



Early Literacy Newsletter



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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 Technology

Technology is a way of doing. Technology is using tools, being inventive, identifying problems, and making things work.

Children learn about the concept of technology when they're exploring tools or simple machines. These can be items they use every day like a pair of scissors, or things they might see like the wheels of a car as they walk outside.

Technology activities that promote literacy:

- Use a sound effects app and play "What's that Sound?"
- Take photos of premade block towers on a tablet. Kids can flip through the photos to find what tower they want to build and replicate.
- Collect a basket of old electronics that your child can pull out during their creative playtime. Adding in technology, even at this most basic level, allows children to explore how they fit in with technology in the wider world.
- Gather a variety of simple machines (clothes pins, tongs, pliers, doorstop, rolling pins, etc.) for children to explore and discuss. Talk about what each item is used for. Ask "Do these items make work easier for us? How?"
- Combine technology and active outdoor time. Taking an iPad or camera phone on a walk in the woods makes it easy for even pre-literate children to document their observations to create a field journal full of images.
- Choose apps that help children build and create - apps that encourage creativity and construction rather than passive game playing.

Talking

Singing

Reading

Writing

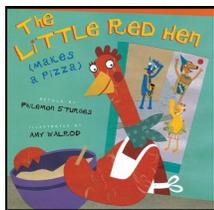
Playing

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

Talking



You may be surprised to find a number of simple machines in your kitchen. Spatulas, tongs and scissors are levers. A pizza wheel and a rolling pin use a wheel and axle. Screw tops on bottles and lids on jars use screws. Knives, forks and vegetable peelers are wedges. Enjoy a scavenger hunt with your child and encourage them to safely explore the different tools. Talk about what each item does and how these simple machines make work easier in the kitchen. Then, make a favorite recipe using some of the machines you discovered. Read *The Little Red Hen Makes a Pizza* by Philemon Sturges and talk about the kitchen tools used in the book.



Playing



Playing with toy cars is fun, but by adding a simple machine such as a ramp, your child can experiment with technology! Create a ramp using a piece of cardboard, a book, a piece of wood or any other flat object.

Then raise one side up with blocks, books, boxes, etc. Let your child race their toy cars down the ramp. Now, experiment by making the ramp higher and lower. Did the cars go farther when the ramp was higher or lower? Did they go faster or slower? For even more technology fun, check out the book *The Kids' Book of Simple Machines* by Kelly Doudna.



Reading

There are many online resources that will read to your child and help them develop their literacy skills. One of the resources that the library provides is TumbleBooks.



TumbleBooks is a database of children's e-books and has over 1100 titles for grades K-6, and includes animated, talking picture books, read-along chapter books, national geographic videos, non-fiction books, playlists, as well as books in Spanish and French. This resource can be accessed through the library's website at:

<http://www.westlandlibrary.org/kids/homework>

Writing



Apps can be a great technology learning tool with your little one as long as you make wise choices and interact with your child while using them. The inexpensive app, *Little Writer*, is a great tracing app for kids that helps them learn to write letters, numbers, shapes and even some short 3-4 letter words.

Singing



Singing songs is a fantastic way to learn for preschoolers. The repetition of preschool songs makes them an

excellent learning tool. Sing and do the motions to *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes* with your child. Then introduce technology by creating a music video of the song. Using your cell phone camera record your child singing and performing the song. Then, set up a movie premiere to play the recording for family & friends.

