



TSR! Parent Literacy Handbook



Additional Resources

- *Get Ready to Read:* www.getreadytoread.org
- *International Reading Association:* www.reading.org
- *Literacy Center Education Network:* www.literacycenter.net
- *National Association for the Education of Young Children:* www.naeyc.org
- *Public Broadcasting Service (PBS):*
www.pbs.org/parents
www.pbs.org/kids
- *Reach Out and Read:* www.reachoutandread.org/parents
- *Reading is Fundamental:* www.rif.org
- *Reading Rockets:* www.readingrockets.org/audience/parents
- *Sesame Street:* www.sesamestreet.org
- *US Department of Education:* www.ed.gov
- *Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families:* www.zerotothree.org

Dear Parents

We've all heard the old saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." Early care providers and parents alike must work together to improve children's school success. We at the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) have been working with your child's teacher this year to improve the quality of learning that takes place each day within the classroom. As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. You are the single most influential factor in your child's development.

CLI is proud to provide you with the Texas School Ready! Parent Bag. The materials and handbook of literacy and math activities included in the bag will help you work with your child at home. Your bag contains several books to read aloud to your child as well as several activities to promote talking and to encourage writing. Please, spend time with your child enjoying these resources. Research tells us that children whose parents read to them on a regular basis, beginning in early childhood, are more likely to be on grade level when entering school. So, as you read the stories and talk about the pictures, know that you are helping your child to get ready for school. Don't be afraid to explore your child's ideas about the story or provide them answers to questions they may have about the book. This type of responsive parenting leads to healthy relationships with others as children get older. Being sensitive and responsive to your child also serves as a "security blanket," allowing your child to feel safe and secure while exploring and mastering their world.

Included in your parent bag are the following items:

- *The TSR! Parent Literacy Handbook*
- *A magnetic clip to hang the handbook on the refrigerator for quick reference*
- *A DVD on how to read to your children*
- *Three books to read aloud to your children*
- *A set of uppercase and lowercase letters for playing alphabet games*
- *A set of math counters for playing counting games*
- *2 "fun" pens to get children excited about writing*

To learn more about the Texas School Ready! program, find fun and exciting activities for you and your child to enjoy, and sign up for the monthly Texas School Ready! newsletter, visit www.childrenslearninginstitute.org/TexasSchoolReady

Sincerely,

Susan H. Landry, Ph.D.

Director, Children's Learning Institute
Albert & Margaret Alkek Chair in Early Childhood
Michael Matthew Knight Professor of Pediatrics

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Math Activities Continued

- Have your child sort the laundry into piles before and after it is washed.

Activities to do with Mouse Count

- As you are reading the book, have your child join you in pointing to and counting the mice on each page.
- Have your child draw a picture about the book. Have him/her use their drawing to retell the story.
- Make up “mouse” math problems. For example, “There were two mice in the jar and snake added one more mouse. How many mice were there in all?” or “There were five mice in the jar and one ran away. How many were left?”
- Collect a variety of small objects and a container. Say a number from 1 to 10. Have your child count out the correct number of objects and drop them into the container.



Math Activities Continued

Shapes

- Have your child find shapes in your home environment, including circles (plate, button), squares (picture, block), triangles (toy) and rectangles (cereal box). Also, ask your child questions about shapes (e.g., “Can you find something that is shaped like a circle?” etc.).
- Play a game with your child to help him/her learn positional words. For example: “Put your hand on top of the block” and “Put your hand under the block,” or, “Stand in front of the chair” and “Stand behind the chair.”
- Have your child build with blocks or books and compare which stack is taller, which one is shorter, which ones are the same, etc.

Patterns

- Call attention to patterns in the environment (e.g., on socks, shirts, buildings, signs, etc.). Have your child look for patterns.
- Have your child make patterns using stickers such as stars and circles. The AB pattern would be: (circle/star), (circle/star), etc. Continue with more difficult AAB patterns: (circle/circle/star), (circle/circle/star), etc.

Sorting

- Have your child sort buttons by common characteristics such as size, shape, color and number of holes.
- Have your child sort groceries into groups such as fruits, vegetables and canned foods.

Oral Language Tips

Parents are the key to children’s language development. Children need multiple opportunities to use language throughout the day. Children who learn to communicate well at home are more likely to successfully communicate at school. Help your child develop the vocabulary necessary for success in school by: reading books, asking questions, making predictions, and having conversations. Use the following tips to help your child develop his/her speaking and listening skills.

Everyday Language

- Having conversations with your child throughout the day helps his/her language skills grow. Conversations involve multiple turn-taking: you speak and your child listens, then your child speaks and you listen, etc.
- Whatever you do together, talk about it with your child. When you eat meals, take walks, go to the store, ride in the car, or visit the library, talk with him/her. Ask questions that require more than a yes or no answer such as, “What do you see in the garden?” or “What do you notice about the flowers?”
- Have your child help with chores at home. As your child helps with a task, talk about what you are doing and why you are doing it. Have your child name and explain items. For example, “This is a pan or skillet. We used it this morning when we fried eggs.”
- When talking with your child, be sure to include positive statements that celebrate your child’s accomplishments. For example, “Thank you for helping. You folded the clothes just right.”

Oral Language Tips Continued

- Talk with your child about the importance of being kind to others. How does it make other people feel? How does it make your child feel?
- Play word games with your child. For example, say a word and have your child think of an opposite word (e.g., up/down, under/over, right/left, push/pull). Another example of a word game is to have your child help you name animals that live in the zoo, things that are green, things that fly, etc.
- Tell stories about things from your childhood or when your child was a baby. Have your child tell stories about events he/she remembers.
- Make up stories with your child. Say a word such as “dinosaur.” Have your child make up a story about the word. Then, have your child say a word and you make up a story about that word. You can also make up stories using pictures from magazines.
- Make your child a “meteorologist” of the day. Look out the window and talk about the weather. Predict whether the day will be sunny, cloudy, rainy, cold, etc. Discuss what kind of clothing you will need to wear for the weather.
- Make your child a “chef” of the day. Ask him/her to help plan breakfast or another meal. Make a list of foods needed. Have him/her find the items in the kitchen. Have him/her help when shopping for any needed items and in preparing the meal. Talk about what you are doing as you follow the recipe. Compliment the “chef” for a job well done!

Math Activities

Help your child develop a positive attitude about math. If math was difficult for you, avoid saying negative things like “I wasn’t good in math” or “I don’t like math either.” Read books about math concepts including counting, shapes, patterning, measuring, sorting and classifying. Help your child become a “math thinker.” Use the following activities to help your child learn math skills:

Numbers and Counting

- Count items inside and outside your home. Examples: spoons, light switches, socks, rocks, cars, leaves, etc.
- Teach your child counting songs and rhymes, such as “This Old Man,” “One, Two, Buckle My Shoe,” “Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed,” and “Five Little Ducks.”
- Draw attention to numbers in the environment (e.g., on signs, license plates, price tags, etc.).
- Collect things in sets of 10 (e.g., 10 buttons, 10 cotton balls, 10 marbles, etc.).
- Give your child several raisins or other types of food. Say a number and have him/her eat that many raisins. Ask how many are left.
- Have your child close his/her eyes. Drop pennies one at a time into a can or glass bowl. Your child can count as he/she hears each penny drop.
- Play with dominoes with your child. Teach your child how to count the number of dots and match the same number of dots on another domino.
- Have your child draw numerals in shaving cream, sand or finger paint.

Writing Activities Continued

- Ask your child to tell you about his/her drawing/writing. Write down what he/she says. Display his/her work on the wall or refrigerator.
- Help your child write notes to relatives and friends to thank them for gifts. Encourage relatives and friends to send replies addressed to your child.
- Make books with your child. Fold and staple papers together. Have your child draw a picture for the front cover of the book. Write a title on the front and write his/her name as the author. You and your child can draw and write on the remaining pages.
- As your child's writing develops, help him/her sound out the letters for words he/she wants to write. Don't be concerned about correct spelling as conventional spelling will come later.



Oral Language Tips Continued

- Schedule some special time with your child. Have him/her brainstorm things you like to do together. Make a list and have your child mark the calendar.
- Help your child develop stronger language skills by using and explaining new words and then encouraging him/her to use the new words.
- Make links between objects, their functions, and actions to support or scaffold your child's language and problem-solving skills. Use some of these "links" with your child:
 - Objects and actions have names (e.g., saying "bye-bye" is waving)
 - Objects have special places (e.g., clothes go in closet)
 - What objects are used for (e.g., pots are used for cooking)
 - How the object works (e.g., a microwave heats food)
 - Actions that go with objects (e.g., spoons are used for stirring)
 - Characteristics of objects that help solve problems (e.g., buttons can keep a jacket from coming off)

Reading Tips

Reading aloud is one of the most important ways you can help your child learn to read and write. Reading to your child regularly will help him/her to read sooner and do better in school. You can introduce your child to different kinds of books: stories, rhymes, poetry and information books.

General Reading Tips:

- Read aloud every day. Make reading aloud part of your daily schedule.
- Join the public library. Take your child to the library each week and let him/her choose several books to check out and take home.
- Look at the pictures on the cover of the book. Ask your child to tell you what they think the book is about.
- Read the title of the book to your child. Tell your child the names of the author and illustrator. Read several books by the same author or illustrator.
- Talk about interesting words and words that rhyme while reading.
- Use expression while reading the story. Change your voice as you read the dialogue of different characters.
- Encourage your child to be an active listener and allow him/her to ask questions, make personal connections, and add sound effects or motions. He/She will begin to remember the story and join in as you read, especially with repeated phrases.

Writing Activities

Just as your child learns to speak by speaking, he/she learns to write by engaging in writing activities. There is a strong link between writing and success in reading. You can play a key role in encouraging your child's writing skills by providing opportunities to experiment with a variety of writing materials. When you are writing a note or a grocery list, talk about what you are doing. All writing attempts should be accepted, including scribbling, pictures, or letters. The focus of writing during the preschool years is on self-expression and not on handwriting.

- Write with your child. He/she will learn about writing while watching you write. Talk about what you are writing as you write so he/she begins to understand that writing has meaning.
- Give your child daily opportunities to communicate his/her ideas through writing and drawing.
- Provide materials so that your child has what he/she needs to write. Materials can be stored in a caddy or plastic pencil case. Include pencils, crayons, markers, paper, notebook, construction paper, and safety scissors.
- Make writing fun! Have your child write letters in salt, shaving cream, pudding or paint.
- Encourage writing and accept and affirm children's attempts to write. Children's writing begins with scribbles and drawing which are acceptable first forms of writing for your child.
- Provide a name card for children to use as they attempt to write their name. On the name card, print your child's first name. Use an upper case letter for the first letter and lower case letters for the rest of the name.

Letter Activities Continued

Activities for Chicka Chicka Boom Boom

- Put the plastic letters in a bowl and have your child pull out a letter and name it. Talk with your child about the alphabet and that there are 26 letters.
- Before reading, look at the front cover and ask your child what the book might be about. Have they ever seen a tree like the one on the cover?
- As you read ask the following questions: “Do you think all of the letters will be able to fit in the top of the tree? What might happen as more letters climb the tree?”
- Put your finger on each colorful letter of the alphabet. When rereading the book, encourage your child to point to each colorful letter.
- Ask your child the following: “Have you ever fallen down? What happened?”
- Talk about the differences between the upper and lower case letters in the book.
- Talk about the coconut tree and about where this type of tree grows. Look for a real coconut at the grocery store. Break open the coconut and taste the fruit. Compare the taste of real coconut and shredded coconut.
- Have your child draw a coconut tree and write some letters on the tree. Have your child tell you the Chicka Chicka Boom Boom story.
- Read other books by author, Bill Martin Jr., such as Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See? and Polar Bear, Polar Bear What Do You Hear?

Reading Tips Continued

- Ask questions about the story:
 - Who is the most important character? Why?
 - What is the problem in the story?
 - How did the story make you feel?
 - What is your favorite part of the story and why?
- Run your finger under the words while reading.

General Book Extensions:

- Invite your child to talk, draw/write, and paint about the story.
- Encourage your child to pretend to be one of the characters and act out the story.
- Reread favorite stories. Children love to hear the same story again and again.
- Provide a math activity for your child to practice counting, making patterns, sorting, etc. after reading a math book.
- Provide a cooking or science experience after reading a book such as Green Eggs and Ham or Stone Soup.

Book Ideas for If You Give a Pig a Pancake:

- Laugh about the story with your child. Encourage your child to retell the story as he/she flips through the pages.
- Pancake recipe—Have your child help you make your favorite pancake recipe. Have him/her help measure and stir the ingredients. Talk about the pig from the book and what else he/she might want to eat.

Reading Tips Continued

- Pancake drawing—Have your child draw and color his/her favorite kind of pancake or his/her favorite part of the story. Have your child tell you about his/her picture and write down what he/she says.
- Farm—Talk with your child about the animals that live on a farm. Read other books about farms and farm animals.
- Go to the website for the author, Laura Numeroff, for other book ideas and activities. www.lauranumeroff.com
- Read *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* and *If You Give a Moose a Muffin* with your child. Have your child brainstorm and invent titles for other possible books in this series. For example, *If You Give a Fish a Flashlight* or *If You Give a Horse a Hamburger*.



Letter Activities Continued

Write In:

Shaving Cream
Salt
Pudding

Make Letters From:

Play dough
Pipe Cleaners
Blocks

Letter Detective

- Give your child a magnifying glass to look for letters around the house. Tell him/her that he/she is a letter detective.

Eye Spy

- Give your child a pair of silly glasses (sunglasses, etc.). Have him/her look for letters around the house while wearing the glasses.

Grab Bag

Place plastic letters in a bag:

- Have your child pull out a letter and try to find that letter around the house (on food labels, magazines, books, etc.).
- Pull out a letter and have your child think of a word that begins with that letter. If it is an action word, have your child act out the word (e.g., “s” in skip, stand, sit or “h” in hop).

Outdoor Fun

- Have your child write letters on the sidewalk with chalk.
- Have your child look for letters on signs when riding in the car.
- Have your child look for letters on food labels when shopping at the grocery store.

Letter Activities

Research shows that alphabet knowledge is one of the best predictors of success in first grade reading. The first letters to focus on are the letters in your child's name since they are the most meaningful to him/her. Then, focus on the letters in the names of family members and friends. Use some of the following activities to draw your child's attention to specific features of letters and help him/her make comparisons between letters.

ABC Song

- Sing the ABC song with your child. Place the magnetic letters on the refrigerator and help your child point to letters as he/she sings.

Names

- Talk about the first letter of your child's name. What does it look like? What sound does it make?
- Have your child look for the beginning letter of names of family members.
- Have your child look for all of the letters in his/her name.

Letter Sorting

Give your child a handful of plastic letters:

- Have him/her look to see how they are alike and how they are different.
- Find letters with straight lines/ slanted lines/ curved lines/ tails/ humps/ etc.

Tactile Letters

Give your child the opportunity to write/make letters in various mediums.



Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is the ability to detect the sounds in language without thinking about the meaning of what is said. Children learn sensitivity to sounds in words by playing with language. Parents should encourage their child to sing songs, say rhymes and play with words throughout the day. Use the following activities to help your child develop the phonological awareness skills needed for success in reading:

Listening—the ability to focus on specific sounds

- Go on a walk around the neighborhood with your child. Every few minutes, stop and have him/her close his/her eyes and listen for sounds. Talk with your child about the sounds that he/she heard (e.g., car honking, birds chirping, dog barking, children playing, etc.)
- Make an assortment of animal sounds for your child to identify. You can moo like a cow, bark like a dog, meow like a cat, etc. Have your child name the animal that makes each sound. Then have him/her make the sound while moving like the animal.
- Set out a variety of kitchen items that make noise such as pots, pans, forks, spoons, measuring cups, etc. Sing a song with your child and use the items to “make music.” Encourage your child to play softly and then loudly.
- Have your child listen as you clap a pattern and then have him/her join you in following the pattern. For example, clap/tap, clap/tap, clap/tap. Vary the number of claps, the speed and the pattern and have your child repeat the pattern.



Phonological Awareness Continued

Sentence Segmenting - the ability to hear individual words in a sentence

- Say a sentence and have your child jump or hop for each word he/she hears. For example, “I/like/pizza.” (3 jumps)
- Give your child 5 or 6 items such as coins. Say a sentence and have your child move a coin for each word he/she hears.
- Bounce a ball for each word in the sentence. Start with three word sentences and gradually make longer sentences. For example, “I/like/cookies,” then “I/like/cookies/with/milk.”

Syllable Segmenting - the ability to hear parts of a word

- Have your child clap:
 - the number of syllables or parts in his name (e.g., Ja-son, 2 claps)
 - the syllables in his family and friend’s names
 - the syllables in everyday words (e.g., cat, 1 clap; ba-na-na, 3 claps)
- Put some items from around the house in a paper bag. Have your child pull an item out of the bag, say the name and clap the syllables.

Alliteration - the ability to hear words that have the same beginning sound

- Read books that emphasize beginning sounds. Many of the Dr. Seuss books contain alliteration.
- Make up silly sentences with words that begin with the same sound, such as “Silly Sally sings softly and sweetly.”

Phonological Awareness Continued

- Have your child think of words that begin with the same sound as his/her name; for example: Holly—house, horse, hose; Lauren—lemon, lamp, light.
- Say a word and have your child think of words that begin with the same sound (e.g., dog—doll, dinosaur, donut, dollar).

Rhyming - the ability to hear words that have the same ending sound

- Say/read nursery rhymes and other rhymes to your child. After your child has become familiar with the rhyme, stop before a rhyming word and have your child fill in the blank. Jack and Jill went up the _(hill)___.
- Have your child change the words in familiar nursery rhymes. For example, “Humpty Dumpty” becomes “Bumpty, Lumpty” or “Sumpty, Tumpty.”
- Read books with rhymes. Teach your child rhymes and songs.
- Listen for rhymes in songs that you know or hear on the radio, TV, or CD’s you have at home. Sing the songs with your child.
- Ask your child to think of and say words that rhyme with their name: (e.g. Heather— feather, weather, leather).
- Say a word and have your child give you a word that rhymes (e.g., car-star, block-sock, dog-frog). Encourage your child to use silly or nonsense words as well as real words (e.g., rug-zug).
- Around the house, point to an object and say its name. Then ask your child to say as many words as he/she can that rhyme with the word (e.g., bed—red, led, ted, said, fed, head, etc.). Other words that are easy for rhyming are clock, rug, toy and sink.