**Reading Readiness**

**![j0406184[1]]()Please set aside 20 minutes each evening to read with your child**. Bedtime is a great time! Reading with your child is one of the best things you can do for his/her education, since research has shown a significant relationship between the amount of time spent reading and school achievement.

**![j0406184[1]]()A great way to get your child interested in books is to talk about them.** Here are some easy ways to have meaningful conversations about books:

-Allow your child to make predictions on what the story will be about before you begin reading.

-As you read, stop occasionally to discuss what is happening. In fictional stories, such as fairy tales, talk about the characters, setting, and the problems the characters are having in the story. If the story is non-fiction, ask your child to say what he/she has learned and share some interesting facts.

-After you finish reading, ask your child to tell about his/her favorite part, funniest part or saddest part. Have him tell you why he feels the way he does about the story or if the story reminds him of any prior experiences or other books he knows.

**![j0406184[1]]()Point to and have your child name shapes, colors and familiar letters (such as those in his/her name) as you read together.** You can make this into an “I Spy” game, where you and your child take turns “spying” and finding items on the page. You might say, “I spy something on this page that is a rectangle,” and your child can guess. When your child finds the item, he/she can “spy” something for you to find. Helping your child to learn the colors and shapes, along with the letters in his/her name is a good way to build his/her visual memory in preparation for the more complex task of learning to recognize all the letters and identify sounds that go with them.

![j0406184[1]]() **Point out rhyming words in nursery rhymes and rhyming books.** A child’s ability to identify and produce rhymes aids in early reading and writing development. When reading a nursery rhyme, such as Jack and Jill, ask your child to say the word that rhymes with Jill. If your child is not yet able to do this, simplify the task by asking, “Do Jill and hill rhyme, or do Jill and pail rhyme?” If your child is not able to identify the rhyming pair, simply say a few words that rhyme, like “Jill, hill, spill and bill,” so that your child can begin to hear the similarities in rhyming words.

![j0406184[1]]() **When you come to a word that is new to your child, stop and discuss the meaning of that word.** Reading to your child is a great way to strengthen his/her vocabulary! This builds your child’s knowledge base. When you are reading together and you come to a word that is new to your child, take a few minutes to ask him/her what it might mean. After some discussion, share the meaning of the word with them and talk about how it relates to the story you are reading. At the end of the story, ask your child to tell you the new words he/she has learned. Use these words periodically to see if your child remembers their meanings.

**![j0406184[1]]()Encourage your child to “read” independently.** It is fun for children to have a special “reading spot” (a bean-bag in a quiet corner of the house works just fine). To help your child get the most of his/her reading time, teach him/her that there are 3 ways to read a book. She/he can:

-“Read” the pictures. When “reading” the pictures, your child can look at each picture and try to create his/her own story from the pictures as he/she turns through the pages.

-Retell the story. Your child can do this with a familiar story. After you have read a book to your child several times, your child can turn the pages of the book and tell the story in his/her own words.

-Read the words. When reading the words, have your child use the pointer (popsicle stick) to crisply point to each word on the page as it is spoken aloud. This works well with printed nursery rhymes or books with predictable text. Children at this age rely on their memory and text patterns to read, more than they are able to rely upon “sounding out” words. The important thing is that they are moving from left to right and top to bottom as they follow the print with the pointer. They should also hold the book right side up and move from the front to the back of the book as they turn the pages. These are important pre-reading skills.