

# Tip Sheet

## Early Literacy

GAPDL COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN IS AN INITIATIVE PROUDLY FUNDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

### THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY LITERACY

The importance that early language and literacy learning plays in the life of all children is well known and as parents we all become concerned if our children show signs of difficulty in these areas. There are many early childhood educators working with the young children of our region every day to promote this learning but these outcomes are significantly strengthened if carers can support this learning at home too. Children learn language by interacting with other



language users in a social context. Adults play a large part in extending children's language through sharing enriching experiences, talking about them, expanding and remodelling children's attempts to communicate. Language continues to develop throughout our lives - even after school and study. As we work and find new interests, we have to learn new vocabulary specific to that new job or activity.

#### **Why is oral language so important?**

Oral language is the predominant mode of communication in our society and is essential for social interaction. We use oral language to control others, express feelings, inform, question or obtain what is needed.

In our schools, where classrooms are mainly oral environments, children need to learn new texts and routines, as classroom language becomes more abstract.

In their early years, children are busy learning language. They acquire vocabulary at a tremendous rate (3000 words by age 4), and also learn how language works. As children develop more abstract language they begin to use language to learn.

Oral language allows the integration of new information, ideas and experiences into the existing framework of knowledge and beliefs. Language gives the child the ability to think out loud so that they can link words, deeds and ideas. Talking with others will also clarify ideas and opinions and is used to plan and think critically. Oral language underpins literacy. Children with poor language skills before school have been shown to be at an increased risk of literacy difficulties.

Children's early language accompanies play and has a shared context. Children talk about the immediate

experience, so the context supplies much of the information required in the communication. Literate language is the language of books and school; it is also the language of power. It is more formal, structured and abstract, because there is no shared context and so the language is the main source of information. Children's literate language develops progressively and we need to scaffold their language experiences so that they can progress at school.

*Lyn Hughes*  
Gladstone Reads & Pyjama Angels Coordinator



*Volunteer as a Pyjama Angel*  
Spend one hour a week working with a child in care helping them to develop a love of learning which will make a positive impact now and into the future.

[www.thepyjamafoundation.com](http://www.thepyjamafoundation.com)

### 2012 NATIONAL YEAR OF READING

The National Year of Reading 2012 is about children learning to read and keen readers finding new sources of inspiration. It's about supporting reading initiatives while respecting the oral tradition of storytelling. It's about helping people discover and rediscover the magic of books. And most of all, it's about Australians becoming a nation of readers.

Nearly half our population can't read with any fluency. It's a shameful and worrying statistic. NYR has identified three goals which will help turn Australia into a nation of readers and encourage a reading culture in every home:

- \* For all Australians to understand the benefits of reading as a life skill and a catalyst for well-being.
- \* To promote a reading culture in every home; and
- \* To establish an aspirational goal for families, of parents and caregivers sharing books with their children every day.

Discover and rediscover the joy of reading. To find out more go to: [www.love2read.org.au/](http://www.love2read.org.au/)  
Gladstone Regional Libraries regularly hold weekly Story Time activities for children. In Gladstone, Story Time is 11am on Wednesday. Contact Gladstone Regional Libraries on (07) 4976 6400.



**National Year of Reading 2012**



# MEM FOX'S TEN READ ALOUD COMMANDMENTS

1. Spend at least 10 wildly happy minutes every single day reading aloud.
2. Read at least three stories a day; it may be the same story three times. Children need to hear a thousand stories before they can begin to learn to read.
3. Read aloud with animation. Listen to your own voice and don't be dull, or flat, or boring. Hang loose and be loud, have fun and laugh a lot.
4. Read with joy and enjoyment, real enjoyment for yourself and great joy for the listeners.
5. Read the stories that the kids love, over and over and over again, and always read in the same 'tune' for each book; ie with the same intonations on each page, each time.
6. Let children hear lots of language by talking to them constantly about the pictures, or anything else connected to the book; or sing any old song that you can remember; or say nursery rhymes in a bouncy way; or be noisy together doing clapping games.
7. Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books for young children, and make sure the books are really short.
8. Play games with the things that you and the child can see on the page, such as letting kids finish rhymes, and finding the letters that start the child's name and yours, remembering that it's never work, it's always a fabulous game.
9. Never ever *teach* reading, or get tense around books.
10. Read aloud every day because you just love being with your child, not because it's the right thing to do. This is as important for fathers as it is for mothers!



## TOP BOOKS FOR CHILDREN 0-12 YEARS

Reading with children doesn't only help build language skills, it also provides a motivation to read. Reading associates a book with a pleasant memory of spending time with someone special in their life.

### Must-Read Books: Birth to 3 yrs

**Goodnight Moon** by Margaret Wise Brown  
**The Very Hungry Caterpillar** by Eric Carle  
**Freight Train** by Donald Crews  
**Brown Bear Brown Bear What Do You See?** by Bill Martin, Jr  
**"More More More" Said the Baby** by Vera B Williams

Books for this age teach children how a book works, they learn how to turn pages and look at the pictures. They are learning how a story works.

### Must-Read Books: Ages 4 to 7

**Where The Wild Things Are** by Maurice Sendak  
**The Cat in the Hat** by Dr Seuss  
**Little Bear** by Else Holmelund Minarik  
**Chicka Chicka Boom Boom** by Bill Martin, Jr and John Archambault  
**Corduroy** by Don Freeman and Richard Peck

Children start reading for themselves at this age, and the moment they discover they can is a breakthrough. It is important that you should still continue to read to your child.

### Must-Read Books: Ages 8 to 12

**Charlotte's Web** by EB White  
**Because of Winn-Dixie** by Kate DiCamillo  
**The Lion The Witch and the Wardrobe** by CS Lewis  
**Little House in the Big Woods** by Laura Ingalls Wilder  
**Harry Potter & the Sorcerer's Stone** by JK Rowling  
**The Golden Compass** by Phillip Pullman

Children will start choosing books on their own at this age; adults should guide them. Many books in this age group have been made into movies. This can keep the kids interested.

## TIPS TO ENCOURAGE READING

**TALK WITH YOUR CHILD** Help your child build an appreciation for words and language.

- Tell stories to your child about your life and encourage your child to tell you about their activities.
- Ask lots of questions so that your child knows that you are interested in what he/she is thinking about.
- Encourage your child to tell you what they think and feel.
- Don't interrupt! Let your child find the words he/she wants to use. Show interest in what your child is saying by being a good listener.
- Play rhyming and riddle games and sing songs encouraging your child to join in.

### MAKE READING AND WRITING FUN

Reading aloud to your child is the best way to get him/her interested in reading. Not only is it fun for the whole family, but also it will help your child to learn what reading is about. Also encourage your child to write.

- Read all kinds of materials - stories, poems, information books, magazines, newspaper articles and comics.
- Read stories aloud with drama and excitement! Use your child's name as the character or make puppets and use them to act out the story.

- Read your child's favourite stories as many times as they want to hear them and choose books and authors your child enjoys.
- Read stories that have repetitive parts and encourage your child to join in. Point to words as you read them. This will help your child make the connection between the spoken words and the words on the page.
- Discuss the themes of a story and ask questions about the characters and what they think might happen in the story.
- Take your child to the local library. Go to a library which is free and borrow books, etc.
- Encourage your child to write lists, cards or messages to friends and family. You could also send and receive mail.
- Always have fun - the more you enjoy yourself the more your child will enjoy the experience.

**READ EVERY DAY** Children respond well to routine and reading is something that you and your child can look forward to every day. It's also fun to do.

- Start reading with your child when they are very young.
- Set aside special time every day in a comfortable spot and give your full attention to reading to your child.

- Choose many different books if your child's first language is not English; choose books both in English and in your child's first language. A strong basis in a child's first language makes it easier for them to learn a second language.

### LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD READ

As your child learns to read, it is very important to listen to them read aloud. This helps build confidence.

- Show your child that you are enjoying the book by showing interest and asking questions.
- Be patient. Allow your child time to figure out tricky words. Pick a time for reading when there are no interruptions.
- Choose books that are not too difficult and when your child is just beginning to read you may want to 'share' the reading.

**SET AN EXAMPLE** As a parent you are your child's most important role model. Take the time to show your child that reading and writing are used in many ways every day in all the things you do.

website at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>.

