

LITERACY



Literacy development is a **vital part of your child's overall development**. It's the foundation for doing well at school, socializing with others, developing independence, managing money, and working.

But before your child learns to read and write, they need to develop the building blocks for literacy – the ability to speak, listen, understand, watch and draw.

And as your child gets older, they also need to learn about the connection between letters on a page and spoken sounds. For this to happen, they need plenty of experience with:

- pictures and objects – how you can use words to talk about them
- letters and words – their shapes, sounds and names sounds – how words can rhyme, begin and end with the same letters, be broken up into parts like syllables, be formed by blending different sounds and so on.

You can help with all these areas of your child's early literacy development by:

- Communicating with your child
- Reading together
- Playing with rhymes and other sounds with your child.
- Copy the sounds your baby and child make.
- Sing with your child.
- Talk with your child about the everyday things you're doing and seeing together.
- Talk about feelings and whether your child is happy or sad. Help them by giving words to describe emotions. This can help them understand how others feel too.
- Share stories with your child. You could even take turns creating a story together.
- Emphasize the different parts of words or different letters to help your child understand that words can be broken down.
- Listen to your child. Follow their lead and talk about things they want to talk about.
- Repeat mispronounced words with the correct pronunciation. For example, if your child says 'pasghetti,' you can say, "Yes, we're having spaghetti for dinner."

The great news is that **you can do this in ways that are fun** for both of you!



FAMILY LITERACY ACTIVITIES

1. Alphabet knock down

This fantastic letter recognition game is especially recommended for kids who love knocking things over. Preparation only requires a pool noodle, some popsicle sticks and letter stickers. Once you've made the letters on their pool noodle feet, give your child a ball, call out a letter and see if they can knock it down!

2. Letter matching archeology game

Drop a few magnetic letters onto a cookie sheet. Cover them with flour. Give the kids a paint brush to carefully 'search the site' for hidden letters.

3. Mini alphabet sensory bins

Tape the focus letter on the front of a box and fill it with objects whose name begins with the letter.

4. Snowball throw alphabet game

Paper, tape and ping-pong balls are all you need for this game of 'snowball' throwing. Tape a bunch of letters to a wall, call out the sounds and have your kids throw the snowball at the letter represented.

5. Number match-slap game

A deck of cards and some duct tape can transform any wall into a correspondence and number recognition system. 'slap' a pre-taped card to its matching card on the wall.

6. Words with ping-pong balls

Golf tees stuck in a Styrofoam base create the perfect platform to interchange different letters written on ping-pong balls. 'Dig' becomes 'pig' with just one switch!

7. Salt tray writing

The title of this activity explains it all. Children get to write (letters, numbers or whole words) in their own tray of salt.

8. Sorting number stickers

Draw a grid on a piece of paper and place a number in each box. Provide your child with a sheet of number stickers and let them move the numbers into the box with the matching number. After all of the numbers are used up, encourage them to write each number themselves in the corresponding box.

9. Alphabet rocks

If you (or your kiddos) have the time to collect 52 rocks, this uppercase and lowercase literacy activity could begin in the great outdoors. Wash the rocks and write an uppercase letter on one side, with the corresponding lowercase letter on the opposite side. Then show words or pictures on index cards and challenge them to re-create the word.

10. Sensory messy play

Letters drawn out with whipped cream on tinfoil begin this activity. Provide the students with sprinkles and other cookie-decorating accessories and let them decorate their letter.

