

# Improving Literacy Brief for Parents and Families

## SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT AT HOME

Take part in literacy experiences at home. Taking part can develop your child's reading ability, comprehension, and language skills. It could also improve your child's interest in reading, attitude towards reading, and focus.

Engage in activities at home. This is important for your child's early literacy development. Engage in: joint reading, drawing, singing, storytelling, reciting, game playing, and rhyming. When joint reading, you and your child take turns reading parts of a book. When reading, ask her to connect to the story. Have her tell you more about what she is thinking. You can use her interests to choose books. Give positive feedback and ask open-ended questions during joint reading to boost her interest and critical thinking skills.

**For young children**, nursery rhymes are especially helpful for language and early literacy development. Play audiobooks or read aloud at home to increase the amount of language your child hears. Hang different kinds of print around your house. Label objects in your home. This can show the importance of language, reading, and writing. Help your child build background knowledge on a topic. Talk about everyday experiences, show your child pictures, and tell stories.

If you use a different language at home, speak and read to your child in that language. This can help grow his vocabulary and make connections at school. It can also increase his curiosity and readiness to learn at school. Learning opportunities in a home language will help literacy learning in English.

**For older children**, play word games, talk about word meanings, and point out interesting or new words when reading together. Ask questions before, during, and after reading aloud. This can help your child focus attention on the ideas in the story. Before reading, look at the book cover and talk about what might happen in the story. During reading, ask what questions he has about the story. After reading, talk about what happened. Ask your child to sum it up and relate the story to what he already knows or has experienced.

**For adolescents**, engage in conversations, offer a literacy-rich environment, and be a strong model for reading. Talk about school, magazines, or current events. Ask them what

---

# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT AT HOME

they are reading and discuss the books. Have a lot of age-appropriate and grade-level reading material around your home. Model good literacy behavior by reading regularly yourself.

Technology can help families meet the literacy needs of their children. Serve as a “media mentor.” Talk with your child about using technology in creative ways. These talks can boost language development, build background knowledge, and help your child develop useful skills. Be an educated consumer of information on the internet. Review the abilities of the developers. Check the quality, usefulness, and content of the information being shared.

## SUGGESTED CITATION

National Center on Improving Literacy. (2017). *10 Ways to Support Your Child's Literacy at Home*. <https://www.improvingliteracy.org/resource/supporting-your-child-s-literacy-at-home>

## REFERENCES

Dunst, C. J., Valentine, A., Raab, M., & Hamby, D. (2013). *Relationship between child participation in everyday activities and early literacy and language development* (CELL Reviews, 6[1]). Center for Early Literacy Learning, Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute.

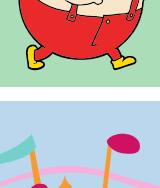
Guernsey, L., Levine, M., Chiong, C., & Severns, M. (2012). *Pioneering literacy in the digital wild west: Empowering parents and educators*. Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

National Urban League. (2008). *Parent/guardian engagement in adolescent literacy*. Author.



# 10 Ways to Support Your Child's Literacy Development at Home

Taking part in literacy experiences at home can develop a child's reading ability, comprehension, and language skills. It may also enhance your child's interest in reading, their attitude towards it, and their ability to focus.

- 1** Read nursery rhymes and books aloud together. 
- 2** Sing, draw, and tell stories. 
- 3** Play audiobooks to increase the amount of language your child hears. 
- 4** Label objects in your home to show the importance of language, reading, and writing. 
- 5** Play word games. 
- 6** Talk about the meanings of words. 
- 7** Point out interesting or new words when reading together. 
- 8** Offer a literacy-rich environment at home. 
- 9** Talk about school, magazines, or current events. 
- 10** Model good literacy behavior by reading regularly yourself! 

## Bonus Ideas:

When reading aloud, ask questions to help your child focus on the ideas in the story to improve comprehension. Before reading, look at the book cover and talk about what might happen in the story. During reading, ask if the child has questions about the story. After reading, ask your child to sum up the story.

If you use a different language at home, speak and read to your child in that language. Learning opportunities in a home language will help literacy learning in English.

Learn more: <https://www.improvingliteracy.org/resource/supporting-your-child-s-literacy-at-home>



The research reported here is funded by a grant to the National Center on Improving Literacy from the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, in partnership with the Office of Special Education Programs (Award #: H283D210004). The opinions or policies expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of OSE, OSEP, or the U.S. Department of Education. You should not assume endorsement by the Federal government. Copyright © 2024 National Center on Improving Literacy.