

“LEARNING ON THE GO”: Literacy Tips for Young Children

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing *before* they can actually read and write. One pre-reading skill that young children need in order to be ready to read is **print awareness**. Children who have print awareness understand that written language has meaning. In other words, they know that those black squiggly marks called letters represent spoken words, and that adults look at those marks when they are reading.

Here are some ideas to help you teach your child about print:

- ❖ Reading together is one of the best ways to learn about print. Let your child pick a book to read. Point out the title and the author’s name on the cover before reading.
- ❖ Have your toddler hold (or help you hold) the book and turn the pages. Show her that you always read books from front to back. Try holding the book upside down and see if she turns it around!
- ❖ Point out page numbers to children who are learning to count.
- ❖ Help your child connect printed words with spoken words by moving your finger under the words as you read, showing him the spaces between the words. Show him that you always read from left to right.
- ❖ Show your older preschooler the difference between upper and lower case letters and point out that each sentence starts with an upper case letter. Help her look for familiar letters and words.
- ❖ Make signs that label things around the house, such as “books”, “toys”, “plates”, “toothpaste”, etc.
- ❖ Help your child find letters and words wherever he goes: home, child care, stores, restaurants, etc.

All these activities will help your child gain print awareness and send him down the road toward reading!