

## **Promoting literacy development with parents**

Communicating with children from an early age helps to develop the child's ability to speak, listen and understand as they get older. For example, you might notice your baby responds to your smiles and your words. Your baby might try to imitate your sounds and facial expressions. When you respond, it encourages two-way conversation and helps your baby learn words and build language skills.

### **What you can do to encourage communication at an early development stage with your children?**

- Copy the sounds they make. Use baby talk, which is when you speak more slowly if you have to. Let your voice rise and fall, repeat and emphasise words. This helps babies understand how language is put together.
- Sing with your child.
- Talk with your child about the everyday things you're doing and seeing together. For example, 'Look at the red bird' or 'Yum, what a nice lunch we're having'. This helps children learn how to structure sentences at an early stage.
- Talk about feelings and encourage them to talk about whether they are happy or sad. Use words to describe your child's emotions. This can help your child understand how others feel too.
- Share stories with your child. You could share funny or interesting stories from your childhood or tell your child about your family's past. You could even take turns creating a story together. Not only will this make them feel like they are a part of the story but it will encourage them to speak and share their thoughts.
- Emphasise the different parts of words or different letters to help your child understand that words can be broken down into segments.
- Listen to your child. Follow your child's lead and talk about things they want to talk about. If your child asks a question, give them the chance to come up with answers before you step in.
- Repeat mispronounced words with the correct pronunciation.

## **The importance of reading in literacy development**

It's good to read with your child often. It's best to start reading from birth, but it's never too late to begin. Reading with children from an early age helps them develop a solid foundation for literacy. It also promotes bonding and is good for your relationship with your child.

Reading with your children does the following:

- Shows them that books can give both pleasure and information.
- Helps them learn the sounds of letters in spoken language.
- Helps them understand that stories aren't coming from you, but from the words on the page this teaches them about how the printed word works.
- Helps them develop a larger vocabulary books might use new or unfamiliar words.
- Improves their thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Can get them thinking and talking about a new concept, an event or something that interests them.
- Helps them learn about the wider community, society and the world.

## **What you can do to prompt literacy development with your children?**

- Choose lift-the-flap books, touch-and-feel books or books with rhyming or repeating words for younger children.
- Encourage your child to hold the book and turn the pages. This helps your child start to understand that the book should be a certain way up and that pages are always turned in the same direction.
- Slide your finger underneath the words as you read them, pointing out each word. This teaches your child about print and shows your child that we always start on the left and move to the right when reading English. You could ask, 'Where should I start reading on this page?' or 'Do you know this letter?'
- Point out pictures and talk about the pictures your child points to.
- Make the sounds of animals or other objects in the book. Make it fun.
- Ask your child open-ended questions about the story, like 'What do you think is going to happen next?' or 'What would you do if this was you?'
- Visit your local library it's free to join and borrow. Libraries have many different types of books.