

Using Music and Song to Encourage Literacy

Research shows that music helps children increase their listening, mathematic, and even literacy skills. Here are some tips to help you incorporate music into your activities.

Here are some ways to keep kids reading in ways they might not have imagined.

.....

1. Turn daily tasks into something to sing about.

Make up songs to bring some fun into activities like brushing teeth, cleaning up, and going to bed.



.....

2. Before you sit down to read, see if you can find music that will match the mood of the book you are reading.

For example, if you're reading a suspenseful story, find music that is slow and low. If it is happy or funny book, a lively tune will do. If it is a sad story, choose a slow and melodic piece.

.....

3. What household items can you use to make musical instruments?

Invite your children to scour the house for appropriate musical tools. A bottle could become a flute, a tub could become a drum or a cap and some beans could become a rattle. Use your instruments while listening to music or while reading rhythmic poetry.



.....

4. Many song lyrics have descriptive lines that summarize a situation

-- whether it's describing the love between a parent and child or a philosophy to live by. Look for song lyrics that inspire you and write them down to post in a room of the house, like beside the bathroom sink. Your children will read this message every time they brush their teeth.

5. The next time you read a book that is rhythmic, try singing it instead.

Invite your child to sing along with you. You don't have to be a great singer to turn your read together into a duet. Sing the page first and then sing it again with your children while you follow the words in the book with your finger.

.....

6. Take familiar songs and change the words to make your own version of the song.

After singing a few stanzas, encourage your children to do the same.



.....

7. Listen to a whole compilation of songs and make up a story to tell along with the song.

When the music changes, how does the action in the story change? Write your story on a sheet of paper and keep it with the CD. The next time you take the CD out to listen to, add pictures to your story.

.....

8. The next time you go to turn on the TV, put on some music instead.

Music is comforting, provides entertainment, and allows you to do other tasks, like reading, while you are listening.

.....

9. Do you remember songs that your parents or grandparents sang to you?

Share the tradition by teaching them to your child. Make sure that the tradition lives on by writing down the lyrics.



.....

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF) is the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit children's literacy organization. For more information about RIF, visit www.rif.org.