

You are your child's first teacher.

Parents are tremendous role models. If your children see that you think reading is important and enjoy it, they will follow your lead!

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they actually learn to read.



- **Talking.** Children learn language and other early literacy skills by listening to their parents and others talk. As they hear spoken language, they learn new words and what they mean.
- **Singing.** Singing slows down language so children can hear the different sounds that make up words. This helps when they begin to read.
- **Reading.** Reading together increases vocabulary and general knowledge. It also helps children learn how print looks and how books work, and it helps children develop an interest in reading.
- **Writing.** Reading and writing both represent spoken language and communicate information. Writing begins with scribbles and other marks. Encourage this by providing many opportunities to draw and “write.”
- **Playing.** Playing helps children think symbolically so they understand that spoken and written words stand for real objects and experiences. Play also helps children express themselves and put thoughts into words.

Research on early literacy and brain development indicates that it is never too early to start preparing children for reading and school success. Children who have been read to and talked with from an early age have a larger vocabulary, better language skills, and a greater interest and familiarity with learning and books.