

Understanding and Sharing Language

Language and literacy skills are words that indicate the way we express thoughts with written or spoken words. Help your child learn proper English by speaking in complete sentences as much as possible. Carry on conversations about the things you like to do. Increase your child's vocabulary by reading a wide variety of stories and going to new places such as a park or beach, a new store or restaurant, the zoo or a museum. Knowing letters and the sounds they represent are important, but other literacy skills are important too.

Here are some activities for you and your child that will help build broad-based literacy and language skills:

- ♥ "Read" signs in your neighborhood. Traffic signs, and store or



restaurant logos are examples of environmental print that your child may recognize and point out to you.

- ♥ Write your child's name on the inside tag of clothes. Help your child learn to distinguish her name from the names of other family members.
- ♥ Point out the name of the author and illustrator

when you read a story to your child. Try writing and illustrating a story of your own together.

- ♥ Let your child help you make a grocery list. Cut out pictures from newspaper circulars that represent a few of the items on your list. Let your child "read" the pictures to you when you are in the store. If possible, show your child how to check off the items you have purchased. Ask your child, "Can you remember 3 things we bought?"
- ♥ When you empty the dishwasher, let your child sort the flatware into groups of dinner forks, salad forks, soup spoons and teaspoons. This skill is similar to distinguishing between the shapes of different letters.

- ♥ Point out and name different shapes in your everyday activities.
Focus on one shape at a time. For example, look for things that are a circle, and point out tires, drawer pulls, buttons and bottle caps.
- ♥ Point out alphabet letters in familiar signs and labels.
- ♥ Draw with chalk on the sidewalk.
- ♥ Make sounds that are in the stories you read together, such as wind, animals, and mechanical sounds. Change your voice to represent different characters.
- ♥ Memorize nursery rhymes and songs together.
- ♥ Leave out words or phrases from a story or rhyme and see if your child can remember them.
You can fill in for your child if help is needed.

