

Pointers For Parents

Become A Reading Model: Encourage Early Childhood Literacy

(NAPSA)—As a parent, there is much you can do to develop your child's reading skills and set the stage for a lifelong love of books and learning. During the school year, create a reading routine with your school-aged child, a toddler or even infant. Show your child reading is a year-round activity by making reading fun and interesting and chances are he or she will be eager to read on his or her own.

Perhaps the best way to encourage your budding reader is by reading to him or her on a regular basis. These tips can help you make the most of the time you spend reading:

- Make reading a relaxed and fun activity. Try to minimize distractions. Turn off the television and consider asking other family members to take phone messages for you.

- Establish a routine time and place for reading.

- Invite your child to sit close to you as you read so he or she can see the illustrations and turn the pages.

- Ask your child to select the book or books to be read. Frequent trips to the public library will give your child an opportunity to select new and different books.

- Be prepared to read and reread the same books over and over. Children love repetition; when a book is well known or the story is familiar, children delight



A few minutes each day sharing a story or part of a book with your child can increase interest in reading.

in their ability to “read” the book to or with others.

- Read the books with expression. For example, alter your voice for different characters or become more animated during exciting parts of the story.

- As you read, pause periodically to ask questions about the text to help your child develop comprehension skills. For example, “What happened to the snowball that the boy put in his pocket?”

- When reading a book for the first time, build on your child's imagination by reading the book's title and asking your child what the story might be about prior to reading it.

- Illustrations give additional layers of meaning to books. Ask

your child to share his or her thoughts about the illustrations as you read books together; for example, “The book says the dog is very, very happy. Does he look happy to you? How can you tell?”

- For infants and toddlers, board books with vivid colors and illustrations can be a nice introduction to a lifelong love of reading.

When striving to become a “reading model” for your child, you can demonstrate through your own actions that reading is important to you. Allow your child to see you regularly reading the mail or the newspaper, magazines, professional journals or your favorite novels and you may begin to plant the seeds that encourage a lifelong love of reading.

“One of the best predictors of reading success is the amount of time children spend engaged in reading,” explained Megan Riede, Senior Director, Education Programs for KinderCare Learning Centers. “Reading aloud to children provides them with an opportunity to learn stories they hear and to develop critical literacy skills. Just a few minutes each day sharing a story or part of a book with your children can increase interest in reading and benefit their future reading success.”

For more information on early childhood education, please visit www.KinderCare.com.

Happy reading.