

Building Your Children's Early Literacy Skills

Before starting school, children begin building their first literacy skills through their interactions at home and in their play time.

Families, are essential in setting up children for success in the early grades (Kindergarten to Grade 3), when young students continue to grow and become readers and writers.

How can families help children develop a strong literacy foundation?

- ☐ Use your First Nation language as much as you can. Practicing more than one language is extremely beneficial for children's brain development, their self-esteem, and their love of learning.
- ☐ Talk to your children. Oral language is the beginning of learning to read and write. Have conversations, ask your children questions, tell them stories, and ask your children to tell stories to you.
- ☐ Play with language. Sing, make up silly rhymes, try to name an animal or food beginning with each letter of the alphabet ... Have fun with sounds.
- ☐ Read to your children ... anything and everything. Read signs, recipes, packages, picture books ... Label items at home so your children see words all around them. Or listen to audiobooks. And talk about what you are reading or listening to – which helps build understanding. Ask your children questions about the story, invite them to make guesses about what might happen next, and discuss any new words you come across.
- ☐ When it's time for your child to read on their own, choose books that interest them. Using early reader books, your children can start to read with your help.
- ☐ Play together. Through play, children learn, build their language skills, and get to express themselves creatively.

- ☐ Use letter and number toys and games. Puzzles, magnets, and board games are fun ways for kids to practice their letters, words, and numbers.
- ☐ Have your child draw, craft, or play with playdough. These activities help to strengthen children's hands, which is important when they begin to form written letters. Making marks and shapes on paper is the start of writing. Later they will practice forming letters correctly.
- ☐ When your child is ready to write, encourage them to write regularly. They can write lists, keep a journal, write funny poems, express their ideas freely. If possible, give them fun writing materials like colorful pens, paper, and notebooks.
- ☐ Share new words. Talk about new ways to describe things. Which fish is big, which is huge, which is giant, which is massive?
- ☐ If you have questions, talk to the school or childcare provider.