



Parental News

Stepping Into the Future

Vol. 11 No. 2, Winter 2009

Let's Read Together

Reading with your children is a great way to spend time and connect as a family. Sitting together in a cozy chair gives you a break from daily activities and time to enjoy a story together. It's great to be able to laugh at a silly idea or look at a beautiful drawing in a book. The more you read, the more your children will begin to grow their interest in books. How can you nurture their interests? *The University of Illinois Project FLAME Family Literacy Curriculum* talks about six ways to make reading an enjoyable experience for you and your children:

1. Sit close to your children
2. Let your children take control
3. Make sure your children can see the book
4. Ask your children questions
5. Answer your children's questions
6. Relate the book to your children's lives

Now that you have some ways to make reading fun, how do you find books that your children will love to read? When a child says, "Read it again!" you know you've found a good book. Here are a few examples to help you find exciting books for your children, no matter their age.

Infants and toddlers

Books for the youngest children have to be about more than just a fun story. To keep their attention, books should have simple words and something fun to play with. Books with fabrics and textures to touch, a finger puppet to tell the story, or a mirror to look into will keep them hooked. *Spot's Touch and Feel Day* by Eric Hill is an example of a story with things to do and great pictures to look at.

3 to 5 year olds

To catch preschoolers' attention, books should be exciting, with more pictures than words, and have stories that encourage them to participate. Stories that are silly, with interesting pictures, or with songs to sing along will really keep them focused and coming back for more. Rhyming stories or books with funny made-up words are also great at keeping preschoolers focused. For a silly story that will have preschoolers giggling while they read, try Moe Willems' *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*

6 to 8 year olds

School age children are starting to read independently and want "big kid" books. They love to look at books that talk about their favorite things, whether that's animals, sports, dinosaurs, or art. When an adult reads to them, they can listen for longer periods of time and pay attention to more detailed stories with interesting characters. However, when they're reading on their own, it's best to start them off with books that have words they already know. As they gain confidence, they can move on to more challenging books. For beginning readers, try a book like *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Joffe Numeroff.

Next time you see a book at the library that catches your eye and it makes you want to read more, your children will probably enjoy it too.



UIC Center for
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
LITERACY
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A Message from the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services



Dear Parents,

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services is the new department that combines several of the City's former human service departments, including the Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services. This new department provides us with a great opportunity to better serve the families of Chicago through a variety of coordinated services that will support the lives of our residents, particularly those most in need, from birth through the senior years.

This edition of Parental News is filled with activities and ideas that encourage early literacy fun through every day events. Going to the grocery store is a good opportunity for your children to help you find specific foods like apples, while looking for different letters on the various signs. At home, ask them to help you sort out and organize the groceries by shape and size. A trip to a museum is another chance for literacy by reading the signs together on your children's favorite

exhibits. When you get home, have your children draw pictures about what they saw at the museum and include a sentence that describes the experience.

Do you and your family have library cards? Stop by your local library and find out how your children can sign up for their own cards. Make a regular family date to go to the library, pick out books, go to story time, or just sit and read together in the children's section.

We hope this newsletter, filled with activities and ideas, will have you finding new ways to encourage your children's literacy skills in this season of chilly weather!

Mary Ellen Caron, Ph.D.
Commissioner



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Every Day Ways to Learn

While walking down the street the other day, I noticed a child and his mother walking in front of me. The boy was looking over at the street by an area that had been dug-up. It looked like a sewer or water pipe was being fixed. The boy walked closer to the area and started asking questions about the hole. "What is it? Why are they doing it? How did they make that big hole?"

Children can be very curious about everything around them. We all learn new ideas through seeing, hearing, talking, and acting on objects. Children often need to use all their senses to understand new information. How do children learn? Let's look at a few every day ways:

- Some children love to tell stories and learn by playing rhyming games with words. On your way to school, talk about the day and what you plan to do.
- Physically playing with letters, making a letter shape using their bodies, or dancing to songs helps children learn.
- For children who love to sing, learning is easiest when they can tap a rhythm to the ABCs, make songs about different letters, or clap out new words.
- Children begin to learn by handling real objects. Playing with blocks and identifying shapes or comparing sizes supports math skills.
- Measuring ingredients for a recipe, matching animals, or playing games with dice help children explore number concepts.

Asking questions and having conversations about every day things are natural learning opportunities. These every day activities will give you time to play together and help your children feel more confident in their ability to learn about our world.

From Our Readers...

We asked some parents and educators to tell us how they help their children build their literacy skills. Here is what they said:

"I have them act out and mimic the alphabet, use their fingers to spell out a letter and then make the sound of the letter. We also read 3 or 4 books together."

**-Gloria King
grandparent and parent**

"You have to keep children moving. We read a story about dinosaurs and, whenever they heard the sound of 'd', they had to move around like dinosaurs. We also play rhyming games."

**-Latarsha Winners
parent and kindergarten teacher**

"We use menus and clipboards so the children can pretend to be in a restaurant. They can walk around and take orders from each other, look at the menu, and practice writing."

**-Elizabeth Gracia
grandparent, parent and teacher aide**

"I encourage the children to write their own personal story and incorporate it in a book of their own."

**-Paula Murray
preschool teacher**



Nancy reads a book she wrote and illustrated.

SEND A LETTER

Next time you talk about a far-away friend or family member, why not have your children write a letter? Even if they can't write all the words, they can draw a picture of themselves, the family, or a story they want to tell. When they're done, you can write the words they tell you under each picture. Then show them how to fold the letter to fit it into an envelope, how to write the address and your return address on the envelope, where to put the stamp, and where the nearest mailbox is to send the letter. Not only are they sending a note to a loved one, but you're helping your children learn that words and letters can be written down to communicate important information.



Recipe for Reading

Cooking is a great chance to practice literacy skills. Using visual recipes with pictures of basic items, beginning readers can practice cooking and doing things in order. Here is a recipe that you and your children can make together. It's tasty, healthy, and easy to make.

Yogurt Parfait

1



2 SPOONS



YOGURT



into



CUP

2



2 SPOONS



GRANOLA

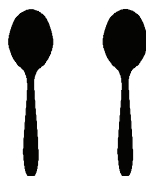


into



CUP

3



2 SPOONS



FRUIT



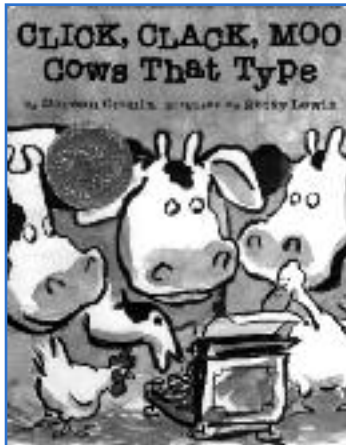
into



CUP

Use a clear plastic cup to see the beautiful layers and enjoy the tasty treat!

From the Book Corner



Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type by Doreen Cronin

Farmer Brown's cows find a typewriter. When they figure out how to write letters on it, his problems begin. Find out what happens when Farmer Brown refuses to meet their demands in this silly barnyard tale.

Together We Are Together: Children's Dictation as Poetry by St. Brigid's Head Start Children



This book has pictures and stories written by preschool students. The poems cover topics like food, friends, family, and feelings. Children will be excited to see a book written and illustrated entirely by children their own age.



The Giant Hug by Sandra Horning

Owen wants to send a birthday hug to his Granny who lives far away. He decides to send her a hug through the mail and the whole post office helps him make sure the hug gets delivered.

Foamy Letters!

Did you know that shaving cream can be a great way to practice the alphabet? Put a fist sized amount of shaving cream on a table your children can reach. Roll up their sleeves and help them spread a layer of foam on the table. Then show them how to use their fingers to write in the foamy fun. Can they write their name? They will get great practice identifying letters while also learning to control their fingers and hands. When they're done, clean up is easy and the foam can be wiped away with water. Your children will have fun working on their letters and the clean up will be fun too!

STORY MOBILE

A great visual way to tell a story is by making and hanging up a story mobile. You will need some paper, crayons or markers, yarn, and a hanger to create it. Ask your child to tell a story by drawing pictures and writing words on small pieces of paper. You can write down the words that they don't know. Next help your child attach the pictures and words using different lengths of yarn. Then hang the story in order with the pictures from the beginning of the story on the shortest strings and later pictures on longer strings. Ask your child to tell other family members or friends the story with the mobile. Finally, be sure to hang up the mobile in a place that your child can tell visitors all about it.

Winter and CPL

The Chicago Public Library (CPL) is celebrating winter as the perfect time to grab a book and get cozy with some great family read-alouds. Just 20 minutes a day of reading aloud to children helps give them the start they need to become lifelong readers. Check out these and other great titles at your local Chicago Public Library and be sure to visit them online at chicagopubliclibrary.org.

Winter/Snow

Avalanche Annie: A Not-So-Tall Tale by Lisa Wheeler; illustrated by Kurt Cyrus

Bear Snores On by Karma Wilson; illustrated by Jane Chapman

Froggy Gets Dressed by Jonathan London; illustrated by Frank Remkiewicz

Polar Bear Night by Lauren Thompson; illustrated by Stephen Savage

Tacky the Penguin by Helen Lester; illustrated by Lynn Munsinger

The Three Snow Bears by Jan Brett

Black History Month

By My Brother's Side by Tiki and Ronde Barber; illustrated by Barry Root

Dizzy by Jonah Winter; illustrated by Sean Qualls

Goin' Somewhere Special by Patricia McKissack; illustrated by Jerry Pinkney

Martin's Big Words by Doreen Rappaport; illustrated by Brian Collier

Read and Rise by Sandra Pinkney; photographs by Myles Pinkney

Thunder Rose by Jerdine Nolen; illustrated by Kadir Nelson

White Socks Only by Evelyn Coleman; illustrated by Tyrone Geter

Free Workshops for You!

Did you know that the Chicago Center for Early Education (CCEE) will be hosting free workshops for parents and educators this spring? The workshops will focus on topics like math, science, and literacy for preschoolers and school-age children. In addition, CCEE has added an educational workshop entirely in Spanish. There will be trainings to develop your computer skills in Word, Excel and PowerPoint as well. For more information on how to register for these free workshops, call CCEE at (312) 733-3134 or look at their Web site at www.uic.edu/educ/ccee under the What's New section for the details.



Week of the Young Child

It's time to celebrate our young children! The Week of the Young Child 2009 will be April 19-25. This celebration of children, their learning, and development is an opportunity to focus on the needs of young children all over the country. Schools throughout Chicago will be hosting events, working with their students on special activities, and encouraging parents and the community to support the needs of young children. Talk to your teacher today about how you can help celebrate the Week of the Young Child.

Parents as Advocates

Literacy and learning don't just happen during the school year. They happen all year long! Now is a good time to start planning for summer programs that will encourage your children to keep reading and writing, even when school is out. Here are local agencies that will be offering educational summer activities:

Chicago Public Library

Local Chicago Public Library branches, as well as CCEE, will be participating in the Summer Reading Program in June 2009. There will be activities, raffles, prizes, and other fun reading programs at all of the branches. To learn more, visit your local library or call (312) 747-4780.

Chicago Park District

The local public parks offer various summer outdoor programs. Children of all ages can learn about gardening, local animals, environmental issues, team sports, and even camping through the Park District's summer programs. On-line registration begins April 20 at chicagoparkdistrict.com or in person at your local park on April 25.

Mayor Daley's Keep Kids Learning

Through this summer program, public schools offer extended summer school schedules for all students – those required to attend and those just interested in attending summer academic programs. Students receive academic support to prepare them for the next school year as well as social and outdoor recreational activities. For more information on this summer program, call (773) 553-3590.

Easter Seals

For children with special needs, Easter Seals offers summer programs for children 3 to 13 years old. These programs develop social and emotional skills through hands on learning activities. Easter Seals also offers summer sports and swimming programs, weekend field trips, and other supportive programs for children and families. For more information, Easter Seals can be reached at (312) 432-1751.

COUPON

Looking for a new way to support your child's literacy skills? Come by the Chicago Center for Early Education with this coupon for a CD with great children's music.

The music will have your children singing, dancing, and tapping their toes while they are learning.

Chicago Center for Early Education
1900 West Van Buren, Room 2611
Chicago, Illinois 60612
(312) 733-3134

Supplies are limited. One coupon per adult.

Resources, Education and Training for Parents

FAST Learning Centers offer family literacy programs and services, which include GED, English as a second language, computer literacy and family literacy programs for Head Start or Child Care parents.

Family Start Learning Centers (FAST)

FAST at Garfield Human Services Center
10 South Kedzie Avenue
(312) 746-5416

FAST at King Human Services Center
4314 South Cottage Grove Avenue
(312) 747-2354

FAST ESL Central
1640 West Roosevelt Road, Room 611
(312) 996-9361

FAST ESL North
1650 West Foster Avenue, Room 1652
(773) 561-5667

FAST Family Literacy Outreach Office (FLO)
1640 West Roosevelt Road, Room 619
(312) 413-3252

Project SOAR (Sharing Opportunities and Activities for Reading)

Supports the development of literacy among preschool children in Head Start programs, as well as supports employed parents and teens as they develop their own literacy, leadership, and employability skills.

1640 West Roosevelt Road, Room 618
(312) 413-2654

AmeriCorps Programs

FAST is always interested in talking with parents who want to serve their communities while earning a living allowance and a \$4,725 education award. Call Ruby Camacho at (312) 355-4227

Chicago Center for Early Education: resources for parents and professionals

provides resources and training materials based on current research and best practices to promote high-quality education of young children.

1900 West Van Buren, Room 2611
uic.edu/educ/ccee
(312) 733-3134

Finding Child Care

earlychildhoodchicago.org

Action for Children

actforchildren.org
(312) 823-1100

Links:

Chicago Department of Family and Support Services
www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Chicago Park District
chicagoparkdistrict.com

Chicago Public Library
chipublib.org

Family Events in Chicago

Northwest Side Irish Parade

March 8, Noon
6633 W. Raven St.

St. Patrick's Day Parade

March 14, Noon
Columbus Dr. from Balbo Dr.
to Monroe St.

South Side Irish Parade

March 15, Noon
104th St. and Western Ave.

Mayor Daley's Kids and Kites Festival

May 2, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Montrose Harbor in Lincoln Park

Cinco de Mayo Parade

May 3, Noon
Cermak Rd. and Damen Ave.
to Marshall Blvd.

Memorial Day Parade

May 23, Noon
State St. and Wacker Dr.



ABCs OF LITERACY

Here are a couple of quick tips to keep literacy an every day event at your house:

A is for All the Time! Reading and writing are something you can model for your children or do with them all the time. Just seeing you read a book or magazine each day will encourage your children to do the same.

B is for Books, Books, Books! Keep books around your house for your children to read with you or just look through on their own. What are your children most interested in? Be sure to keep lots of books around the house that match their interests and they'll be looking at books every day.

C is for Change it Up! Tired of reading the same stories, singing the same songs, and playing the same games? Keep literacy exciting for you and your children and they will want to do it more and more. Read through Parental News for some new literacy ideas or visit your local library to get some new stories.