

# HOW TO NURTURE A LOVE OF READING IN PRESCHOOLERS

Knowledge of letters, sounds, pictures and print develop long before your child starts school. You can enhance your child's exposure to language and print naturally during the course of your day.

Here are five tips that will help you instil in your child a love of reading and language.

## 1) CREATE A POSITIVE NURTURING ENVIRONMENT

- Celebrate your child's early reading behaviours.
- Talk is the basis of language and reading development. Talk with and listen to your child every day.
- Cut apart old magazines and make a scrap box of pictures and words. Have fun creating a new story by gluing or taping the cut-out pictures onto clean sheets of paper.
- Play word games, such as 'I spy something that rhymes with log'.

## 2) READ A VARIETY OF BOOKS

- Read books you remember from your childhood. Favourite stories and characters are timeless.
- Read wordless stories and make up stories that go with the pictures.
- Children are full of interests and curiosities. Simple concept books give them the vocabulary they need to talk about the world.
- Children love to fill in the gaps when you read together. You can start with rhymes, songs and fingerplays. For example, 'Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great \_\_\_\_\_.'

## 3) READ PURPOSEFULLY

- Read aloud every day to your child. Select books that reflect your child's culture and give them a world of heroes and adventures through quality literature.
- Connect books to experiences and family outings. For example, if you visit an aquarium and your child seems particularly interested, read books about ocean creatures.
- Read around your home! Most homes are filled with box labels, mail addresses, messages and notes.
- Explore how books work. Talk about the cover of the book and read aloud the author's name. Take turns turning the pages, point to words as you read and talk about the pictures.

## 4) MAKE READING A HABIT

- The ritual of reading a bedtime story cannot be established too early. These times when you and your child are close together are essential in establishing a lifelong reading habit.
- Let your child select books to read. Read favourite stories over and over. Children love repetition and learn from it.
- Ensure that reading material is accessible. Visit the library and bookstores, and participate in Book Club.
- Be a reader yourself, and let your child catch you reading newspapers, magazines and books.

## 5) MAKE THE READING/WRITING CONNECTION

- Young children need to see themselves as readers and writers. Keep writing materials and resources around the house.
- When you need to be away from home, leave a message to be read to your child.
- Label your child's possessions. Children love to see their names written on everything!

