



Equipping Literacy Assistants

Literacy in the pre-school years

Literacy in the pre-school years

- Reading starts with listening and speaking.
- It is important for children to have exposure to language from the time they are born.
- They are collecting the vocabulary they will need to be ready to read.

Other ways to develop vocabulary

- Play situations, e.g. pretend play such as shops, building together
- Play involves experimenting with language, making up scripts, using imagination
- Creating together

Make a pretend shop or market stand to get children talking together.









Literacy in the home

Parents can be encouraged to:

- Talk to their children even when they are babies
- Read signs with children when out in the community
- Point to names of produce in the market or supermarket
- Cross items off a shopping list
- Read books with children or tell stories them.



Language and listening

- We have been created with an ability to learn a language.
- Children learn their mother-tongue by listening to their parents.
- Research shows children under the age of 5 have a special ability for language learning.
- The kindergarten is therefore a good place to start learning a second language.

Listening and speaking go together

- Reading starts with listening and speaking.
- We can encourage children to identify sounds in the environment – wind and rain, birds and other animals
- near/far sounds; high/low sounds in music

Awareness of sounds

- Matching up sounds with letters is called “Phonics.”
- But children need practice in identifying the sounds that the letters make before they are introduced to the letter symbols.
- They can also listen for words that rhyme.

Teaching initial sounds

- *Initial sounds* are the sounds words begin with,
- Example, “cat” starts with “c”

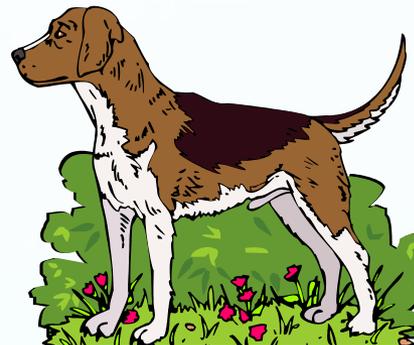


Listening activities

Children listen for initial sounds, without seeing letters.

- Say: What sound can you hear at the beginning of “**c**at”
- Which words rhyme? *cat pot rat*
- Clap word syllables, e.g. their name – Jo/seph
- Guess the word I am saying, e.g. fl – a – g
- Play listening games such as “I spy”.

Picture or object collection for initial sounds



Activity

Play a game of “I spy” ...

Think of something you can see around you, e.g. a pencil. Say:

“I spy with my little eye, something beginning with ‘p’.

The other player/s have to guess the object you are thinking about.

Word shapes

- Words have shapes
- Children start by identifying shapes around them – circles, triangles, squares
- Jig saw puzzles, play equipment of different shapes help children identify shapes
- Also ‘which is different’ games and activities

Which is different?:

b b d b

Reading readiness

Readiness is the step before reading.

In the preschool years:

- small finger muscles are being developed ready for writing.
- they learn language through songs, stories and rhymes
- puzzles and shape activities help their eyes to get ready to see the shapes that words make

Questions

1. Why is it important for parents to talk to their babies and young children?
2. Why is playing with other children important for the pre-school child?
3. What activities can be done to help pre-school children with listening skills?
4. What is the definition of phonics?
5. Why are shape activities important for pre-school children?