

Smart from the start

Helping your kindergarten or grade 1 child

For students in the primary grades

Read, read and reread

- **Read to and with your child every day.**

Encourage your child to join in when reading familiar stories or favorite lines. Reread favorite stories. Listen as your child reads to you. Set aside the same time to read every day to establish a routine.

- **Set an example.** Children need to see you reading, too. Provide positive role models, both male and female.

Encourage your child's first attempts at reading. Be generous with your praise and support. When you show confidence, your child will feel it.

- **Surround your child with reading materials.** Provide a variety of texts to read, for example, fiction and non-fiction books, poems, comics, magazines, cartoons, recipe books and newspapers. Include books in your own language. Read books for enjoyment as well as information.

- **Talk about stories.** To develop comprehension, talk about the stories you read together. Occasionally pause to ask your child to make predictions – "What do you think might happen next?" Ask some "why" questions during and after the reading.

Play with sounds in words

- **Play "I Spy."** Say "I spy with my little eye something that starts with the sound 's'" and ask him to try and guess the object.

- **Make silly sentences.** Help your child create silly alliterative sentences. For example,

"Katie kissed kangaroos." Collect your silly sentences in a book.

- **Sound it out.** Say a word in parts for children to blend together. For example, s...at, m...an.

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Write on

- **Sing the alphabet song.** Look at alphabet books with your child and play with magnetic letters, alphabet blocks and puzzles.

- **Provide a place and materials.** Give your child a place to experiment with writing, with good lighting and a range of writing materials (such as different kinds of paper, notebooks, pencils, markers and crayons).

- **Set an example.** Write messages to your child and encourage replies. Have your child help you write letters and cards and make lists. Do *real* writing together for real purposes.

- **Encourage your child to write.** The more writing your child does, the more recognizable the letters will become. Help your child learn to write her name and some favorite words. Support your child's attempts at spelling. Help

sound out new words—for example "s-u-n"—then blend sounds to create words.

- **Encourage keeping a journal.**

Suggest your child write about things that happen at home and at school. A journal provides excellent writing practice and a place to work out feelings.

- **Encourage your child to use a word processor, if available.**

Talk, talk and more talk

- **Talk about the pictures and events in the books you read.** Relate the events in stories to

your child's experiences. Ask her to retell a story.

- **Talk to your child about the events of the day.** Encourage your child to talk about his interests, friends, favorite books, TV shows and movies.

- **Encourage your child to ask questions.**

Use TV and computers wisely

- **TV, computers, and videos are great educational tools.** Set limits, make good choices and plan ahead. Review the TV guide with your child and select shows for the week.

- **Make it a family affair.** Enjoy shows together and discuss them afterwards. Share your point of view.

- **Read the book. Watch the video.** How are they the same or different?

Listen carefully, listen actively

- **Provide an example of good listening.**

Listen to what your child is trying to say. Encourage her to listen courteously to others.

- **Provide listening opportunities.** Give oral

instructions for your child to follow.

Listen to books on tape and all kinds of music.

- **Play listening games with your child.**

For example, "*I packed my bag and in it I put my toothbrush.*" In turn, each player repeats what has been said and then adds a new item to the bag.

Explore your community

- **Visit the zoo, museum, art gallery and**

bookstores. Play games in the car, recognizing the letters and numbers on dehiscent plates. Map out the route to your destination. Take a camera to record your trip and write a memory book of your adventures.

- **Point out traffic signs, billboards and shop names.** How many can your child read?

- **Take your child for a ride on the bus, GO**

train or subway. What a great experience to talk and write about!

- **Take your child to the library regularly.**

Get your child his own library card and let him choose his own books.

Participate in children's programs at the library.

Create a traveling backpack. Include items such as paper, maps, brochures, picture books, magazines, pencils, markers, tape, scissors and glue.

Be creative

- **Keep a cupboard, drawer or box of craft materials.** Build, paint, model and draw together. Encourage your child to talk about her creations with others.

- **Keep a trunk or box of dress up clothes and costumes.** Be dramatic. Make up plays and skits. Find an audience!
- **Create a favorite recipe together.** Enjoy eating it.

Sing songs and read rhymes

- **Jump Rope.** Sing and chant the skipping rhymes you remember from your childhood, for example, *Engine, Engine Number Nine*.
- **Read nursery rhymes and poetry.** Help your child feel the rhythm and hear the sounds and patterns of language.
- **Play rhyming games.** Go on a "rhyme hunt." Ask your child to find something in the room that rhymes with a given word.
This will help him recognize word families and develop better listening skills.

Encourage, praise, celebrate

- **Praise your child when she is reading.**
Say "Good for you – that was a difficult word." Be patient and maintain your child's confidence.
- **React positively to your child's writing.**
Value your child's first attempts at writing. Respond to the message rather than the grammar or spelling. Always encourage her to "have a go" at spelling words herself.
- **Celebrate your child's efforts and successes.** Find a special place to display his work.
- **Have fun!**