



Early Literacy Newsletter



Issue 15
Apr - Jun 2018

What is Early Literacy?

Early Literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write. Research shows that children get ready to read years before they start school. There are five early literacy practices that parents can incorporate into their children's daily life.

These five practices are:

**Talking, Writing, Reading, Playing,
and Singing**

This newsletter's purpose is to help parents of children from birth to age five put early literacy principles into practice. You can help your baby, toddler and preschooler learn important skills now so they can become good readers.

Over the course of the next five newsletters we will look at how the basic concepts of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) can be incorporated with early literacy activities!

What is STEAM? "STEAM" stands for science, technology, engineering, art, and math. For young children, we focus on STEAM through exploration, play and building curiosity about the world and the way things work. The real-life skills that people develop when learning STEAM help make them better problem-solvers and learners.

This issue is all about:

Early Literacy and Math

Most people think of mathematics as separate from language and literacy.

But there is more overlap between language and mathematics than we might think. Seeing those connections, parents can help children double their learning with math and literacy activities.

Math activities that promote literacy:

- Play with shape-sorters. Talk with your child about each shape—count the sides, describe the colors. Make your own shapes by cutting large shapes out of colored construction paper. Ask your child to “hop on the circle” or “jump on the red shape.”
- Even young children can help fill, stir, and pour while making a recipe. Through these activities, children learn, quite naturally, to count, measure, add, and estimate.
- Notice the sizes of objects in the world around you: That pink ball is the biggest. The blue ball is the smallest. Ask your child to think about his own size relative to other objects.
- Use an hourglass, stopwatch, or timer to time short activities. This helps children develop a sense of time and to understand that some things take longer than others.
- Use a calendar to talk about the date, the day of the week, and the weather. Calendars reinforce counting, sequences, and patterns.
- When folding laundry with your child, make a pattern with socks. Line them up like this: big, small, big, small, big, small. Then, have fun matching the pairs of socks together.
- Cut a few pieces of ribbon, yarn or paper in different lengths. Talk about ideas like long and short. With your child, put the ribbons in order from longest to shortest.

Talking

Singing

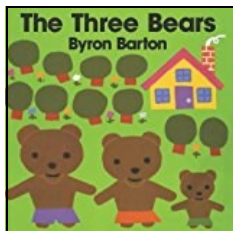
Reading

Writing

Playing

Here are some math activities to do that go along with the five early literacy practices !

Talking



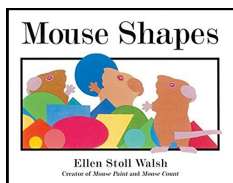
Building children's vocabularies helps them understand the stories they hear, and, eventually, read. Mathematical words and ideas are important for understanding stories. In

Goldilocks and the Three Bears, there's a number three right in the title! But, there is also ordering (small, medium, large) and patterning (the repeated phrase, too little, too big, just right). Read *The Three Bears* by Byron Barton with your child, then invite them to compare sizes, such as chairs, bowls, and beds. Ask them "What sizes were the chairs? What sizes were the bowls? Who slept in the big bed? Who sat in the medium chair?" As you read other books, talk about the mathematical ideas. Name groups of things children see on the pages with numbers and shape names, such as, "Look at those three beautiful flowers. What shape are those petals?"

Reading

Learning to tell one letter from another involves being able to see the differences in letter shapes. Helping babies and toddlers learn about different shapes and to understand how things are alike and different will help prepare them to learn the alphabet as well as their numbers. Read the book *Mouse Shapes* by Ellen Stoll Walsh with your child.

Then go back through the book and identify each of the shapes pictured. For even more fun, make your own shape book to read and learn the shapes together.

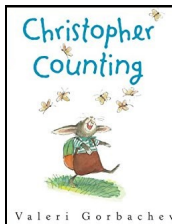


Singing

Sing songs that rhyme, repeat, or have numbers in them. Songs reinforce patterns (which is a math skill). They also are fun ways to practice language and foster social skills like cooperation. Sing along to the book *Five Little Ducks* by Raffi then check out his Singable Songs Collection CD to go along with it!



Playing



During play, opportunities for mathematical thinking and understanding can emerge naturally. As your child plays with his blocks, ask: "What can you do to make the block tower taller?" As she plays with her

trains, ask: "How many cars did you use to make that train? Can you make it longer?" The book *Christopher Counting* by Valeri Gorbachev shows how one boy has fun counting everything he sees during his day. After reading the book, encourage your child to play the game too, looking for things around the house to count.

Writing

Proper pencil grasp development for writing starts a lot earlier than you think in children. From the time your child starts grasping for objects with their hands, they are developing pencil grasp. Sorting activities can encourage fine motor skills while promoting math concepts as well. Gather together a basket of small toys, shells, pom-poms or buttons. Count them with your child. Using tongs, tweezers or a clothes pin, sort them based on size, color, or shape. Then read *Sorting* by David Kirkby for even more ideas!

