

# Reading with Children is an Opportunity for Conversation

## (Summary of suggestions from *Learning to Talk and Listen*)

### SHARING BOOKS

Shared reading with children offers one of the best opportunities for conversations that build oral language

- Engage children in answering questions and discussion.
- Books with lots of interesting illustrations and simple text are best for encouraging young children to talk about what is happening in the pictures and storylines.
- As children get older, books are important in exposing them to new ideas, new words, and new worlds.

### SHARING STORIES

Telling stories and listening to their stories helps children build oral language in a variety of ways.

- Stories help in developing children's speaking and listening skills
- Introduce new concepts or information helps in increasing both vocabulary and the ability to define and explain the meanings of new words.
- You can help focus children's attention on the vocabulary and concepts and use them as a basis for conversations after the shared reading experience.

### VARIETY OF BOOKS

The types of books available can make a difference in children's interest in and use of books for learning and enjoyment.

- Many available children's books contain rich vocabulary in a natural context. They have a variety of words that might not otherwise come up in daily conversation, and those words often occur in complete sentences in the books.
- There should be an adequate supply of books of different types available to children that allow children to get information or answer questions.
  - fiction and non-fiction
  - poetry
  - stories
  - children's reference books (picture dictionaries or encyclopedias)
  - "information books"—single-topic books that explore different features, characteristics, or circumstances of the topic
- During repeated reading of books, emphasize concepts such as the following:
  - interesting content
  - rich vocabulary
  - detailed illustrations
  - building oral language and vocabulary
  - understanding of the meaning of words they hear and read
  - understanding of how language works
    - how sentences are formed
    - how our language uses punctuation
    - rhyming
    - author's intent
    - play on words
    - multiple meanings of words

**The Partnership for Reading**, a project administered by the National Institute for Literacy, is a collaborative effort of the National Institute for Literacy, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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