



Family 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.

One of the easiest ways to show your child the importance of reading is to make a special place to store your child's books.

Young children love to use their imaginations to create stories to go along with pictures. One of the earliest literacy skills children develop is the concept of sequencing, or telling a story from start to finish in order. One way to practice this skill at home is to create your own picture books or books without words. Using photos, pictures from magazines or your child's drawings, books can be created and placed in the home library for easy access.

Storytelling: Talk about Family Adventures or Family History

One of the best ways to help foster family literacy in the home is to encourage all family members to engage in storytelling. Not only is storytelling a great way to share family history, but it is also a great way to engage all members of the family -- especially those who are building literacy skills regardless of their age. Start by having an older member of the family tell a story about a major family event (wedding, birthday, graduation). Afterward, ask a younger member of the family to retell the story in his or her own words.

Writing Notes: Connect Family and Friends

Learning to read and learning to write go hand in hand. It is important to practice and encourage writing skills with young children and those new to learning a language. One way to encourage writing practice is to have family members leave notes for one another on a regular basis. Leaving a note in a lunch box, taping a note to the mirror in the hallway or slipping a note under a pillow are great ways to reinforce the importance of writing to communicate information. Children should be encouraged to send notes at every stage of their development -- from scribbles to sentences.

Another way to encourage written communication between family members is to send each other text messages. This is a great way to help young children keep in touch with distant relatives or friends. Working with an adult, have the child attempt to text a short message. If the child has typed the message without help, the adult can text a translation of the message underneath it.

Visit the Library as a Family

Visiting the library together is a great way to encourage family literacy activities. Libraries often have books in several languages as well. Adults and children can improve their literacy skills by reading books in the family's first language and then reading the same book in English. By doing this, family members will build vocabulary, the ability to learn new words, and the adults will be able to ask the children questions about the pictures and predict what will happen next. Families should also visit the library to connect with community literacy projects, storytelling, tutoring and reading clubs.

Resources:

English Language Center 1544 N 200 W, Logan, UT
Tremonton Library 210 N Tremont St, UT
Oneida Library 31 N. 100 W. Malad, ID
Larsen-Sant Library 109 S 1st E, Preston, ID
Hyrum Library 50 W. Main, Hyrum, UT

Soda Springs library 149 S Main St, Soda Springs, ID
Montpelier Library 138 N 6th St, Montpelier, ID
Logan Library 255 N Main St, Logan, UT
Brigham City Library 26 E. Forest Street, Brigham City, UT