

# HELPING OUR CHILDREN: READING AND WRITING AT HOME

Center for Literacy  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
© 1995

---

One of the most important things that parents can teach their children is the love to read and write. Parents can share reading and writing experiences with their children so they can discover the benefits that these skills bring to life.

## READING

With your help, your children will discover the joys and benefits of reading: new worlds, new ideas, fun and entertainment. Do not wait until your children attend school. You should interest your children to read or write as early as three years old, if not before.

### *How can I help my children to read?*

- Show your children how much you enjoy reading. If they see you reading newspapers or magazines or books, they will imitate your behavior.
- Make a special place to read. It should be quiet and set apart from the TV.
- Visit the library regularly.
- Have your children choose their own books.
- Ask another member of the family to read if you do not have the time or do not know how to read well: an older sibling, a grand-parent, an aunt, an uncle, etc.
- Make up your own books.
- Read in the language that you feel most comfortable with. Reading will create a common bond between you and your children.
- Read to your children as moments of entertainment and fun. Children should not be forced to read.
- Write notes to your children and read them together.

### *What is the best way to read with my children?*

- Be together and close to each other: in your lap or next to you. Reading time should be identified as a caring and loving time.
- Let the children control the activity. They should be allowed to turn pages, interrupt the reader, ask questions and ask to read it again.
- Ask the children to name different things in the book. Ask questions about the content of the book. Teachers do this at school. If the children get used to it now, they will learn more and they will do better in school.
- Answer all their questions. If you do not know the answer, be honest. Try to find the answers with the children or tell them you will find out later. Children ask questions because they are interested - the more questions they have, the more they will learn.
- Relate some aspect of the book to the children's everyday life. Children need to make connections with their own life in order to keep their love for reading.

## **WRITING**

Writing can start at a very young age. When children scribble, they are writing. Scribbles are important because through them children start to figure out how to read and write.

### ***How can I encourage my children to write?***

- Provide pens, pencils, crayons, scissors, glue, construction paper, etc. Always keep materials together and handy.
- Praise anything they write or draw. Do not force children to read or write, but encourage them.
- Ask your children to talk about their drawings. Write down what the children say. This will help the children connect the way they think and the act of writing.
- Some young children will scribble and tell you their writings are actual words. Encourage them to write notes, letters, stories, signs, cards, etc.
- Not all children write or draw at the same age. All children develop differently, so do not try to compare them.

---

#### **Authors:**

Ana U. Colomb  
Cynthia Reyes  
Flora V. Rodriguez-Brown  
Melanie Schikore

#### **Editor:**

Suzanne Wagner

#### **Art and Design:**

Peggy Ford, Geoffery Blanton, and Lorraine Jossick Weber

**Copyright © 1995 by Center for Literacy at UIC. All rights reserved**

This brochure was produced by the Center for Literacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

For more information contact the

Center for Literacy  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
1040 W. Harrison M/C 147  
Chicago, IL 60607  
Phone (312) 413-1914.

The contents of this brochure were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. The contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.