

Talking Matters

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Helping your child to reach their potential



Goal: Sharing Books

Books introduce children to new worlds. When you read to your child, you are helping their mind grow and develop. You are also enjoying the chance to snuggle up and share the fun of reading together.

The Best Things about Books

Book reading is a special time for you and your child. Books connect your child to the world- their world and new worlds. They transport your child to interesting places and situations, many of which your child has never seen.

One of the best things about books is that the pictures and words are always there to read again and again. Unlike speech which ‘disappears’ as soon as we finish talking, the stories and words in books come back to use the same way each time we read the book. This makes learning new words and ideas much easier for your child.



The earlier you begin to read and tell stories to your child, the sooner reading will become an important and enjoyable part of their life. Reading aloud to your child is the most important thing you can do to build the knowledge that your child needs to learn to read. Try to make reading part of every day. Take a book along with you wherever you go.

The Right Book for the Right Time

Children will enjoy and learn books in different ways at different ages.

- Babies believe books taste better than they look so cloth and cardboard books are the safest
- Toddlers like books that they can feel or smell or do things with such as flap books. They also like to name pictures of things that they know
- As your child gets older introduce simple action sequences and stories. Children like rhyme, rhythm and repetitive lines.

Turn Book Reading into a Conversation

Allow your child to lead by taking the time to...

- Observe what your child does with the book
- Wait if your child wants to look at something
- Listen carefully to the sounds or words your child makes
- Remember it is OK to
 - Just talk about the pictures
 - Change the words
 - Put your child’s name in the story
 - Focus just on a page that interests your child
 - Read a favourite book over and over again



Sharing Books

This handout has been compiled using the Hanen books “It Takes Two to Talk” by Jan Pepper and Elaine Weitzman (2004), and “You Make the Difference In Helping Your Child Learn” by Ayala Manolson, Barbara Ward, and Nancy Dodington (2007).

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Adapting to share with books means...

- Finding a comfortable place to read face to face, on the floor, on your lap, in a chair, at the table
- Take turns to share with your child
- Imitate and interpret your child's sounds and actions

Adding new experiences and words means...

- Imitating and adding a word or action
- Making the words come to life by acting out
- Repeat, repeat, repeat
- Adding a new idea



Making your Own Books

Sometimes the books that children love the most are homemade books. A homemade book is extra special for your child because it can be all about them and because they can help you make it. This creates wonderful opportunities for your child to communicate and take turns with you. As you write the words beside the pictures, tell your child what you are writing. Better still, ask your child what they want you to write.

Ideas for homemade books :

- Picture books of things your child likes. You can use magazines, catalogues, drawings or clip art
- Photo albums of your child, special people and thing they have done
- Surprise books with flaps that open
- Your own stories about your child or yourself

Children love to have their books read over and over. You can get books at libraries, garage sales, second-hand book shops or from friends.

Reading with your child is something that you will both enjoy and that will help your child learn a great deal about the world. Try to read often and to read the same books many times. This gives your child a chance to learn from all the repetition. For a child, reading the same book again and again makes it feel like an old friend. This familiarity gives your child the confidence to try to express themselves. Reading the book with you creates a strong connection between books and being close to you – a connection that can help your child enjoy books for the rest of their life.



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