

Exploring

infants and toddlers

Capital District Child Care Council *a tipsheet for parents and caregivers of children ages 0 to 2*

Early Literacy for Infants

Early Language and Literacy begins at birth. Babies are born ready to learn, communicate and connect with their favorite caregivers. Even at birth they are experts at offering us their own curiosity and eagerness to learn. There are many ways to include babies in scenarios that foster early language and literacy skills. By reading their cues, caregivers can discover what babies want and need. Through this unspoken communication, early language and literacy is born.

1. Provide a safe and comfortable environment that encourages attachment and invites children to explore. Adults should have comfortable places to read to and play with one baby or several at a time.
2. Provide furniture, books, play space and materials that allow babies to explore safely.
3. Play spaces should be "print rich". Label items at levels where little ones can see them. Babies also enjoy eye level pictures of interesting items and familiar faces that are labeled.
4. Remember that books, bulletin boards and any communications should honor children's home language and culture whenever possible.
5. Babies should have a generous supply of cloth and cardboard books visible and available to choose from every day.

6. Young infants enjoy simply listening to a caregiver's voice as they share a story. Later on, a reader can point out an object to a baby and say its name. After that, an adult can begin asking a baby to point to a picture and then say the name of the object.
7. Gently hold baby's finger out and trace items and letters. An adult reader can bring a character to



Lap reading with a young child can be a memorable time of snuggly warmth and pleasure

- life by using her own fingers to help it take steps or climb a tree. Use different voices for different characters and simple sign language while reading. Play a game by leaving out a word and patiently wait for baby to fill in familiar words. The deep vibration of a favorite voice against a baby's back while cuddled on a snuggly lap helps little ones make calm transitions from one activity to the next.
9. The repetition of reading the same story over and over is wonderful and reassuring to young children.
10. To avoid clutter and over abundance, borrow books from the library and purchase the most requested titles.



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