

Read, talk, sing, write, & laugh!



COMMUNICATE & DEVELOP LITERACY SKILLS THROUGH PLAY!

DISCOVER THE JOY OF READING

Commit to visiting your local library once a week or even once a month. Let your child help pick out a big stack of books—and don't forget to choose some that you're excited to read, too! When you read together at home, focus on making the story come alive. Use different voices, point out interesting pictures, and talk about what's happening in the story.

Instead of asking your child to "sound out" words or quiz them on the story, invite curiosity with open-ended questions like, "Hmm... what do you think will happen next?"

Make your child part of the action! Let them turn the pages and pick a fun sound to signal when it's time to turn (like "ding!" or "beep beep!"). Get silly—make it fun!

Turn reading into a nightly routine:

"First we brush our teeth, then pajamas, then we pick three books to read together."

The more often you do it, the easier it becomes—and soon, your child will expect (and look forward to) this cozy, screen-free time with you!

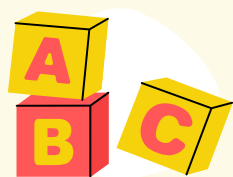
BUILD A HOME LIBRARY:

Look for a little library or book barn in your neighborhood—where you can take free books and leave books you've finished. It's an easy, fun no-cost way to find new stories.

Over time, you can pick out and swap books to slowly build a collection of favorites right at home. This helps make reading a regular, exciting part of your family's routine!



TALK, SING, LAUGH (AND KEEP A JOURNAL!)



TALK!

As you go about your day—getting dressed, cooking, cleaning—talk out loud about what you're doing. For example:

"Now I'm looking for my blue shoes so we can go to the park... blue shoe, oh blue shoe, where are you?"

Your child doesn't need to respond to benefit—they're listening and learning all the time. Even before they speak, their brain is busy building connections based on the words they hear. In fact, research shows that children who hear more words in early childhood develop stronger language and thinking skills later on.

Communicate in your first language! Bilingual brains are strong brains! If you want to encourage English development, label everyday items around the house in both languages (like "door," "floor," or "chair") and let your child see you using the words. They'll be copying you in no time.



SING SONGS

Singing with your baby or toddler isn't just fun—it helps them learn language! Songs are a great way to introduce new words and show how they're used in everyday life.

When you sing the same songs again and again, your child starts to remember the words and sounds. Repetition helps the brain build strong connections—this is how kids learn to talk!

Singing also helps with memory. The rhythm and melody make it easier for young children to remember words and phrases. That's why songs like the alphabet song or nursery rhymes stick so well! And don't worry if you're not a great singer—your child loves your voice. Try simple songs during everyday routines like getting dressed, brushing teeth, or riding in the car.

"This is the way we put on socks, put on socks, put on socks..." It's fun, it's bonding—and it's building your child's vocabulary every time you sing!



KEEP A JOURNAL

You don't need anything special—just some paper, crayons, or a notebook.

Set up a little spot in your home (even a shoebox works!) and call it "the office." Having a space with writing and drawing tools helps your child build fine motor skills—those tiny hand muscles that get stronger with practice and are important for writing, buttoning clothes, and more. Easy ways to build writing and drawing into everyday life:

- Write Down Their Ideas: If your child tells you a story, write it down and invite them to draw a picture to go with it—even if it's just scribbles.
- Turn Chores into a Game: Instead of turning on a screen, ask your child to help you make a list of chores, draw pictures of grocery items, or cut out food pictures from store flyers.
- Let Them "Get to Work" Too: When you're doing tasks around the house, give your child their own paper and say, "It's your turn to write or draw now!" They can make a card for grandma, a note for you, or just draw anything they like.

These fun, low-pressure moments help your child build a love for writing, expressing ideas, and creating—all skills they'll use for life!

MINIMIZE SCREEN TIME IN EARLY CHILDHOOD



Playing interactive games with your child helps their brain grow in ways that watching videos or TV can't. When kids are actively involved—talking, moving, and thinking—they have more opportunities develop important skills and their brains are making more connections..

Be careful with apps like YouTube, which often show videos that aren't always safe or appropriate for little ones. If you have to do screen time, do it on the children's computers at the library or choose an educational app.

The simple rule? The less screen time your child has, the better it is for their brain and overall development!

Also, don't worry if your child gets bored sometimes. Boredom is actually helpful—it encourages kids to use their imagination, come up with their own ideas, and find creative ways to play and learn on their own. It's an important part of growing!



LAUGH!



When your child laughs, their brain releases powerful "feel-good" chemicals—like serotonin, dopamine, endorphins, and oxytocin. These chemicals help calm the nervous system, reduce stress, and create a sense of safety and connection.

You can encourage laughter through simple, playful activities like clapping games, silly songs, peek-a-boo, or making funny noises. These joyful moments wire the brain for learning and problem solving!



Hi

Hi! let's play!

Learn more at the Power of Play Workshop Series, brought to you by Play Dirt Projects & AOC7 through a grant made possible by Best Start Central Long Beach

