

Early Literacy

Tips for Infants

At Home

- **Talking.** Talk to your baby as you go about your day, even if they can't respond with words yet. Encourage, listen and respond to your baby's chatters and babbles as much as possible to boost language development.
- **Singing.** Sing your baby a lullaby when you tuck them in for the night or make up a song to greet them in the morning. Hearing music and songs helps your baby develop awareness of different sounds and exposes them to new vocabulary.
- **Reading.** Set aside time during your day to read with your baby. Point to pictures and talk about what you are seeing and reading. This will help your child learn how books work, understand that pictures represent real things and encourage a love of books and reading.
- **Writing.** As you play or eat meals together, help your baby develop the muscles in their hands by encouraging them to pick up crackers and cereal, touch their noses and toes or pick up toys. This will help their little hands get ready to turn pages and hold pencils and crayons.
- **Playing.** When you're playing with your baby, have fun using different noises for toys, like trucks, baby dolls, or animals. Hearing different noises and experiencing various pitches, tones and volumes helps your baby develop the basics of language.

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write.

You are your child's first teacher and preparing them to read can be easy and fun – whether you're at home or on the go!

Five of the best ways to prepare your child to read are talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing.

On the Go

- **Talking.** Talk about what your child is doing wherever you are and describe what they are looking at, touching or playing with. When you talk with your baby, they are hearing the language you speak and learning what words mean as you point to and label things. Babies babble using the sounds they have heard.
- **Singing.** Sing to your baby as you drive around town. Put your own spin on classic favorite child songs to help introduce new vocabulary and word sounds.
- **Reading.** Read whatever you see during your day to your child (street signs, grocery store labels or even posters) to improve your child's vocabulary when they start talking.
- **Writing.** Let your child draw in soft substances, such as sandboxes at the park or yogurt at mealtime. Even this simple activity will help strengthen hand-eye coordination, which will help with writing later on.
- **Playing.** A simple game of peek-a-boo while grocery shopping can have a big impact. Playing helps babies become aware of their bodies, increases curiosity, develops a sense of humor and creates brain connections for future learning.