s imaginations. (PR)</p>

<p>Print Motivation cont.</p>	<p>When you are reading a book with your child, don't worry about whether you get to finish the book or not. Engage your child as much as you can, with your voice, by asking questions, talking about the pictures. When your child loses interest, just set the book down and continue another time. By following your child's lead, you can help make booksharing a positive experience. This supports print motivation, a love of books. (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>When we play with the ideas that we find in a book, we are helping to make the story part of the child's life. By encouraging them to play along with the story we are helping them incorporate the words, ideas, and energy of the story into their play. By making books and their stories fun, we are helping to motivate them to want more. (T,PR)</p> <p>[When you use a non-fiction book in your storytime] Many children enjoy books about true things, non-fiction books more than they like books of stories. Our non-fiction books are not shelved with the picture books. I would be happy to point out where books are on the topics your child is interested in. Following your child's interests helps develop print motivation. (T,PR)</p> <p>You may not realize it but by sharing books you and your child enjoy you are helping to develop your child's print motivation, one of the six early literacy skills. (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>Promoting literacy does not mean creating a school-like setting in your home, but rather taking advantage of the opportunities in your everyday life. (T,PR)</p> <p>For about 60% of our children learning to read in school is difficult. If they have a positive experience about books and reading, they will be more likely to keep trying to learn to read even when it IS hard, because they have a good association with books and reading. (T,PR)</p>
<p>Phonological Awareness</p>	<p>Researchers have found that one of the six early literacy skills is phonological awareness. This is the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words, like rhyming, playing with syllables or parts of words, and hearing beginning sounds of words. (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>Today I'll be pointing out some activities we are doing that support early literacy in the area of phonological awareness. [Point to poster if you have one in the room.] This is the term that researchers give to the ability to break words down into parts. You will also be able to do some of these activities at home. (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>Hearing the rhythm of language and making the sounds of animals, both of these contribute to phonological awareness, hearing sounds in words, one of the skills that researchers have found helps with reading later on. (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>Nursery rhymes are fun to sing and say with your children. Because they rhyme they also help children develop phonological awareness. This is the word educators use for the ability to play with parts of words. Research shows this is an important skill for reading.</p> <p>Even though young children do not understand the meanings of the rhymes, it is important for them to hear them. By six months babies are already able to recognize the sounds of the languages they hear. They also are losing those sounds they don't hear even though they were born able to learn to make them. (ET)</p> <p>Rhyming is one way that children learn to hear that words are made up of smaller parts. By doing rhymes with them you are supporting phonological awareness. This skill helps them when they later try to sound out words to read. And it's fun too. (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>Hearing and learning animal sounds helps children hear different kinds of sounds. Animals make different sounds in different languages. (ET,T)</p> <p>Having your child hear and make the sounds of the animals is one enjoyable way to help develop phonological awareness, to eventually be able to hear the smaller sounds in words. (ET,T)</p> <p>Reading rhyming books and sharing rhymes both help your child hear parts of words. You can play "I Spy" like this—Say, "I spy something in this picture that is (red) and rhymes with (loot)." You can play this game with any book or picture, or even as you are walking or driving around. (T,PR)</p> <p>You may not realize it, but singing songs with your baby/ toddler helps them hear words being broken up into smaller sounds. This skill is part of phonological awareness and later helps them with reading. (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>Sing to your children even if you don't have perfect pitch. In songs, each syllable has a different note. Without really thinking about it, children are hearing words being broken down into parts. This helps them when they have to sound out words. (ET,T,PR)</p>

<p>Phonological Awareness cont.</p>	<p>Today we are going to be changing the first sounds in words, and breaking words into their smaller parts. These skills are part of phonological awareness, the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words. These are skills that will help the children once they have to try to sound out words later when they learn to read. (PR)</p> <p>Phonological awareness involves understanding that words are made up of smaller sounds. When they have his skill, children are able to think about how words sound, separate from what they mean. (PR)</p> <p>You may not realize it but playing word games like the ones I have shown you in storytime today helps your child develop phonological awareness! (T,PR)</p> <p>Changing the beginning sound in a words helps children see understand that words are made up of sounds and that those sounds can be manipulated. This will help them when they need to sound out words. (PR)</p> <p>At home, have your child think of other words that start with the same sound as the first sound in your child's name. Children learn best by doing activities that have meaning to them. ((PR)</p> <p>When we separate a word into its sounds it is called <i>segmentation</i>. Playing with this when they are little will help them later when they are bigger and have to break words into syllables as a way of decoding words. Clapping out the parts of words is one way to help your child hear the parts of words. (PR)</p> <p>Take advantage of every opportunity to play with rhyme and the sounds of words. Have fun this week as you rhyme around town and combine sounds too! (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>Take advantage of every opportunity to play with words. Make up riddles or play "I Spy" as you wait in the doctor's office, or anywhere else. Not only will your children learn, but also it will lessen the boredom and tension of waiting! (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>Research has shown that children who play with sounds of words in their preschool years are better prepared to read when they get to school. (PR)</p> <p>[Clap out names of children and adults as an introduction] Clapping names helps children hear words divided into parts. This fun activity helps develop their phonological awareness, breaking words into parts. This is one of the skills researchers say is important for children to be able to learn to read. (PR)</p>
<p>Vocabulary</p>	<p>Vocabulary is knowing the names of things, not just things, but concepts, feelings, and ideas. Researchers have found that children with a large vocabulary, to have heard a lot of different words, find it easier to read when that time comes. (ET, T, PR)</p> <p>Today I'll be pointing out some activities we are doing that support early literacy in the areas of vocabulary and narrative skills. [Point to poster if you have one in the room.] I'll also be suggesting some activities you can do throughout the day. (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>Today I'll be pointing out some activities we are doing that support early literacy in the area of vocabulary.[Point to poster if you have one in the room.] This is the term that researchers give to knowing the names of things. You can see what we do here in storytime, and you may get some ideas of what you can do with your child throughout the day. (T,PR)</p> <p>Our youngest children learn words that name things they can see, like milk, bottle, juice—things they can see. As children get older they understand words for feelings and concepts, and as they get older still, they understand words for ideas. (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>Go ahead and use words that are unfamiliar to your child. Don't replace words in books that they may not understand, just explain them.</p> <p>What happens when YOU don't know the word either? What a great opportunity to show your child what we do when we don't know something! There's the dictionary, of course, but also you might be able to figure out what the word means from what else is going on, from a picture, or if not, feel free to call the library to find out! (T,PR)</p> <p>[Can use when demonstrating dialogic reading] Today I'll be pointing out some activities we are doing that support early literacy in the areas of vocabulary and narrative skills. [Point to poster if you have one in the room.] Researchers have found that these are two of the skills that are part of a solid foundation for being ready to read. Vocabulary is knowing the names of things. Narrative skills is being able to describe things and events and to tell a story. (T,PR)</p>

Vocabulary cont.

[Handout board books]

When you read with your child, don't JUST read the words. Talk about the pictures. Describe what is going on. Leave time for your child to say something back. [Demonstrate.] This type of interaction sets the stage for increased vocabulary and narrative skills, which research has shown, help when your child begins to read. Go ahead and do it now with the rest of the book. Keep it cozy and fun. If your child gets tired of the book, just stop and do something else. (ET)

. . . This is a good rhyme to do as you are bathing or diapering your child. Use different parts of the body and words for different actions to help increase your child's vocabulary. Even though your baby does not understand everything you say, it is important for them to hear you speak. The wider variety of words they hear, the larger their vocabulary will be, and the more easily they will later be able to read. (ET,T)

We just went through the book from start to finish, feeling the rhythm of the text and noticing the sequence between each action. Now let's go through it again. This time we'll read it but also talk about what is happening in the pictures, the way you would with your baby or toddler. This way of sharing books helps your child develop vocabulary and narrative skills. (ET,T)

Talking about the pictures with your child, naming them, talking about what sounds they make, telling them something about what is in the pictures will help them later as they try to understand what they read. (ET,T,PR)

One way you can help increase your child's vocabulary is by "narrating your day." That simply means to say what you are doing while you are doing it. Or you can say what your child is doing as s/he is doing it. You might even add little stories about when you were a child. By doing this, you are exposing your child to lots of language! Leave your child time to respond, even if you cannot understand what s/he is saying. (ET,T,PR)

When you do this rhyme at home add on parts of the body that we may not often mention, such as elbow, wrist, eyebrow. (ET,T)

As you can see, nursery rhymes expose children to words that are not used in everyday conversation. Researchers have found that children who know rhymes find it easier to learn to read. (ET,T,PR)

As you can see, nursery rhymes expose children to words and rhythm that are not used in everyday conversation. Researchers have found that children who know rhymes find it easier to learn to read. (ET,T,PR)

By using specific names for things, like cat and kitten, you help your child learn new words and you help them understand differences between similar things. This is one way to increase their vocabulary. (ET,T)

You can help children understand words they may not know by offering a little explanation as you go along. If you prefer, you can explain these words before you start the book. Research notes that the more words your children know and understand, the more vocabulary they have, the easier it will be for them when they begin to read. (T, PR)

This book (*A Place for Ben* or *On Mother's Lap*) allows you to talk about feelings. You can turn to a page and talk about what is happening in the picture. How does the child feel? You help your child talk about how he feels if you use the words for both what your child is feeling and what you yourself are feeling. This develops vocabulary and also helps your child talk about what he feels. (T,PR)

Children like to hear books over and over again. We can point out different words or pictures at different times. This will help them build their vocabulary. (T,PR)

Ask us to help you find some non-fiction/true books on things your child is interested in. We can all learn new words and new things together from these books! (T,PR)

Even in a fairly simple story, there are many words that we don't use in everyday conversation. [Give an example, like *Dinosaur Roar*.] Even if you don't talk about the meaning of all the unfamiliar words, your child hears the words in the story and get an idea of what they mean from hearing the story and from the pictures. (T, PR)

Children's books have about 31 rare words per thousand words. That's 3 times more than in conversation and 25% more rare words than what is on television programs. The more of these rare words the children know, the easier it will be when it comes time for school and formal learning. [Read Aloud Handbook] (ET,T,PR)

<p>Vocabulary cont.</p>	<p>The more words kids know, the better off they will be when they learn to read. Research tells us that it is easier to read a word that is known to you. You can use books to help expand your child's vocabulary. Look for words that have the same meaning, or are synonyms. You can also look at words that are opposites, or antonyms. (PR)</p> <p>When we talk about a story after reading it with a child, we are helping him or her remember what he or she heard, and to review it. It helps to reinforce new vocabulary words because they have the opportunity to use the words again. (T,PR)</p> <p>When you go to the store, look at the names of different brands. Lots of them (like Hefty trash bags) have meanings aside from the product itself. Talk about the meanings of these words. (T,PR)</p>
<p>Narrative Skills</p>	<p>Narrative skills is the ability to describe things and to talk about events and tell stories. Researchers have noted this skill as one of the six early literacy skills that will help your child be ready to read. (ET,T, PR)</p> <p>Narrative skills deals with expressive language—talking. For the baby, leaving time for your baby to babble back to you when you talk is the beginning of narrative skills. For the child is just learning to talk, being patient while they say words is important. When your child is talking fluently, the next step of narrative skills is to help them recount stories or things that have happened in order, in sequence. (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>We just went through the book from start to finish, feeling the rhythm of the text and noticing the sequence between each action. Now let's go through it again. This time we'll read it but also talk about what is happening in the pictures, the way you would with your baby or toddler. This way of sharing books helps your child develop vocabulary and narrative skills. (ET,T)</p> <p>The language used in story books is different from what we use when we are speaking. Stories also have a certain structure, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. By exposing your children to storybooks, you help them become familiar with the way language is written. Reading and sharing stories with children is fun. It also will help them to know what to expect when they read stories themselves. (ET,T,PR)</p> <p>[Can use when demonstrating dialogic reading] Today I'll be pointing out some activities we are doing that support early literacy in the areas of vocabulary and narrative skills. [Point to poster if you have one in the room.] Researchers have found that these are two of the skills that are part of a solid foundation for being ready to read. Vocabulary is knowing the names of things. Narrative skills is being able to describe things and events and to tell a story. (T,PR)</p> <p>Narrative skills, which includes the ability to retell stories, is one of the early literacy skills that researchers say children need to understand what they read. Using things you have around the house as props can help children remember a story and retell it. (T,PR)</p> <p>When you ask your child questions, give them extra time to think and to answer you. Talking back and forth uses four different parts of the brain, so it takes them some time to form their responses. (T,PR)</p> <p>Acting out stories or parts of them, having young children use their whole bodies, helps them internalize and understand what is happening in the story. They will be able to tell the story back to you, especially their favorites, which they like to hear over and over again. (T,PR)</p> <p>When we talk about a story after reading it with a child, we are helping him or her remember what he or she heard, and to review it. Using expressive language to retell a story is developing their narrative skills. This will help them later to understand what they read. (T,PR)</p> <p>Remember to summarize stories after you read them. You can also help children get the idea of putting activities in sequence, by telling them what you are going to do. For example, first we are going to story time, then we are going to pick out some books, and then we are going to go home. (T,PR)</p> <p>Practice telling and retelling stories. If you let your child watch television, talk about the shows that you watch together. This will help them later to talk about what is happening in books. (PR)</p> <p>Children enjoy talking about what they have read. It is a good way to engage them in conversation, and for them to remember the story they have read. The ability to retell a story is an important skill to learn before going to school. (PR)</p> <p>As you go about your day together, talk about what you are doing. Summarize with your child what you did this morning, or yesterday. Talk about your activities in order that they occurred. This will help them to become familiar with the idea that their activities, like stories, have a sequence. (PR)</p>

Print Awareness

Print Awareness is knowing how to handle a book, and noticing print all around us. It is one of the skills researchers say is important to know before a child learns to read. (ET, T, PR)

Print awareness is recognizing that print has meaning. Print is all around us. Words represent things. (T,PR)

Today I'll be pointing out some activities we are doing that support early literacy in the area of print awareness. [Point to poster if you have one in the room.] This is the term that researchers give to being aware of how books work, and how we follow the words on the page. You can see what we do here in storytime, and you may get some ideas of what you can do with your child throughout the day. (ET,T,PR)

When children are young, they treat books as they would any other toy. This means they put them in their mouths and explore them by pushing and pulling and sometimes tearing them. Sometimes people keep books out of reach of young children. Of course there are going to be some books that are special that will need to be kept out of reach, but allowing children to explore books is how they learn to handle them. Keep some in their toy box. If you have a book shelf, keep some face out, not spine out, so they can see the pictures on the covers and be drawn to them. By doing these things you help your child develop print awareness. They are learning how books work, with pages that turn. This is one of the skills that researchers have shown is an important part of a strong foundation for reading. (ET)

When you are choosing books for young children, they like ones that have pictures of things that are familiar to them. So, here is one with a picture of an apple. You can talk about the apple in the picture, it's color. Then get a real apple and show it to your child. Talk about how it tastes—sweet, how it feels—round and smooth, how it feels when you bite it—crunchy. It's too hard for you to eat because you don't have teeth yet, but you eat applesauce, which is made from apples! By showing the child the real object, you are helping them realize that pictures represent real things. Later they will also understand that printed words represent real things. (ET)

You can run your finger under the words of the title as you say it. This helps children understand that you are reading the text, not the pictures. Do this only with the title or a repeated phrase, so it doesn't get in the way of sharing the story. (T,PR)

When we read picture books to children, researchers have found that 95% of their attention is on the pictures. By occasionally pointing to the words in the book, you are helping them realize that it is the text we are reading, not the pictures. Pictures are wonderful, of course! (PR)

You can name the letters and their sounds based on things you are doing throughout the day. Using signs, like STOP signs, even when they cannot recognize the letters, they are still recognizing the symbol. They can understand that print has meaning. (T,PR)

Here is a story(for ex. *Bunny Cakes*) where writing is important to the story. You can have your child draw pictures and "write" lists. As you walk around or drive around, point out signs and what they say. They become aware that print is all around us. (T,PR)

Hold book upside down or backwards. See if children notice that it is upside down. If not, point it out. Children need to know how to hold a book, which is the cover, which is the back of the book. This is one fun way to find out if they know this. (PR)

You can help your children see the relationship between the written and spoken word by using what is called *environmental print*, or words that are part of our everyday life, like signs and labels. This is part of print awareness. (T,PR)

Writing can be very motivating. It helps children make the connection between the spoken and the written word. Encourage your children to write. You could begin by making a shopping list together the next time you go shopping. (T,PR)

Letter Knowledge

Letter knowledge is knowing that letters are different from each other and that the same letter can look different ways. It is also knowing that letters relate to sounds. (ET, T, PR)

Researchers have noted one of the six areas of early literacy as "letter knowledge". This means recognizing letters and the names of the letters. Alphabet books are one way to help children become aware of letters and how they look. It is best not to quiz your child on the letters.

Many alphabet books do not have a story that goes in order. When you share that kind of alphabet book with your child, you needn't read it through from beginning to end. Let your child choose a page that looks interesting to him/her. Talk about the letter and the picture(s) that go with it. (T,PR)

The letter your child is likely to be the most interested in is the first letter of his/her name. Make sure you point out that letter when you come to it (in an alphabet book), or you might even start with it! (T,PR)

Young children learn through their senses. Touching, smelling and tasting are as important as hearing and seeing. Give them opportunities to feel different textures and shapes. What feels the same, what feels different? These introductory opportunities help them later when they are trying to make out differences in the shapes of letters and when they try to figure out what is the same and what is different among them. So, now as we play with these shakers, let them feel the shape and the texture. If their hands are too small to hold them, then roll them on their bodies. (ET)

By using specific names for things, like cat and kitten, you not only help your child learn new words, you also help them understand differences between similar things. This sets the stage for them seeing differences in many things, including later, differences in the way letters look. (ET,T)

What is the beginning of letter knowledge for a very young child? It is not doing letter flash cards with your baby. Your baby learns through all his/her senses. Letting your child feel shapes will later help him/her make out shapes in letters. Talking to your child about what is alike and different in pictures or in the things you see around you helps your child distinguish similarities and differences which will also help later in distinguishing differences in letters. (ET,T)

You can name the letters and their sounds based on things you are doing throughout the day. Even using signs, like STOP signs, when you are driving or walking around helps children learn letters. (T,PR)

Before children learn actual letters, they are aware of shapes. Before they have the coordination to hold a crayon and write they can move their whole arms and bodies. Let's see you make a circle shape with your whole body! (T,PR)

Showing children letters based on subjects they like follows the child's interest. They are more likely to remember the letter than if you drill them. (PR)

Point out letters and their sounds wherever you go. The most interesting letters for most children are the ones in their names, so begin there and have fun! (PR)

For most children drilling is not fun. Children can learn letters in many ways that are fun and that will keep their attention longer. For example, they can make letters using their bodies, then their fingers. They can draw letters in the water when they take a bath, with chalk on the sidewalk, or with playdough. Keep it fun. Talk about the letters in your child's name or in the name of a topic s/he might be interested in (trucks, volcanoes, kittens)

Research indicates that children benefit most from learning both the sound and the letter name, at the same time. When you teach them their letters, explain that the letter is called ____ and makes the sound _____. Start with letters that have meaning to your child (like his/her name). (PR)

Children learn best by doing. Remember that letter play should be meaningful. Show letters in the context of objects and words that they know and can touch or play with. (PR)