

Especially for parents of infants! 

Homespun Fun

 *Literacy Learning Experiences*

Everyday family life is filled with moments that will spark your baby's interest in talking, reading, and writing. Make your home a place where he can learn the joys of books, stories, and talking!

What is the practice?

Looking at books. Scribbling and drawing. Fingerplays. Sound and word games. These kinds of things help babies learn to read, write, and talk. We call these different kinds of activities *literacy-rich home experiences*.

What does the practice look like?

An infant snuggles in an adult's lap as they look at a picture book. An infant and parent laugh as they play peek-a-boo. An infant in a highchair at the dinner table listens to her older brothers chat about their day at school. An infant uses his finger to draw in a puddle of pudding or yogurt. These are just a few of the literacy-rich experiences that babies like and enjoy.



How do you do the practice?

Babies benefit from experiences that create interest in reading, talking, and writing. These should be activities that your child finds fun and interesting. But don't overdo it! A few highly interesting activities are better than too many not-so-interesting things to do.

- Picture books. ABC books. Talking books. Photo-album books. These are all great bets for building a baby's interest in stories.
- Read to your baby any time she seems interested. Find favorite books and let her touch, point, show, and babble as you share them together.
- Play lap games and fingerplays together. Sing nursery rhymes and made-up songs with your child.
- Talk to your child while you are changing his diaper or cooking meals. Include your child when talking with others. Ask simple questions like "What do you think about that?" It isn't important for your child to understand what is being said. The important thing is making your child part of the activity.
- Let your child try finger drawing with pudding or yogurt. Involve your child in activities like watching you make a shopping list or write a note or letter.
- Encourage your child to play with alphabet toys that make sounds when shaken or dropped.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child try to talk to you with sounds or hand motions?
- Does your child know the words that "come next" in a story or nursery rhyme?
- Does your child show interest in trying to draw with his or her fingers?

Take a look at more homespun fun activities

Reading Every Day

Susan became interested in books soon after she was able to hold things on her own. Having her mom or dad read stories to her is something she really enjoys. Susan's parents encourage her interest in books and reading. She gets to play with reading material every day. Board books, cloth books, homemade picture-album books, magazines, and talking books. These are some things they give Susan. Mom and Dad watch for chances to use Susan's interests when they read to her or tell her stories. She has become happily involved in these activities.



It's the Right Time To Write!

Landon, age 14 months, is very interested in watching his mother draw and write. Mom tries to find all kinds of ways for Landon to join in these activities. She encourages him to try to "write" on his own. He may only be able to scribble, but he loves "writing with Mom." She lets him use crayons and markers while she is writing a note or making a shopping list. She lets him draw with finger paints in the bathtub before having a bath. He gets to scribble with big pieces of chalk on the sidewalk outside their house. He even "types" on Mom's computer. As Landon does any of these things, Mom talks about what he is doing. She asks questions that help keep him involved in all kinds of pre-writing activities.

Tried-and-Tested Fun

David cannot see. Sarah cannot hear. Still they enjoy traditional lap games, nursery rhymes, and fingerplays. These activities let babies listen to sounds and words and interact with their parents. They can help infants express wants and needs using gestures or sign language. Both David's and Sarah's parents involve their children in lots of these kinds of play. As they play together, the parents talk about everything that is going on. They use simple words, signs, and sentences that David and Sarah have learned and understand.

