

BUILDING LITERACY SKILLS FROM INFANCY TO ADULTHOOD

INFANTS & TODDLERS



TALK ALL THE TIME

- ▶ The more words they hear, the more babies learn.
- ▶ Narrate your day: *"Let's go to the car. Wow! It's really sunny today. Ok, let's put you in your car seat."*

MODEL READING AND WRITING

- ▶ Keep books, magazines and newspapers you like to read around the house.
- ▶ Let your child see you read and hear you talk about what you're reading. Don't worry if your baby doesn't understand at first; you're showing them what it's like to learn from reading.
- ▶ Talk out loud about what you're writing, whether it's a letter, email or grocery list.

READ ALOUD TO YOUR BABY EVERY DAY

- ▶ Use funny voices, act out the story, point to pictures and ask questions.
- ▶ It's ok to skip around. If your baby turns to a different page, go with it.
- ▶ Feel free to read aloud from a magazine or a novel you find interesting.

PROVIDE BOOKS THAT APPEAL TO BABIES

- ▶ Easy-to-handle fabric and board books, books with photos, especially faces
- ▶ Learning books that teach your child ABCs or 1-2-3s
- ▶ Rhyming or singalong books

START "WRITING" EARLY

- ▶ Any kind of mark on paper is a great start.
- ▶ Provide finger paints, thick markers or crayons.
- ▶ For less mess, try a magnetic drawing toy like a Magna Doodle or a tablet drawing program.

MAKE TIME TO PLAY

- ▶ Singing, nursery rhymes and pat-a-cake games all help babies learn words.
- ▶ Passing a ball or toy helps develop back-and-forth communication.
- ▶ Imaginative play like dress up, make believe and blocks all support literacy.

NOTE TO PARENTS: It's important to keep screen time to a minimum but if your baby does tune in, choose educational shows like Signing Time, ABC videos and PBS KIDS. And remember that building literacy skills doesn't have to be expensive. Check out your local public library, yard sales, second-hand stores, BuyNothing and other community groups for free or low-cost books. Cardboard boxes make great building blocks and toy kitchens.



Boston Children's Hospital
Down Syndrome Program