

Activities to build and support your child's literacy skills at home

- ◆ Let your child start a conversation and then follow their lead by responding with interest about their chosen topic. This dialogue encourages children to converse more and is associated with children's later academic success.
- ◆ Read non-fiction books about various, interesting topics. Encourage your child to ask questions and discuss what was read. Discuss any new vocabulary learned and encourage this use of those words in other situations.
- ◆ Instead of using "everyday" words, use rare words that mean the same thing. Rather than talking of a siren being "loud", introduce more sophisticated words such as "deafening" or "earsplitting".
- ◆ Make up a story together. Begin with a story starter such as "Once upon a time..." and take turns adding to the story until it's done!
- ◆ Encourage children to think about how others might feel and what they might do. E.g. "How would you feel if you lost your special teddy bear? What could you do to try and find it?"
- ◆ Make up a new verse to a favourite song.
- ◆ Go on a scavenger hunt to find items that begin with certain letters. You can extend this activity to find items that have the "long a" sound or items that end in "ing".
- ◆ Write clues for a family treasure hunt.
- ◆ Draw names from a hat. That person will be your secret pal. For a week or 2, secretly do something nice for that person by writing notes, making a card or writing a poem and leaving it where they will find it!
- ◆ Find a big word in a dictionary. Write it on a piece of paper and see how many small words your family can find in it.
- ◆ Cut out words from magazines and paste together to make sentences or even a story!
- ◆ Turn down the sound and read the closed caption on T.V.
- ◆ Tell or write your own jokes!
- ◆ Keep a family journal and take turns writing in it.
- ◆ Have a party and have your children write the invitations, the menu, and list of items needed.
- ◆ Write story questions on a beach ball. After reading a story, pass the ball and answer the questions.
- ◆ Cut food into alphabet letter shapes using cookie cutters.
- ◆ Write a comic strip!
- ◆ Snuggle up with a favourite book and celebrate with cookies and hot chocolate!
- ◆ Find a word of the day website and try to get each family member to use the word of the day as many ways and times as they can. Have a family use contest to see how many times your family can use the word of the day today.
- ◆ Find out about the world- look at [Google Maps](#). You can get directions, find restaurants, look at satellite and road maps of your destination and all points in between.
- ◆ Go to a quote of the day website and print off a copy of the day's quote. Discuss what this quote means with your family. Keep track of 'quotable' things that your family members say and make your own family quote book.

- ◆ Let your child help you make dinner tonight. This includes: planning the menu, reading the recipes, setting the table, helping to serve and cleaning up.
- ◆ Start a journal of family activities. Include pictures in the journal that have been drawn or taken with a camera.
- ◆ Visit a library or book mobile and choose books to read. Make sure that your child is able to read the text independently. Have your child show you the 'five finger rule.'
- ◆ Create an acrostic poem. Put your family name vertically down the left hand side of a sheet of paper. Use each letter to describe your family. E.g. T- talented
- ◆ Share books. Read part of a book you are reading to your child and then have her read her book to you. Compare the two books. What are the similarities and differences?
- ◆ Create a family story today. Write the first sentence and then pass it on to the next family member. This person writes the next sentence and passes it on. You can start the story at breakfast and continue to pass it on throughout the day. Share the story with everyone at supper.
- ◆ Have your child draw a picture of a favourite outdoor activity. Then, go outside and do it!
- ◆ Does your child want a special privilege; have a friend sleep over or an allowance? Have her write a persuasive letter to you. Discuss the letter with your child and reach a decision.
- ◆ Give your child a journal. The journal can be used for fiction and non-fiction purposes and may include drawings too. The dollar store is a great place to find inexpensive journal type books.
- ◆ Read a good book. Relate the book to an experience that your family will have or has had and make your child responsible for sharing the information with the rest of the family. e.g. book on soccer to help everyone brush up on the rules before you have a game at your family reunion, travel book on somewhere you plan to visit, a how to book on something that you will be making at your home....
- ◆ Visit the website of a favourite author or illustrator to learn more about them. Then try creating one of your own books to pattern from a book or illustrator that you like.