

East Missouri Action Agency, Inc.  
**HEAD START PARENT-DEVELOPED LITERACY IDEAS**

### LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

*Goal: "Big people" talk with child 2½ hours each day.* Children who have someone to talk with them about 2½ hours a day are more likely to become successful readers than those who have someone with them only ¾ hours each day.

#### **Visit with family members that enjoyed talking with kids!**

#### **Bedtime—morning and evening**

- Communication is enhanced.
- Morning talking: if your child gets in bed with you in the morning to talk, parent gets to stay in bed and wake up leisurely.
- Realize: some children just fall asleep.
- Lying in bed together can be a special talking time.

#### **Mealtime**

Pro: It is important for families to connect to each other. Mealtime is a good time to connect.

Con: If mealtimes are stressful, find a special time to talk with child other than mealtime.

**Bath time** Many children are relaxed and enjoy talking in the bath.

#### **Car rides**

- Turn the radio off, and singing silly songs—or sing along with the radio.
- Be available to your child as you drive.
- While driving talk about the buildings you see, such as police station.

#### **Reading Time**

- Books help with picture recognition.
- Talk about pictures in books.

**Walmart:** Go by the fish, talk about toys and other items in the store.

#### **School-Home Connection**

- Homework helps a child to talk about things done during the day.
- Recall your child's day at school with him or her.
- When your child brings papers home from school, this is a good talking time.
- Value of songs, singing the songs they hear it school, and repeating them at home.

*Note: Many parents talked about wanting to know more about what is going on at Head Start. Therefore we have added 1) frequently sending home information about what the children are doing in class, and 2) making sure to send home work your child has done each week. Many programs have already been doing this and parents appreciated it.*

### Circumstances affect talking

- Understand that a child can be frustrated trying to say the words the way he or she wants to.
- Amount of talking depends on:
  - \*the setting of the environment.
  - \*a child's temperament and personality.
  - \*the atmosphere, at home vs. school, friends vs. teachers.
  - \*emotional ties between the child and the other person.
- Children are more likely to express their opinion when an adult express back, and voices own opinion. This is a respectful relationship.

*Parents' note: Be aware of times your child likes to talk. Some talk in the morning, others prefer evening—others talk all the time. Some children want to talk about their day at Head Start. Others may need a break, time to chill out, and then they want to talk about things.*

### Talking Activities/Topics

- Pretend to talk on the phone
- Talk about: animals, new shoes, trucks, family invisible creatures or people, something you are comfortable with such as an imaginary dinosaur
- Reading time can become a talking time.
- Have a special time, or day--Monday—to talk.

### Television

Observe your child: Zombie out in front of the TV? No retention of information? Child does not use brain to communicate back?

Shows parents recommend because children interact:

- Dora the Explorer
- Blues Clues
- Disney channel
- Barney

Use TV shows to distinguish between pretend and real.

### Interrupting!

- Help children learn the appropriate and inappropriate talking time.
- Use a signal, such as a hand signal, to encourage a child to wait for his or her turn to talk.
- For children who really like to talk, make sure that you spend time each day talking about what the child is interested in. This can be while driving in the car or while cooking, as well as just relaxing.

## LITERACY

*Goal: 'Big people' read at least 100 books to each child outside of Head Start during the school year.* That is about 3 books each week. The same book can be read over and over, or a child can listen to different stories. In addition, parents have *many* effective ways to encourage literacy listed below!

### Reading Time

- Find others to read to your children when you don't have the time, or do not enjoy reading. That's OK! Just be sure your child is read to.
- #1 Parent Favorite Idea:  
READ AT BEDTIME: Use reading time at bedtime as a winding down time. After dinner they are not quite sleepy yet and may not be ready to be read to.
- Ask questions of what has been read to your child.
- Afternoon can be a quiet time reading.
- Use reading time as a means to settle down.
- Read books at bath time.

### Obtaining Books

- Ordering books from Head Start is helpful.
- Go to library.
- Make your child books about favorite topics, such as farm animals. Label pictures.
- Check out books from Head Start.

### Learning the Alphabet

- Make alphabet soup.
- Repeat names of letters when spelling child name.
- As the Head Start bus comes, pick out letters on the bus.
- While cleaning windows and mirrors -- write letters on the mirror.
- Point out that your child does know letters, for instance when he recognizes W. W. F -- World Wrestling Federation.

### Recognizing Words

- Recognize letters in words printed in book
  - Write and recognize favorite words -- Mama, gas, name, W. W. F.
  - Parents could send in words that children recognize like Wal-Mart and McDonald's
  - Pick out a word for the day and talk about it
- Note: We're asking parents to send in words and, if possible, actual logos such as names on food boxes, that their child recognizes.*

### Reading Ideas

- Model reading—even just brief moments!
- Adjust reading according to the child's style.
- Read to calm a child.

## Younger Siblings Complicate Life

- Younger siblings abuse books.
- Younger siblings make it difficult to read.
- *Talk with other parents about how they deal with younger siblings!*

### Writing

- Save children's work in a notebook
- Provide lots of opportunities for writing
- When child asked to write a word show him or her
- Have child to write a letter
- Write and mail a letter at the post office
- Combine fun activities with writing words. For example, make a paper airplane—and write 'plane' on the side.
- Preschoolers like to do homework when older children do.
- Use the Internet for children to send messages to friends -- and Mom and Dad, if Head Start had the Internet. *Note: This is a great goal for us!*

### Learn Words from Environment

- Some children recognize words from their environment.
- Point out and read words that are on video games.
- Point out signs while driving—McDonalds, STOP.
- Point out words in advertisements on TV.
- Read words on food containers.

### Computers, and the Internet

- Type on computer -- e-mail, learning games
- [www.disney.com](http://www.disney.com) has Bear in the Big Blue House and other activities
- [www.nickjr.com](http://www.nickjr.com)--click on Nick Jr. Playtime

### Ways to Encourage Enjoyment of Reading

- Have books with a good story line.
- Have books that tie in with TV shows.
- Have a special place for children's books.
- Keep book reading time a flexible.
- Read short books.
- Read favorite stories.
- Have kids read you.
- Read your child's very own books.
- Tell parent story—and you write it down, and read that story many times to your child.
- Have older siblings read to younger siblings—and find ways to reward them for doing so.

### Last but not least....

Figure out ways to deal with distractions--TV, computer, babies, older siblings, activities!