

## Information for parents and teachers

### Development of reading, writing and language skills in infants and primary aged children

Prepared by Dr Angela Wilson, Senior Research Fellow, CHERI

Parents and teachers can use the following activities to assist them develop and enhance communication skills in infants and primary aged children.

- Make sure children have books of their own. They also need a special place to keep their books and they should be encouraged to think of books as treasured possessions.
- Ensure children know how to hold a book properly and how to turn the pages of a book without damaging it and where to begin reading.
- Encourage your child to read aloud for a short period every day. He or she can read from a book he or she selects, from a letter or email sent to him or her, from a magazine or a comic book. Make sure the book selected is of interest to your child. At the end of the time make sure your child is encouraged for his or her efforts.
- Have your child keep a small index card catalogue of books to read. He or she can write the names of the books and the author(s) names, the date of publication and the date read. Your child could then write a brief note about the story and whether he or she would recommend this book to someone else. Did he or she find the book "interesting", "funny", "scary", or "too long"? This is a wonderful way of keeping a record of the number of books read and it is amazing how many books can be read in a six month period.
- Make a map of your street or the way to school or the way to the shops. Help your child write the names of the streets and roads on the map, where bus stops are located, and the names of churches and schools and other places of interest. Make sure you identify the directions.
- Have your child write a personal passport about him or herself. He or she can include a self-description, important dates in his/her life, a list of favourite foods and games, and special songs or music he/she enjoys listening to. Drawings and pictures can be included to add meaning to the passport.
- Suggest your child write a story about a special occasion such as a birthday party or a fete he/she has attended or a journey he/she has taken. Also encourage your child to make up a story that may be fact or fantasy. These stories can be collated and kept in a folder. Remember to date the story so you and your child can look back and see the improvement in writing and reading.
- Encourage your child to write a special article on his or her birthday each year outlining special events or happenings that have taken place in the previous twelve months. This journal can become a record of events of significance in your child's life that will be cherished and referred to for many years.
- Draw a circle in the middle of a page and write a word or draw a picture in this circle. Have your child suggest words he or she thinks are related to the word in the middle of the picture. Draw lines that radiate out from the circle and write the key words on those lines. An example would be fruit and some of the words that your child may suggest could include: bananas, apples, fruit salad, delicious, Granny Smith, skin, orange juice, pips, yummy and orchard.
- Buy a scrapbook and have your child make a page for each letter of the alphabet. He or she can then write the names of objects, things and places that commence with that particular letter and draw pictures or cut out illustrations.



- Have your child write picture words. These are words that look like the object they represent. He or she can draw a circle out of the letters c, i, r, c, l, e.
- Prepare a family time capsule with your child. You can put a copy of a newspaper of the day, a TV program, some family photos, fingerprints of family members and your child could write a story about what he or she had done the previous week. This capsule could be brought out in say five years time and members of the family could talk about the significance of the items that had been stored.
- Have your child help you prepare the menu for the week. He or she can look up favourite recipes in cookbooks, write them out, help you do the shopping and work out what quantities of food will need to be purchased. Your child could then write out and decorate the menu to be displayed on the table before dinner.
- Make or help your child make flash cards that can be used to help improve your child's vocabulary. Select words you know your child is having difficulty reading or learning to spell and print these on the cards. Remember to put each word into a sentence to help your child understand its meaning as well as how to spell it.
- Write little letters and notes to your child and place them in a special place. You can put these notes in his or her lunch box, on the table, on the bathroom mirror or anywhere you know your child looks. They could even be put on the television screen. You may even like to post a note occasionally using Australia Post. These notes can be about a future activity, something you have done during the day, or they could contain a word of encouragement or thanks for something your child has done. Have your child write back to you.
- Point out different signs and symbols when driving in the car or when travelling with your child. When you return home try and write down or draw many of these signs, words or symbols.
- Play at "collecting" car number plates or bus route numbers when driving in the car and keep a running record of each in a special book that you fill in when return home.
- Write down the letters of the alphabet in order on a page. Choose a topic, such as fruit, and see if you can write the name of a fruit commencing with every letter of the alphabet. For example: a for apple, b for banana, c for coconut, etc. You can do the same for boys and girls names, cities and towns, vegetables and anything else you can suggest.
- Help your child find little words within larger words. Keep a list and try to discover which word has the most little words inside it. Examples could be: caterpillar – cat, at, pill, pillar, ill, ate; chimpanzee – chimp, him, pan, an. Other words you could use include – admission, bracelet, cabbage, disappeared, grandfather, handkerchief, hippopotamus, kindergarten, microphone, potatoes, tomatoes, vegetables and wardrobe.
- Write a story in which you have drawn pictures in place of some words. Have your child rewrite the story using words instead of the pictures.
- Cut out or have your child cut out large letter shapes out of paper or cardboard. Your child can then fill in the letter shapes with words beginning with the letter shape.
- Make lists of rhyming words. Your child will begin to realise that while many words may rhyme they may not look alike. Examples would be: cold and mould, threw and through, bite and might. Also, words that look alike may not necessarily rhyme, for example, though, cough, bough.
- Spell words by adding one letter at a time.
 

a	to
at	toe
cat	tore
scat	store
scant	stored
- Compile a list of homophones - words that have the same sound but different spellings. These can be written on a chart or in a scrapbook and added to as new ones are thought of. Try to find homophones with more than two words.



Examples of homophones are:

son – sun

pair – pear – pare

pour – poor – pore - paw

dear - deer

heard - herd

hole – whole

peal – peel

one – won

peace - piece

weak – week

course - coarse

two – to - too

for – four - fore

whether – wether – weather

- Use mnemonics to help your child remember how to spell difficult words. Some examples of mnemonics are:

My *pal* is the *principal*

A *piece* of *pie*

Never *end* a *friendship*

You *fri* the end of your *friend*

*Parallel* has 3 *parallel* lines

An *island* is *land*

Necessary has one *collar* and two *socks*

The *two* *twins* are *twenty*

Never *believe* a *lie*

A *special agent* is someone in the *CIA*

### For more Information

If you require further information please contact:

CHERI  
The Children's Hospital at Westmead  
Locked Bag 4001  
Westmead NSW 2145

Tel: (02) 9845 0418  
Fax: (02) 9845 0421  
Email: [info@cheri.com.au](mailto:info@cheri.com.au)

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