



Family Literacy Tip Sheets

Literacy and Language

- Literacy begins at birth—long before children start school.
- Even babies are ready to start learning about language and books.
- To learn to read, children need to first experience language.
- First comes **experience**, then comes **understanding** and finally **language**.
- Children learn language best through interaction with others. They take cues from facial expression, intonation, inflection and environment.
- Children's earliest and best learning happens when they feel loved and cared for—at home, with their families.
- Literacy, learning and healthy child development are interconnected.
- A strong understanding of any language is the best start for children's literacy.
- Speak **with** your children, not **at** or **to** them.
- Use open ended questions (not just yes/no questions) with your child to find out what they think, and to check for understanding.
- Don't forget to **listen** to what your child has to say!
- Rhymes, chants, songs and storytelling create a rich environment for language development. Use any language you want!
- Children learn through **rhythm, rhyme** and **repetition**.
- Book sharing is a way to explore a world of beauty, imagination and magic with children.
- By reading **with** children, you are helping them develop skills they will use forever.
- It's never too early or too late to talk, sing, and read with your children.
- Literacy does not begin in school—it begins at home, in families!

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Developed by the Centre for Family Literacy with support from the Parent-Child Literacy Strategy, Community Programs, Alberta Government.



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Signs of Reading and Writing Development in Young Children*

Reading:

- Showing interest when someone reads
- Turning pages
- Pointing to pictures
- Pretending to read
- Naming letters
- Joining in or repeating phrases of a familiar story
- Asking what a word says or asking where a certain word is on a page
- Picking out letters, such as those in their names, or words on a page

Writing:

- Watching closely when another person writes
- Scribbling
- Making scribbles that look a bit like letters
- Telling you what a scribble says
- Producing what look like words for others to read
- Writing labels for objects
- Making lists
- Using their own spellings for words

*(*Children will show these signs of literacy growth across the preschool and early school years, depending on how much experience they have with language, books and writing.)*

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