

Especially for parents of infants! 

World of Words

 *Literacy Learning Experiences*

Most any place in a young child's neighborhood and community is alive with words. The world all around us is rich in sights and sounds. They will capture a baby's interest in listening and talking. When you involve your child in activities outside your home, you show him a world of words. Getting to read, talk, write, and more are what we call literacy-rich activities.

What is the practice?

Literacy learning activities are everywhere you look in your neighborhood and community. Hearing someone tell a story. Pointing out signs. Playing word games. These are just a few of the fun things you and your baby can do when out and about. Taking part in these things helps your child learn all kinds of early writing and reading skills.

What does the practice look like?

A mother and daughter attend a mother-and-infant play group a couple of times a week. Each session is filled with songs, games, and stories. Their favorite thing is a simple version of *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes*. The little girl really likes this rhyming song. She enjoys wiggling her toes in the air while her mother and the other mothers sing the song. She even lies down on the floor and kicks her feet. This lets her mother know she is ready to play!



How do you do the practice?

Here are some ways to involve your child in literacy-rich neighborhood and community activities.

- What things does your child like and enjoy doing? If an activity interests him, chances are he will learn from being involved in it.
- Look for places to go or things to do that match your child's interests. This will provide him lots of learning experiences.
- What kinds of things might be of interest? Library story times. Listening to a story at mother's morning-out programs. Saying nursery rhymes at parent-and-child play groups. Drawing and finger painting at an art workshop for wee ones. Don't overlook activities at book stores, recreation centers, and other places.
- What are some other activities? Listening to songs at a music store. Looking at a menu at a cafe. Going to a children's section of a book store. Talking to your child as he pets animals at a petting zoo. Almost any activity is an opportunity for talking, listening, and learning.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child get excited when doing an activity?
- Does he try to do part of the activities?
- Does your child vocalize to get someone to continue to play?

Take a look at more fun in a world of words

Wonderful Walks

Paige is 14 months old. She and her father enjoy taking walks. Dad carries Paige in a baby backpack so she can see what is going on. On their walks, Paige's father points out both familiar and new things. He points to a neighbor's dog and says, "There's Skippy! Do you want to pet him?" He stoops down so Paige can pet the dog. Dad describes what she is doing. He encourages her to use gestures or sounds to "tell him" what she wants to do next. Paige sees someone she knows and starts to get excited. She makes sounds as the person gets near. These encounters provide Paige opportunities to listen and interact with her neighbor and father. These walks are filled with lots of talking, listening, and interacting. Paige loves all the attention!



Words Everywhere!

Wyatt is 5 months old. His favorite things to do are going to a baby exercise class and at the local recreation center. They are fun things because there is so much to see, do, and hear. He is "all eyes and ears." The baby exercise class includes lots of rhymes, finger plays, and singing that Wyatt so much enjoys. The swimming class includes music and "dancing" while in the water! Wyatt's mother describes and explains what they are doing in each of the activities. She gets Wyatt to babble and gesture to tell his mom "what he thinks" about everything. These parent-and-child play times are chances for mom and son to talk to each other while having fun.