

Building a Home Library

When it comes to building a literacy rich environment at home, many parents ask the same question:

“What can I do to help my child?”

If you are reading each night for about 15 minutes, you are already doing the most important thing you can do! If you tell stories at the dinner table, sing songs during car rides or baths, great job! If you ask questions about places you visit- whether it be trips to the park, zoo or beach or to the grocery store, bank, or car wash then you are fostering literacy! All of these moments with your child are terrific opportunities to develop early literacy skills.

But what about books at home? Do you feel like there are many opportunities for you and your child to read and re-read books you love? Here are some ideas for setting up a home library- a “go-to” place for your child to grab a book, cozy up and read! Ideally, you will have about 12+ books to choose from.

- Choosing the right books
 - Choose a variety of reading materials- Kids love books, magazines, poems and newspapers. They also love travel brochures, maps, and reading information from trips you take! Hang onto things from your travels when you go out and about! Let them choose from a variety of topics they are interested each night. It is important to have a nice mix of books that they can read on their own as well as books that are easy to read with your child.
 - Read Alouds- Look for those books that will peak their interest, captivate their imagination and stir up images. Children love picture books with animal characters, silly themes, rhyme and whimsy. Maybe you have a favorite author or illustrator to check out. Fairy tales, poems and traditional songs and stories all are a part of read alouds. No matter what, make the read aloud a special time where the T.V. is off and it is calm and relaxed. Set a routine that you all look forward to and make it a family affair! The benefits of reading aloud with your child are immeasurable! Check out the links on our Family Literacy Corner *Resources* page for suggested book lists by grade level for both picture & beginning chapter book read alouds.
 - Series Books- Does your child love Captain Underpants? Junie B. Jones? Henry and Mudge? Curious George? They are not alone! Becoming a lifelong reader means reading *fluently* without struggling to sound out words, with understanding and with passion! Let your child read wildly and widely- from chapter books to classics to series books with silly characters- it all counts and it all adds up to one thing: Time Spent Reading!

- Non-Fiction - It's no surprise that kids love animals, machines, dinosaurs, sports and space. Why not let them read and find out all that they can about the real life things that interest them. After all, isn't this what we as adults do much of the time? Non-Fiction is fun, engaging, leads to LOTS of wonderings and questions and encourages curiosity and inventiveness. Explore many non-fiction titles with your child.

- Where can I get more books?
 - Look for books that are gently used at yard sales, used book shops and the library!
 - Scholastic Reading Clubs are often a part of your child's classroom routine and many of the books cost between 1-3 dollars!
 - Ask for books or book store gift cards as gifts. ALL kids love to choose their own books. You can bet that those will be read the most frequently!
 - Talk to your child's teacher for more suggestions.
- Where to keep them
 - Once you begin your book collection you will need a place to keep it. Let your child choose a special place to store their books. Make a book box out of an old shoebox that is decorated or a book bag from the dollar bins. Keep them next to their bed, near a cozy spot or spread throughout the house! Books are treasures, treat them well. Make sure that your child takes care of them and they will build good reading habits.
- Spread the love!
 - Keep books on hand everywhere- the car, the kitchen and the bathroom! Let your child see you reading- from an article online to a recipe to instructions in a manual. Reading is reading!
- Keeping it Up

Once your child's home library is set up, remember to update it from time to time, keeping it fresh and exciting. You will be creating a LIFELONG READER, not to mention that you most likely will see an increase in school success and overall academic ability!

Read together. Read Forever!

- Web sites to check out
 - www.itsps.org/Slackwood.cfm click on the left at the Family Literacy Corner
 - www.growingreaders.com
 - www.readingrockets.com

-MaryEllen Wallauer
First Grade Teacher/ Literacy Lover