



Pathways to Success

Helpful Strategies for Parents and Caregivers of Young Children

Using Storybooks to Build Language (3-6 years)

Reading and telling stories are important skills for children as they go through school. Stories help improve children's listening, speaking and writing skills. Stories are also a good way to learn new things about the world. Books introduce children to many new concepts, events and experiences. These experiences help to build a child's vocabulary.

There are many fun ways you can use storybooks with a child. Here are a few suggestions:

- Start reading with a child at an early age. Birth is not too soon!
- Begin with a good book. Good books talk about things that are interesting and/or familiar to the child and have good pictures.
- Read regularly with a child. Bedtime is always a good time for stories but there are many other times that are good for reading. For example, you could read with a child while waiting in line at a store. Keep a book or two in the car or in a backpack. You will be ready to read a page whenever you have a chance.
- Read s-l-o-w-l-y with lots of expression in your face and voice.
- Sit face to face or side by side with the child so you can see the same pictures, and the child can see your facial expression while you read.
- Read simple stories the child can memorize, so they can fill in the words as you read together.
- Read the same story many times. A child learns best when they hear a story over and over again. A child will enjoy knowing a book by heart!
- Ask questions encouraging the child to think. Ask why and how questions like, "Why do you think he did that?" or "How did that happen?"
- Ask questions encouraging the child to predict what will happen next in the story. Ask questions like, "What do you think will happen next?"
- Have fun! A child will learn reading is fun and it provides a chance to learn something new. Make reading a habit.