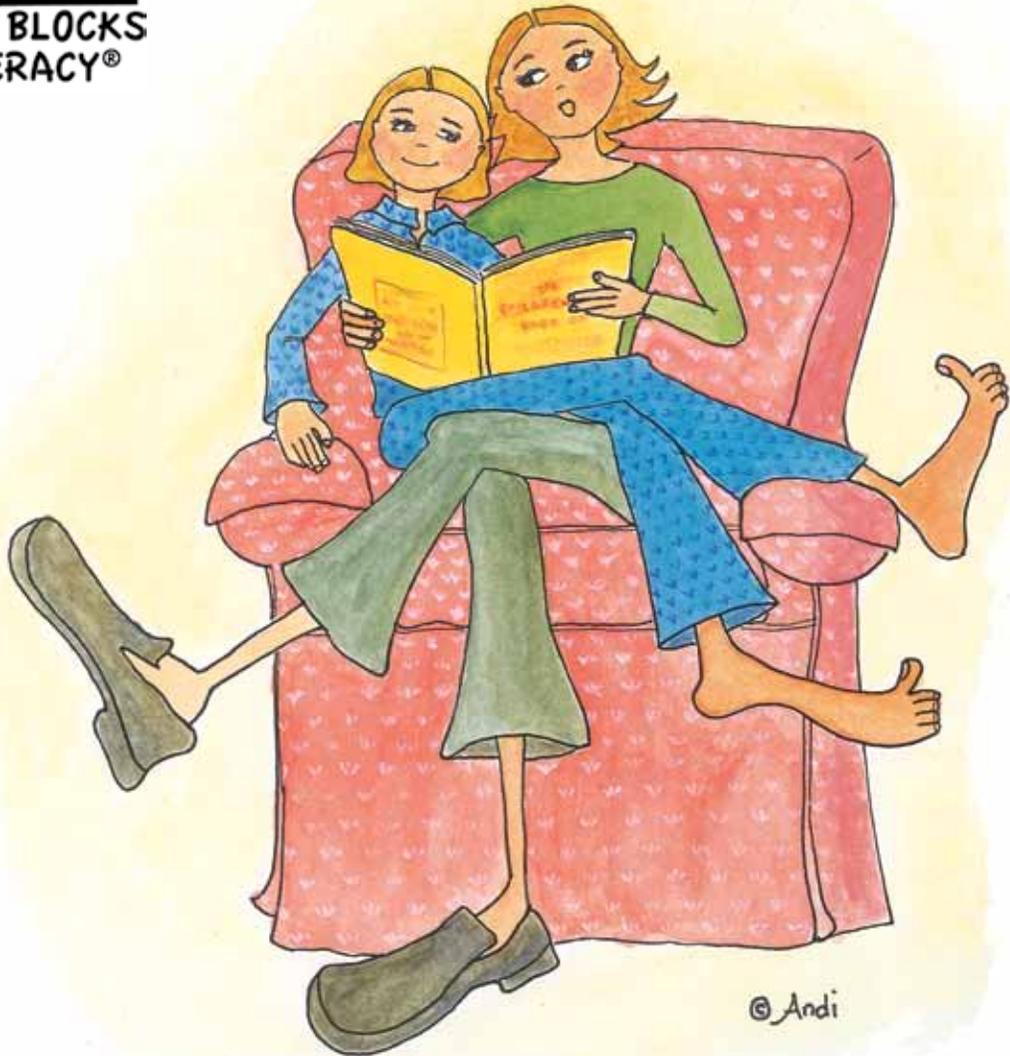


BUILDING BLOCKS  
FOR LITERACY®

# BUILDING BLOCKS FOR LITERACY®



## Activity Guide

for promoting your child's  
early reading success



Stern Center  
for Language and Learning

# Shared Book Reading

**Besides being a great way to connect with your child, reading and talking about books are keys to helping your children develop language, build comprehension, and learn more about print.**

## **What Do You Read with a Preschooler?**

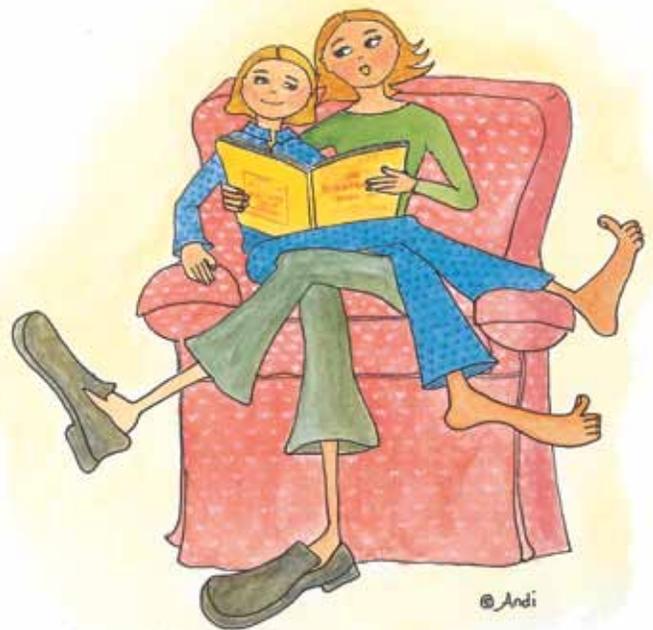
EVERYTHING! Magazines, the comics, signs, notes, recipes, web pages, and books, books, books. Let children choose whatever books they want at the library, but check out some that you will enjoy, too. Your enthusiasm will be contagious. Parents modeling reading is powerful stuff.

## **Where Should We Read?**

ANYWHERE! Position baskets and boxes of books around the house so you can reach for a book when opportunity knocks—the laundry room, the porch, under the dining room table, next to the toy box, and, of course, the most popular reading room, the bathroom!

## **When Should We Read?**

ANYTIME! In addition to quiet times like bedtime, pack a tote bag and try reading as you wait at the supermarket check-out counter or the bus stop. Have a wiggly child who doesn't seem to sit still through a whole book? Look for times when you have a captive audience; when they are eating a snack or when they are sitting on the potty.



# Speech to Print Connection

People are motivated to read and write because we know that print contains a message. We also know that anything we say can be put into print.

## If You Can Say It, You Can Write It!

Have children dictate to you for a thank you note, email, story, or reminder. Write down exactly what they say, not making any corrections for grammar or pronunciation. Read it back to them, pointing to each word as you go.



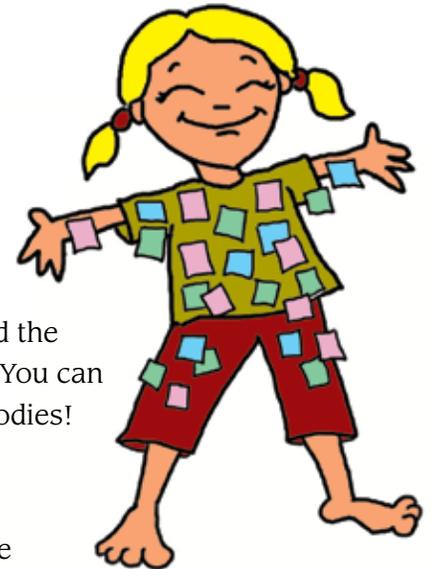
## Say What?

Look for books with thought bubbles (like *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* by Mo Willems). Cut your own thought bubbles out of white paper and add them to magazine pictures and family photos. Don't limit it to people. Trucks, machines, animals, and things in nature "say" sounds too. Figure out the spelling together and get ready to giggle.



## Stick To It!

Sticky notes make labeling objects around the house quick and easy. You can even label your own bodies!



## Size It Up

Look for books that use different size print for shouting and whispering (such as *Snuggle Puppy* by Sandra Boynton). Share with your child how you know when to adjust the volume.



## Bingo With a Twist

"There was a mom who had a kid and Colby was his name-o, C-O-L-B-Y..."

## Alphabet Knowledge

Build your children's understanding of the ABC's not just by saying and singing them. Use refrigerator magnet letters to match (L to L), recognize ("Find the M."), and name them ("What's this one?").

# Phonological Awareness

understanding that words are made up of smaller parts

## Syllables

**Being aware of syllables helps us learn new vocabulary, sound out words, and spell.**

### Guess My Word

Have children practice putting word parts together. Tell them you are going to the "li...brar...y."

### You Tap My Back, I'll Tap Yours

Tell children that you are going to tap out the name of someone in the family on their backs. See if they can guess whose name it is.

### Clap It Out

Have children clap out the beats in their names (three claps for Sa-man-tha, two for Pe-ter). Or jump, karate chop, rubber stamp, or lay out objects (like rocks or raisins) for each beat in a word. Whose name is the longest in the family? The shortest?



### Talk Like a Robot

Talk... ing... in... a... mon... o... tone... helps... kids... fo... cus... on... syl... la... bles.



### Sing!

Music makes us more aware of syllables: "Hick...or...y Dick...or...y Dock."



# Phonological Awareness

understanding that words are made up of smaller parts

## Phonemes (sounds)

The ability to think about individual sounds in words is one of the strongest indicators of future reading success.

### Look for Books and Songs with Alliteration

Saying sentences such as "Sammy snake slithered south" is super for separating single sounds.



### What if the Whole World Started with My Sound?

"My name, Daddy, starts with the /d/ sound. What if everything started with that sound? Your name would be Doseph! We would be sitting in the ditchen..."

...Get the didea?

### (Don't) Finish What You Start

Having soup for lunch? Tell children, "Today we're having /s/..." If they can't figure it out, keep adding one more sound until they get it - /s/.../oo/.../p/.

### Sing!

Songs provide great opportunities to play with speech sounds. Single sounds get repeated (think of David Bowie's "ch...ch...ch...ch... changes!" or stretched out like Carly Simon's "anticipaaaaaaation"). So even if you can't carry a tune, go ahead and break out in song when the spirit moves you!



# Phonological Awareness

understanding that words are made up of smaller parts

## Rhyming



**Knowing that words sound alike and making our own rhymes help us manipulate sounds, learn new words to read, and spell.**

### **"I Spy" with a Twist**

Play "I Spy" with children by giving a rhyme as a hint: "I spy something that rhymes with \_\_\_\_."

### **Nicknames**

Make up silly terms of endearment for each other!

"Daddy-addy-badaddy"

"Tessie Tutu, I love you-too!"

"Michael, Michael Motorcycle"

"Miss Molly, by Golly"

### **Read lots of Rhyming Books!**

Songs, poems, and stories that rhyme are easy to memorize and help train little ears in rhythm and rhyme.

Don't forget the classics! Nursery rhymes, playground chants, lullabies, and Dr. Seuss books endure because they are so effective. Plus, they link us to our past and to each other.

### **Sing!**

Most lyrics rhyme. Find songs you and your child love. Make up your own.

