

Pointers For Parents

Reading To Preschoolers Opens World Of Words

(NAPS)—Fewer than half of American parents read to their infants and toddlers regularly, even though a study says hearing a story read aloud can stimulate brain cell growth in young children.

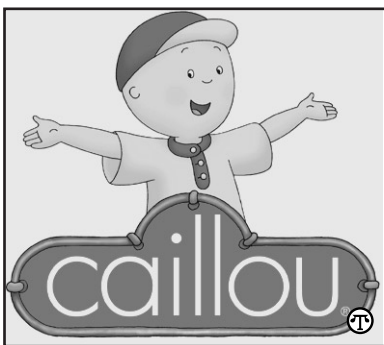
According to a report by the Carnegie Corporation, reading can make little ones feel secure and loved while they learn pre-reading skills and begin to recognize letters and words.

One of the Top 5 TV shows for preschoolers is a PBS KIDS hit called *Caillou* (pronounced kai-you), based on a book series of the same name. Now, a Caillou toy line based on the TV series and book has been created for preschoolers by Irwin Toy. Just as reading aloud helps in brain development, these toys can help young children develop their fine motor skills.

Caillou chronicles the adventures of a little boy named Caillou, say the show's producers. His experiences portray the relationship between small children and the world around them. Children aged 2 to 5 see Caillou as a real little boy to whom they can easily relate.

The show's producer, CINAR, in association with PBS, developed stories to help children develop self-esteem, confidence and independence. Research by famed child psychologist Nicole Nadeau guide the producers of Caillou, which *Child* magazine called "one of the best new preschool series," and the *LA Times* called "a virtual guide book for parents and caregivers." The TV series features a combination of animation, puppets, music, dance and live action.

An article in *Early Childhood News* notes that play is the work of children, providing the ultimate curriculum for social, physical and mental advancement as they accumulate the basic knowledge needed



A favorite book character has inspired new toys.

to learn language, math, science and art.

Caillou toys, books and TV stories help fulfill America's goal to have children reading by the end of third grade, a goal so important that The American Academy of Pediatrics wants to incorporate a prescription for reading into standard pediatric care.

The Caillou game and toy line brings Caillou's world to life in three dimensions. Fun interaction between parent and child, such as playing with Caillou puzzles and board games, stimulates children's development and begins to teach children the rules of life.

The Caillou Discovery Game teaches preschoolers about winning and losing. The puzzles teach them to observe and recognize shape correlations. Caillou's Flip N' Match, improves memory skills. With the plush and two-inch Caillou beanie, children can create and act out their own adventures, along with their TV pal.

By offering a four year old's perspective, Caillou helps parents understand a child's psychological and emotional development, just as he helps children learn how to express themselves.

Caillou information is available on the Web at www.pbskids.org/caillou and www.irwintoy.com.