

Ten Tips for Families of Young Children

Support your young child's learning with ten simple, research-based tips that fit naturally into everyday life. From talking and reading together to encouraging play and exploration, these practical strategies help build the foundation for language, literacy, and lifelong learning.

Read aloud to your child every day

- Read to babies even before they can talk
- Let your child see and touch the book
- Play with voices and the sounds of words

Create a print rich-home environment

- Have a wide variety of books available to children
- Encourage children to look at books on their own
- Set aside a family reading area and a family reading time

Use grocery shopping to encourage reading and writing

- Have children help you search for specific brands
- Use the aisle markers with your child to find items
- Match coupons to products
- Have children write out grocery lists

Cook with your child to develop literacy

- Show your child how to read a recipe
- Read the labels on ingredients together
- Make a family cookbook of favorite recipes
- Develop oral literacy by talking about family recipes and cooking tips

Point out environmental print to children.

- Note signage during nature walks and other outings
- Discuss logos
- Ask children to point out print outside of the home environment

Tell stories together

- Talk together about your family history
- Look at old vacation photos and discuss your memories of the trip
- Record your storytelling
- Create family photo albums and have our child help craft the captions

Ten Tips for Families of Young Children

Sing and rhyme with your child

- Choose songs with rhymes and word play
- Play rhyming games with your child such as, “What other words sound like “honey”?”
- Challenge your child to sing or say rhymes as fast as they can and don’t forget to laugh if the results are silly

Write with your child

- Provide lots of writing materials (chalk, markers, crayons, and pencils)
- Encourage your child to draw and write on their own
- Encourage your child to write thank you notes to grandparents, make to-do lists, etc.

Tie literacy to art

- Visit an art museum together and use storytelling to explain what is happening in the artwork. Allow your child to interpret the artwork however he/she views it
- Have children create their own drawings, painting, sculptures, and even instillation
- pieces made from recyclables in your living room
- Explain art with sentence strips on which children dictate to you what their artwork is about (consider making a recording in which the children can tell a story about their artwork)

Visit the library (and/or bookstore) often

- Make trips as often as you can
- Encourage your child to get his or her own library card
- Take advantage of library programs, such as read alouds and family book clubs

*This tip sheet is available in other languages. Find them at **rif.org**.