Opening a book opens the whole world of literacy

- literacy is connecting
- literacy is finding meaning
- literacy is understanding
- literacy is reading, writing, listening, speaking
- literacy is power

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A Lifetime of Literacy Begins at a Very Young Age

The following tips can help you and your child get started

1. Encourage your child to take the lead in selecting which books to share together. Also include poems, jingles, lullabies, rhymes, stories, and finger plays from your childhood.

2. Read at different times of day for different reasons. Reading a story out loud can help pass the time in waiting rooms, long lines, or traffic jams. Include books into meal time, outdoor play, and bath time.

3. Children enjoy hearing stories repeated. Be prepared to read and re-read favorites.

4. Before you begin to read a book, tell your child its name, author and illustrator. Take time to talk about the cover.

5. Sit close together so you can both hold the book and see the pictures. Your child may want to help out by turning the pages.

6. As you read, occasionally move your finger from left to right, following the words. This motion helps children connect spoken and written language.

7. Use your voice as a way to bring the story to life. For example, growl with a word like “gruff!” or change your voice to suit a character. Doing this may feel silly at first, but your child will love it.

8. Throughout the story, incorporate your child’s reactions. If she asks questions or makes comments as you read, respond with brief, positive remarks and then continue.

9. Encourage your child to say words or phrases that are repeated. Once your child is familiar with a story, encourage him to “read” it to you. Don’t correct your child when he misses a word or makes up his own; just enjoy his creativity and imagination.

10. Keep a good pace without rushing through the story. Give your child time to enjoy the illustrations.

11. Act out what is being read. For example, if a character is flying, flap your arms. Children particularly enjoy this activity.

12. Briefly review the story when you have finished reading. Talk about the characters, what they did, and how the story ended. Look for similarities between the story and experiences you or your child may have had.

13. Continue to read aloud to your child even after she is able to read independently. Introduce chapter books that will take longer to read. Keep reading. Opening books opens new worlds.