Able Young Readers, Healthy Growing Bodies: Connecting Early Literacy to Health

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NEMOURS IS WORKING TO CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP AND ENSURE EVERY CHILD RECEIVES A BRIGHT START FOR SCHOOL AND FOR LIFE
EXTENDING OUR REACH

PARENTS
POLICY MAKERS
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
PRE-K AND K EDUCATORS
COMMUNITIES
EARLY CHILD CARE EDUCATORS
Did you know...

LITERACY IS THE SINGLE, STRONGEST PREDICTOR OF ADULT HEALTH.
Did you know...

LITERACY IS THE SINGLE, STRONGEST PREDICTOR OF ADULT HEALTH. SUCCESS IN READING IS ESSENTIAL TO A CHILD’S WELL BEING
Did you know...
Did you know...

- 40% of children entering kindergarten lack the foundational literacy skills needed for reading success
Did you know...

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- This is a major health issue
Did you know...

- 40% of children entering kindergarten lack the foundational literacy skills needed for reading success

- This is a major health issue

- Results in the disruption of academic, cognitive, behavioral, social and emotional development

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NEMOURS BRIGHTSTART!
OUR VISION IS TO HELP EVERY CHILD BECOME A READER
Objectives

- Identify the impact that reading ability has on the health of children, adolescents and adults
- Explore best practices to enhance early literacy interactions
- Share tips to involve, engage and empower families as they establish a foundation for future reading success
Let’s Take a Poll...
Consequences: Reading Skills Are Tied to a Longer, Healthier Life

A new study suggests that children who have difficulties reading by the end of third grade are more likely to develop chronic health conditions and die at a younger age than those who have better reading skills.

The study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a nationally representative sample of U.S. students who were between the ages of 11 and 18 in 1994.

The researchers found that children who scored below the 20th percentile on reading tests were more likely to have chronic health conditions by age 30, including hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and obesity. They were also more likely to die before age 60.

The study suggests that improving reading skills in young children could have a significant impact on long-term health outcomes.

IMPROVING READING SKILLS AND IMPROVING HEALTH

When kids can read, they can succeed.

The challenge is to ensure that all children have access to quality education and the resources they need to succeed. This can be accomplished through partnerships between schools and community organizations, as well as by providing targeted interventions for children who are struggling with reading.

The evidence is clear: improving reading skills leads to improved health outcomes. By focusing on early reading interventions, we can help ensure that all children have the opportunity to succeed academically and in life.

This is not just a matter of individual success; it is a matter of public health. By investing in reading, we are investing in the health of our communities.

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**Literacy**: the ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.

- The US Department of Education
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- **Illiteracy**: 0-4th grade
- **Low Literacy**: 5th-8th grade
- **Functional Illiteracy**: above 8th grade

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- shame
- inadequacy
- embarrassment
- low self esteem
- shame
- inadequacy
- embarrassment
- low self esteem

- physical health
- emotional health
- mental health

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Let's Take a Poll...
Myth or Fact?
Myth or Fact?

Individuals with low reading ability are intellectually slow learners or incapable of learning at all.
Myth or Fact?

Individuals with low reading ability are intellectually slow learners or incapable of learning at all.

They can be recognized by their appearance.
Myth or Fact?

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The number of years of schooling correlates with reading ability.
Myth or Fact?

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The number of years of schooling correlates with reading ability.

Illiteracy affects more women than men.
Myth or Fact?

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The number of years of schooling correlates with reading ability.

Illiteracy affects more women than men.

Most will freely admit that they do not know how to read.
Did you know that positive interactions with adults during infancy determine a child’s path to future reading success?
Did you know...

“Reading aloud to infants helps to stimulate brain development, yet only 50% of infants are routinely read to by their families.”

-National Institute for Literacy
Did you know...

“Reading aloud to infants helps to stimulate brain development, yet only 50% of infants are routinely read to by their families.”

-National Institute for Literacy

“Many pediatricians now believe that a child who has never held a book or listened to a story is NOT a fully, healthy child.”

- America Reads
Did you know...

“Babies whose families frequently read to them are more likely to read at the right time.”

-Kids Health
Did you know...

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-Kids Health

- exposed to the sounds and patterns of their language
- know more words
- greater language comprehension
The lack of positive interactions early on can create several challenges in the lives of infants.

- Missed opportunities to build a strong bond
- Language delay due to fewer periods of communication
  - Motivation to learn may be diminished
- Acquire less information about the world around them
- Fewer opportunities to develop listening, memory and vocabulary skills
Did you know that the effects of poor language development can be observed as early as 18 months of age?
Did you know…

“Children who are engaged in less conversation with their caregivers before age three, hear fewer words and have smaller vocabularies than children who have richer early language experiences.”

-Ounce of Prevention
Did you know...

“Children who are engaged in less conversation with their caregivers before age three, hear fewer words and have smaller vocabularies than children who have richer early language experiences.”

-Ounce of Prevention

“85% of brain development occurs by age three.”

-For Our Babies
Did you know...

“By age three, a 30,000,000 word gap is evident among children of diverse home environments.”

-Hart and Risley
Did you know...

“By age three, a 30,000,000 word gap is evident among children of diverse home environments.”

-Hart and Risley
The lack of language-rich environments create several challenges in the lives of toddlers.

- Use of sounds versus words during communication
- Depend on gestures and body language to communicate
  - Withdrawn or shy behavior with others
  - Irritation or tantrums when needs are not met
  - Difficulty interacting socially with peers
    - Poor problem solving skills
Did you know that the effects of low reading ability can be seen in early childhood?
Did you know...

“A student who finishes second grade without being able to read has only a 1 in 4 chance of reading at grade level by the end of elementary school.”
Did you know...

“A student who finishes second grade without being able to read has only a 1 in 4 chance of reading at grade level by the end of elementary school.”

“65% of 4th graders nationwide scored “below proficient and 32% scored “below basic”

-National Assessment of Educational Progress
Inability to read or low reading ability can create several challenges in the lives of young children.

- Huge gaps in academics and learning
  - Decreased motivation to read
- Difficulty creating and maintaining relationships with peers
  - Decline in confidence and poor self image
- Difficulty within the family systems
Did you know that reading difficulty continues to disrupt cognitive, physical, emotional and mental health in adolescence?
Did you know...

“Two thirds of eighth graders do not read at grade level.”

-NAEP Reading
“Two thirds of eighth graders do not read at grade level.”

-NAEP Reading

“47% of students who took the ACT in 2009 did not meet the College Readiness Benchmark.”

-ACT
The inability to read proficiently during adolescence adds to the symptoms of low academic achievement with unsafe behaviors.

- Poor mental health and depression
- Lower self worth and life satisfaction
- Increased use of alcohol and other substances
- Higher drop out rates
Did you know that the destruction of low reading ability continues into adulthood, where many researchers now focus on the grave consequences during the adult years.
Did you know...

“Only 30% of college graduates have high level literacy skills.”

-National Assessment of Adult Literacy
Did you know...

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“According to the U.S. Department of Education and the National Institute of Literacy, 32 million adults in the U.S. cannot read.”
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“According to the U.S. Department of Education and the National Institute of Literacy, 32 million adults in the U.S. cannot read.”
“Researchers have discovered that adults with poor reading and comprehension skills have disproportionately \textit{higher} medical costs, \textit{increased} number of hospitalizations and \textit{more} perceived physical and psychological problems than do literate persons.”
Think About It…
Think About It...

Low reading ability may have a direct effect on adult health through the inadequate use of health care services.

- Schedule fewer physicians visits and preventative visits
- Less likely to understand and follow medical treatment plans
  - Inability to take prescriptions correctly
Let’s Reflect

Given the data about the effects of reading ability on health over time, how will you use this information to change the path of your work with children?
EARLY INTERVENTION IS THE KEY TO PREVENTING THE SYMPTOMS THAT OFTEN ACCOMPANY LOW ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- LOW SELF ESTEEM
- LACK OF INTEREST IN SCHOOL
- POOR BEHAVIOR
Goals

By the end of this segment, you will be able to…

- Identify proven, research-based strategies that increase connections to foundational literacy skills
- Apply these strategies to improve overall health of young, diverse learners
Strategies for Educators

- Be Explicit
- Teach Systematically
- Make It Multisensory
- Ensure Success
- Keep It Simple
Explicit Instruction

Instruction that guides diverse learners and supports their learning through clear and efficient delivery.
Explicit Instruction

- Explain what you want children to learn with simple, concrete terms
Explicit Instruction

- Explain what you want children to learn with **simple, concrete terms**
- Provide opportunities to **expand** and **clarify** the child’s understanding
Explicit Instruction

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- Provide opportunities to expand and clarify the child’s understanding
  - Provide real-world examples that the children can relate to or understand
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    - Use **visual aids** or pictorial cues
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  - **Model and demonstrate** each new skill
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    - **Model** and **demonstrate** each new skill
  - Maintain a **high level** of **teacher-child interaction**
Explicit Instruction

- Explain what you want children to learn with simple, concrete terms
- Provide opportunities to expand and clarify the child’s understanding
  - Provide real-world examples that the children can relate to or understand
    - Use visual aids or pictorial cues
    - Model and demonstrate each new skill
    - Maintain a high level of teacher-child interaction
- Provide specific and positive feedback

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Why Use Explicit Instruction?

- Provides exposure to specific words, phrases and language
- Benefits children who have a limited vocabulary or language delay
- Provides opportunities for positive feedback which many children have not experienced due to the absence of adult-child interactions
- Improves listening and comprehension skills with clear, specific instruction
Strategies for Educators

- Be Explicit ✓
- Teach Systematically
- Make It Multisensory
- Ensure Success
- Keep It Simple
Systematic Instruction

Instruction that follows a logical sequence of steps to build familiarity with concepts in early literacy.
Introduce skills slowly and *gradually* over time
Introduce skills slowly and **gradually** over time

- Use activities that **build** on previously taught information
Introduce skills slowly and **gradually** over time

- Use activities that **build** on previously taught information

- **Integrate** and **connect** foundational literacy skills
Systematic Instruction

- Introduce skills slowly and **gradually** over time
- Use activities that **build** on previously taught information
- **Integrate** and **connect** foundational literacy skills
  - Teach each **step**, one at a time
Introduce skills slowly and **gradually** over time

Use activities that **build** on previously taught information

**Integrate** and **connect** foundational literacy skills

- Teach each **step**, one at a time
- Provide **hints** or **assistance**
Why Use Systematic Instruction?

- The gradual learning provides a **scaffolding** for children who struggle with foundational literacy skills and demonstrate a **cognitive delay**

- The **adequate pacing** of instruction may help to reduce anxiety and confusion that some struggling learners may experience, improving **mental health**
Strategies for Educators

- Be Explicit ✓
- Teach Systematically ✓
- Make It Multisensory
- Ensure Success
- Keep It Simple
Instruction that encourages children to use many sensory pathways simultaneously, addressing the preferences of ALL learners.
Combines visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile experiences
Combines visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile experiences

See It! Hear It! Do It! and Touch It!
Multisensory Instruction

- Combines visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile experiences
  - See It! Hear It! Do It! and Touch It!
- Opportunities to provide individualized instruction
Multisensory Instruction

- Combines visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile experiences
  - See It! Hear It! Do It! and Touch It!
- Opportunities to provide individualized instruction
  - Provide a variety of materials
Multisensory Instruction

- Combines **visual, auditory, kinesthetic** and **tactile** experiences
  - See It! Hear It! Do It! and Touch It!
- Opportunities to provide **individualized** instruction
  - Provide a **variety** of materials
- Engage through **hands-on** and **movement** activities
Why use Multisensory Instruction?

- Makes learning fun and enjoyable through active play, creating motivation to learn
- Supports brain development through use of multiple pathways
- Strengthens physical development through kinesthetic and tactile learning experiences
- Acquire information about the world around them through senses

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Strategies for Educators

- Be Explicit
- Teach Systematically
- Make It Multisensory
- Ensure Success
- Keep It Simple
Successful connections are made when we create a positive learning environment that has a focus on learning, while remaining upbeat, encouraging and fun.
Create warm and caring relationships that build trust
Create **warm and caring** relationships that build **trust**

- Set **reachable** goals for each child
Create **warm and caring** relationships that build **trust**

- Set **reachable** goals for each child
  - Begin with **small** goals
Create warm and caring relationships that build trust

- Set reachable goals for each child
  - Begin with small goals
- Guide mastery of skills with multisensory support
Create warm and caring relationships that build trust

- Set reachable goals for each child
  - Begin with small goals

- Guide mastery of skills with multisensory support
  - Reassure, recognize and reward children
Why Ensure Success?

- Provides positive recognition to improve **self worth** and **self esteem**
- Creates an environment where contributions are encouraged and valued, meeting the **emotional needs** of children
- Strengthens **responsive and nurturing relationships** which many children are without
- Increases the **confidence** of diverse learners with praise
Strategies for Educators

- Be Explicit ✔
- Teach Systematically ✔
- Make It Multisensory ✔
- Ensure Success ✔
- Keep it Simple

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Effective early literacy activities can be simple and quick and yet still provide children with developmentally appropriate ways to make meaningful connections to foundational literacy skills.
Prioritize objectives and stick to the essentials
Simple Activities

- **Prioritize** objectives and stick to the essentials
- **Limit** concepts to one or two at a time
Simple Activities

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- **Limit** concepts to one or two at a time
- Be **respectful** of each child’s needs, abilities and attention span
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  - **Limit** concepts to one or two at a time
- Be **respectful** of each child’s needs, abilities and attention span
- Provide **repetition and review** as mastery cannot be expected immediately
Simple Activities

- **Prioritize** objectives and stick to the essentials
  - **Limit** concepts to one or two at a time
  - Be **respectful** of each child’s needs, abilities and attention span
  - Provide **repetition and review** as mastery cannot be expected immediately

- Keep sessions **short…and FUN!**
Why Keep it Simple?

- Fewer and clearer objectives **reduce anxiety**
- Repetition and review increases the **confidence** and **self esteem**
- Simple and fun activities increases **motivation to learn**
- **Less** time for **misbehavior**
Strategies for Educators

- Be Explicit ✓
- Teach Systematically ✓
- Make It Multisensory ✓
- Ensure Success ✓
- Keep it Simple ✓
What Did You Notice?

Be Explicit!
- Clear behavioral expectations
- Explicit explanation of goals
- Modeling and demonstration

Be Systematic!
- Series of steps

Make It Multisensory!
- Evidence of visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile learning

Ensure Success!
- Warm relationships
- Support and guidance
- Specific and positive praise

Keep It Simple!
- Two minute activity
- Simple objective
- Review throughout
Let’s Reflect

Identify one instructional strategy you use well in your early literacy interactions with children?

Identify one instructional strategy you will include more often in your work with children?

- Be Explicit
- Teach Systematically
- Make It Multisensory
- Ensure Success
- Keep It Simple

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Family Connection

Educators

Families

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By the end of this segment, you will be able to…

- Support families as they build a foundation for future reading success
- Identify tools and resources that enhance language and literacy development
ONE OF THE BIGGEST PREDICTORS OF A CHILD’S SUCCESS IN SCHOOL IS WHAT HAPPENS AT HOME
Did you know that family beliefs about the value of reading play an important role in whether children interact with printed materials in the home?
Did you Know...

“Children who grow up in homes where books are available go further in school than those who do not.”

-Pre-K Now
Did you Know...

“Children who grow up in homes where books are available go further in school than those who do not.”

-Pre-K Now

“Increased family engagement in educational programs is linked to increases in child reading achievement as well as other academic successes.”

-Pre-K Now

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Experts say...
Positive Attributes:
(+) families are lifelong educators
(+) families are a child’s first and most important teacher
(+) most want to help their children
Experts say...

Obstacles and Barriers:
(-) families experts on their children, not literacy experts
(-) negative personal experiences with school and education
(-) stress or difficulty with communication since families speak many languages other than English
(-) diverse levels of educational backgrounds influence work life
(-) limited access to powerful tools and resources
What Can We Do?
We can...

- **Educate** families regarding the connection between literacy development and child health
- **Encourage** families to play, read and talk together
- **Promote** rich literacy learning experiences
- **Increase** the frequency of positive interactions
- **Improve** the quality of responsive and nurturing relationships
Choose activities that...
Choose activities that...

- help parents and caregivers take an active role in their child’s development
Choose activities that...

- help parents and caregivers take an active role in their child’s development
- reinforce classroom instruction and support the learning that is happening in school
Choose activities that...

- help parents and caregivers take an active role in their child’s development
- reinforce classroom instruction and support the learning that is happening in school
- introduce families to foundational literacy skills
Phonological Awareness is the understanding that spoken words can be divided into parts and each of those parts can be manipulated.

Letter Knowledge is the recognition and naming of letter names and letter sounds as well as the general understanding that print and pictures are processed differently.

Beginning Writing includes the understanding that we can show our thoughts through drawing and writing.

Oral Language includes the ability to understand spoken language and speak clearly to communicate with others.
Infants and Toddlers

- Songs
- Stories
- Nursery Rhymes
Phonological Awareness

Infants and Toddlers
- Songs
- Stories
- Nursery Rhymes

Prekindergarteners
- Syllables
- Compound Words
- Beginning Sounds
- Ending Sounds
Letter Knowledge

Infants and Toddlers
- Alphabet Books
- Letter Search
- Letter Play (puzzles or magnetic letters)
Letter Knowledge

Infants and Toddlers
- Alphabet Books
- Letter Search
- Letter Play (puzzles or magnetic letters)

Prekindergarteners
- Letter Names
- Letter Sounds
- Letter Shapes
Beginning Writing

Infants and Toddlers

- Scribbling
- Finger Painting
- Collaging
Beginning Writing

Infants and Toddlers
- Scribbling
- Finger Painting
- Collaging

Prekindergarteners
- Name Writing
- Letter Tracing
- Air Writing
Oral Language

Infants and Toddlers
- Talking
- Reading
- Back and Forth Exchanges
Oral Language

Infants and Toddlers
- Talking
- Reading
- Back and Forth Exchanges

Prekindergarteners
- Conversations
- Story Telling
- Book Retelling
Ten Strategies to Help Your Child Become a Confident Writer

The first experiences children have with drawing and writing will shape their writing development as well as their interest and enthusiasm for writing. You can create a home literacy environment that will positively support your child's early attempts and will help her successfully advance through the often difficult and complex process of beginning writing.

Beginning writing occurs in stages that should be respected and celebrated. Some of these stages include:
- scribbling
- shapes that resemble letters
- random letters written together to resemble a word
- labeling pictures with beginning sounds
- experimenting with different spellings of words

Parents can promote fun and enjoyable writing experiences for all stages of beginning writing with the following ten strategies.

1. **Create an Inviting Space for Drawing and Writing**
   Young children need a comfortable and inspiring space that allows them to experiment with drawing and writing. This may include appropriately sized tables and chairs as well as a sturdy work surface. If the lack of space or equipment is an issue, consider creating a cozy area with bean bags, throw pillows, and soft lighting.

2. **Provide a Variety of Writing Tools**
   Offer your child the opportunity to experiment with different writing tools such as pencils, crayons, markers, colored pencils, and chalk. Include magnetic writing surfaces and get boards if your child has difficulties with the typical writing tools.

3. **Provide a Variety of Writing Surfaces**
   Provide an assortment of paper, including large and small sheets of paper, lined and unlined paper, note pads, stationary, and envelopes. You might also consider providing other writing surfaces such as a chalkboard, easel, clip board or dry erase board.

4. **Allow for Appropriate Drawing and Writing Opportunities**
   To help your child progress through the stages of writing, provide consistent and varied opportunities for her to draw and write each day or as often as possible.

5. **Teach by Example**
   It is very important for young children to see the adults in their lives writing. It sends the message that writing is a form of communication. For this reason, find every opportunity to include your child in the writing process. The next time you make a shopping list, write a letter or model a drawing, invite your child to participate.

6. **Allow Children the Freedom to Make Choices**
   Remember, young children should be able to express themselves freely through drawing and writing. Often, we lose sight of that goal and place pressure and high demands on young writers. Each child's choice to express his or her thoughts, ideas and feelings should be accepted, acknowledged and praised.

7. **Provide Support and Guidance**
   Our role in the development of early writing is to provide encouragement and create confidence. Young children require support and guidance. Try these effective techniques:
   - provide visual support (pictures or illustrations)
   - provide verbal instructions to allow your child to construct an image in multiple steps

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Home Activities

At-Home Activities

The best way to fine-tune your child’s reading skills is to find time to practice every day. And most kids learn better when they’re doing something they want to do, not because they have to. These kid-approved activities and games are fun and help build reading skills. They’re simple enough to make part of your routine during playtime, at meals and snacks, or when you’re out and about.

Recommended Activities

Sort activities by: All Skills ▼ All Ages ▼ Sort

- **New** Cabinet of Curiosity
  - **Prep:** 3 Minutes / Activity Time: 1.2 Minutes
  - In this game, you will combine a two-year-old’s love of games and their natural curiosity into a sneaky game that develops an attention to language.
  
- **New** Flip Your Lid!
  - **Prep:** 5 Minutes / Activity Time: 10 Minutes
  - Here is a playful way to help your toddler develop his oral language, listening and thinking skills, which are all crucial to the development of literacy.

- **New** Hall of Shapes
  - **Prep:** 3 Minutes / Activity Time: 1.2 Minutes
  - All about two years old, children begin to notice the different shapes, lines and circles that appear in printed materials. Create a Hall of Shapes to help your child notice the features of print.

- **New** My Color Folder
  - **Prep:** 15-20 Minutes / Activity Time: 5-10 Minutes
  - Make a folder game to help your child practice color words. It’s an easy, inexpensive way to create a fun and interactive activity for your preschooler.

- **New** Let’s Make a Frame!
  - **Prep:** 5-10 Minutes / Activity Time: 15-20 Minutes
  - Through an easy sequence of folds, you and your child can make a picture frame out of paper. This activity is a fun, creative way for your child to practice both fine motor and beginning writing skills.

- **New** My Letter is Lost!
  - **Prep:** 2-3 Minutes / Activity Time: 5-7 Minutes
  - This activity gives your child lots of opportunities to practice pairing of letter names and letter sounds.

- **New** Mangoes for Matilda
  - **Prep:** 5 Minutes / Activity Time: 15-20 Minutes
  - Extend your child’s learning through an imaginative writing activity designed to help her think about food allergies.

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Recommended Books

Why These Books?
The following books have been carefully selected by the Nemours BrightStart early literacy specialists based on a number of characteristics such as:

- appropriateness for the age level
- quality of literature and appealing illustrations
- variety in genres
- appeal of the story or subject matter
- selection of well-known and less-known authors
- literary awards earned, such as the Caldecott Award

These books provide opportunities to teach children the four skills shown to predict reading success:

- oral language
- letter knowledge
- phonological awareness
- language thinking

Keep your child excited about reading by checking back for new book lists and trying the suggested activities with other books your child enjoys.

May's Featured Books

Llama Llama Mad at Mama

Have you ever gone shopping with your child on a day when he just doesn't want to go? That's what happens when Mama Llama takes her little one, llama llama, out for a day of shopping.

Tuck Me In!

This adorable, interactive book lets your toddler learn about and tuck in different baby animals during their bedtime, a perfect way to get him ready for sleep at bedtime.

Brush, Brush, Brush!

This cute, informative book with illustrations by Alicia Padron will show your toddler how fun it can be to brush her teeth.

Bear With Me

Author: Max Kornell

When Owen's parents bring home a bear named Gary to complete their family, Owen is not happy at all. Gary is new and different – and Owen is expected to share his parents, his room and even his toys! Though it takes Owen time to get used to Gary, he grows to love him and all the ways Gary brings joy to his life.

Before, During and After Reading

Oral Language

Discuss what you read and see. Owen talks about how his mom and dad brought home a surprise. Ask your child what he thinks that surprise could be. Talk about the illustrations as you read the book, especially the pages that are illustrations without text. Ask your child what he sees, what he thinks is happening or what he thinks will happen.

Letter Knowledge

There are two b words that repeat throughout the story: bear and blocks. Point out that both bear and blocks begin with the letter b and that b makes the /b/ sound. As you read, encourage your child to find other words that begin with b, like the words bedtime and backyard. Reinforce the letter name, b, and the letter sound, /b/.

This can be done with different letters, like the letter s. Find words that begin with that letter; tell your child the letter name and its sound.
Take the Free Preschool Reading Screener for children age 3-5

1. Answer the questions
2. Scores are calculated
3. Receive a customized action plan
Thank You!