

Sharing Thoughts About Enjoying Stories and Books

Dear Families:

Everyone agrees that books are a necessary part of a child's education. Even young infants benefit from having simple books read to them! Looking at books and hearing them read aloud stimulate an infant's brain development in important ways.

Before children learn to read, they need to know a lot about language, how a story progresses, and how books work. Children who learn to love books are more likely to become successful learners and lifelong readers. In our program, we offer your child a wide variety of good books, and we read together every day.

What You Can Do at Home

Read and tell stories to your child every day. The words and pictures are important, but, most of all, spending time with you as you read aloud and tell stories lets your child know how much you value these activities. Reading is a wonderful way to be together, whether during your child's bedtime routine or a relaxed daytime opportunity.

Here are some suggestions for reading with your child.

- **Pick a story that you enjoy.** Share rhymes, songs, and stories from your childhood. Your enthusiasm will be contagious. Start by talking about the book's cover or simply by beginning to read.
- **Talk about the pictures.** You do not always have to read a story from beginning to end.
- **Ask your child questions as you read.** Have your child find an object in a picture, for example, "Where is the dog's ball?" Take cues from your child's gestures, sounds, or words, for example, "Yes, that's the baby's Grandma, just like Nona Maria." As your child is able to follow a story, you can ask more open-ended questions. For example, you might ask, "What do you think will happen next?" or "What did you like best about the story?"
- **Be prepared to vary the length of your reading sessions.** Your child might want you to read a story again and again, but you also need to be prepared to stop at any point. There is no need to force your child to be still while you read. Sometimes children want to be more active. Stop when your child no longer seems interested.

Let us share. We can give you the titles of the books your child enjoys here, and you can tell us your child's current favorite books and rhymes at home. We would also love to have you record your child's favorite story or nursery rhyme so we can play it for your child here. We will be glad to help you make the recording. Together, we can help prepare your child to be a lifelong reader.

Sincerely,