

Top Tips to Support Your Child's Development

Communication and Language Development: Early Reading Skills

Teaching your child the skills needed for early literacy – activities to support the development of skills needed for literacy and early reading.

This will support your child to get 'ready' for reading and practice the skills needed before learning to read. Such pre reading skills might include matching pictures or rhyming and activities which encourage the development of skills such as listening, attention and discriminating between sounds will support your child in this area.



You may want seek advice from a Speech and Language Therapist regarding communication and language skills.

1. Sing songs and nursery rhymes with your child regularly.
2. Share and read books with your child; use simple picture books, those that are brightly coloured or with flaps to lift/textures for interest. Use sounds (e.g. alongside a book about animals or transport), change the tone of your voice (for e.g. for different characters), choose stories which have rhyme and rhythm or those with repetitive lines which will support children to know what is coming next. This will encourage interest in books and let your child know that books/reading can be fun.
3. Let your child hold and touch books, you can use cloth/soft books to begin with, or those made of cardboard or books suitable for the bath.
4. Begin by having shorter 'reading' sessions and increase the time that you are expecting your child to sit/focus on early reading activities slowly.
5. Play matching games; match objects to pictures or pictures to pictures (you can also take photographs of familiar objects and make your own simple matching book).
6. Make your own picture book with photos of familiar objects, your child's favourite things or familiar people.
7. Choose books with simple pictures (one or two images per page) and those which include the names of familiar objects next to the picture. You can gradually increase the complexity and detail within the books you choose to share with your child. Point to objects or comment on details within pictures.
8. Practice early mark making and create opportunities for your child to practice skills needed for writing; for example finger painting, making marks in shaving foam or sand on a tray; using a variety of tools to make marks (e.g. printing with sponges or cotton reels, rolling cars/trains through paint), using chalk, painting with large brushes/sponges or with rollers. If you have access to a tablet you might want to use an appropriate simple drawing App. You can begin by giving your child hand on hand support when first introducing these activities.
9. Talk about books when sharing them with your child, and talk about print you see in your environment, for e.g. when going out for a walk or at the supermarket.
10. As your child progresses, use rhymes and repetition and support your child to continue a line they are familiar with, or answer questions about a familiar story (for e.g. ask your child what they think might happen next).

