

Building emotional learning and literacy Family Connections



Capital District
Child Care Council

Encouraging Literacy Education and Parent Engagement (LEAPE)

The Wonderful World of Letters

Learning about letters is complex. Developing print awareness is one of the first skills children need when learning the alphabet. When children can name letters and recognize signs or symbols in their environment; this is called print awareness. Children understand that these signs or symbols are connected to the spoken word, a very important concept for young readers and writers.

What you can do...

Provide blank paper, crayons and markers for children to draw and write. If the child does not know how to write their name you might ask, "Can I write your name on your paper?" As you write the child's name say the letters aloud. This reinforces the connection between the letters you are writing and the names of the letters. Or ask your child to tell you a story about their picture. Write down what they say and attach it to the drawing.

How does this benefit my child...

Each child learns that every mark they make is special and unique. When we talk with children about their pictures they connect those drawings with the spoken word.

What you can do...

Provide opportunities for children to explore the shapes of letters. Have children manipulate pipe cleaners or yarn to make different letters. For example with the letter "O," ask the child to bend the pipe cleaner to make the letter O. Draw attention to the shape, using phrases like, "Wow the letter O looks a lot like a circle."

How does this benefit my child...

By describing shapes and making comparisons we are helping children to discriminate attributes of letters, leading to knowledge of the names of the letters. When describing letters it also provides an opportunity to build vocabulary.

What you can do...

Model writing. The printed word has many purposes for us in our daily environment. Encourage children to play with sign making in the block area. Have cookbooks in dramatic play. Write a message of the day and read to children. Display information books in your science area.

How does this benefit my child...

Children begin to identify the purpose or function of print. When we provide opportunities for children to use the written word they are valued as readers and writers.

