



## Early Literacy

### **Your health is important.**

Because the Youens and Duchicela Clinic believes this, the following is brought to you in an effort to provide wellness information that you can use to help manage and maintain your health.

### **This week, the focus is on the development of literacy in young children.**

No child is too young to benefit from exposure to reading. Though many think reading is a skill that should develop in a child once he/she is school age, there are many skills that can be developed in a child prior to going to school. In fact, early literacy should be a part of total child wellness.

### **Early literacy is a child's knowledge of skills of reading and writing which develop before he/she can actually read and write.**

Parents and other caregivers play an integral role in the development of a child's literacy because they know the child the best and spend the most time with the child; therefore, they can cultivate skills early.

Through research, the American Library Association (ALA) has identified six pre-reading skills children can start learning from birth.

- 1. NARRATIVE SKILLS:** describing things, explaining events, and telling stories help children experiment with language.
- 2. PRINT MOTIVATION:** interest in printed words and enjoyment of books, especially developed early, will carry into a child's future.
- 3. VOCABULARY:** knowing the names of things and learning new words is integral in a child's development.



4. **PRINT AWARENESS:** noticing printed words, knowing how to follow letters, and knowing how to handle a book are practices to develop early with a child.
5. **LETTER KNOWLEDGE** Recognizing letters, their differences, and their names/sounds will encourage discovery and mastery in a child.
6. **PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS:** Hearing sounds that make-up words helps children better understand the structure of language.

**Activities which parents and caregivers do in the home every day can encourage the development of these pre-reading skills. No matter the age of a child,**

- read to your child at least 15 minutes each day.
- talk with your child about what is going on around him/her.
- talk to your child about what you are doing.
- ask your child questions.
- sing songs to your child, like nursery rhymes with patterns and rhythm.
- point out different letters to your child.
- speak clearly to your child.
- let your child see you reading.

Public libraries are great places to go for age-appropriate books. Reading together can also be an excellent bonding experience between child and parents.

**Have fun with your child and with reading, knowing that each experience brings many benefits.**

*The information provided here is not to be used as a substitute for medical attention. Remember that, should you have specific medical questions or desire more information, contact your doctor.*