Early Literacy Begins with You
Help your child get ready to read

Background Knowledge
What a child knows

Vocabulary
Knowing words

Print Awareness
Print all around, using books

Phonological Awareness
Hearing, making sounds and rhymes

Letter Knowledge
Shapes, letters

Gestures
Oral Language
Facial Expressions
Body Language
Help Your Child Get Ready to Read

**Narrative Skills**
Tell stories together, encourage pretend play, and let your child be a storyteller.

**Letter Knowledge**
Help your child identify the first letter in his/her name and find it in books, answers signs, and practice it daily.

**Print Awareness**
Help your child discover how to hold a book and read the front cover.

**Vocabulary**
Teach your child the specific names of things, like vegetables in the grocery store.
Early Literacy Enhanced Storytimes
Incorporating ECRR2

Each storyline:
- One skill
- 3 Early Literacy Asides (the 3 Es)
  1. Explain the skill
  2. Example of the skill in practice, in one of your stories or activities
  3. Empower to do at home or in child care setting

One skill               Many practices
Phonological Awareness (play with smaller sounds in words)   Sing
Vocabulary (know meanings of words)                           Talk
Narrative Skills (expressive language, recounting events/stories)   Read
Print Awareness (print has meaning, environmental print, handling book)   Play
Letter Knowledge (same letter looks different, letters have names, represent sounds)   Write
Print Motivation (enjoyment of books and reading)

Baby Storytime Example

Explain: Our early literacy tip of the day today is on helping your child hear the smaller sounds in words which is called phonological awareness, one of the six early literacy skills researchers say is important for the decoding part of reading, sounding out words from the letters they will read. As you’ll see today, singing with your children is not only fun but also helps them later with reading.

Example: [Sing a song of your choice.]
Aside: In many songs, there is a different note for each syllable, so your baby is hearing words broken down into smaller sounds. Singing slows down language which makes it easier for your baby to hear.

Empower: I have a handout here with the words of the songs we sang today. Over the coming week, I hope you’ll sing these songs over and over with your baby. Children learn through repetition. You can sing songs to your children in whatever language is most comfortable to YOU! Don’t worry if you “can’t sing”. Your child loves the sound of your voice and singing with them helps hear the smaller sounds in words when they learn to read.

Preschool Storytime Example

Explain: Our early literacy tip of the day today is on narrative skills, which includes encouraging your child to talk about their own experiences. When your child has good narrative skills, researchers note it helps your child later with comprehension, understanding what he reads. I’ll be pointing out some ways you can support narrative skills through talking and playing.

Example: Read Benny Bakes a Cake by Eve Rice. Go back to the page where Benny is crying. Ask how Benny is feeling (sad, frustrated). Ask: “When have you felt that way?”
Aside: Having your child describe his feelings and talk about the situation not only helps us understand his feelings, but also gives him the opportunity to describe something that happened and how he felt about it which supports narrative skills.

Empower: You can support narrative skills through play. When your child is playing, take the opportunity for some pretend play or role playing. Encourage your child to talk about what is happening and to use his imagination. Give your child plenty of time to respond and follow your child’s lead. OR
You can support narrative skills through writing. Have your child draw a picture of a story or something that happened. Encourage your child to tell you what is happening in the picture. Write down your child’s words.
Some other possibilities:

How we talk, sing, read, write and play with our children makes a difference in helping them get ready to learn to read. Today I’ll be pointing out some activities you can do to help develop vocabulary, knowing the names of things. Researchers note that when children have a large vocabulary, it is easier for them to both understand what they read and to identify words when they try to sound them out.

How we talk, sing, read, write and play with our children makes a difference in helping them get ready to learn to read. Today I’ll be pointing out some ways singing and playing can support hearing the smaller sounds in words, phonological awareness. This is one of the six skills that researchers have noted help your children get ready to learn to read.

Our early literacy tip of the day today is letter knowledge, knowing that the same letter can look different, that letters have names and represent sounds. Researchers have found that children identify letters by their shapes. I’ll be pointing out some ways you can support this skill as you sing and talk with your children.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Literacy</th>
<th>Sing</th>
<th>Talk</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Write</th>
<th>Play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What children know about communication, language (verbal and non-verbal), reading and writing before they can actually read or write.</td>
<td>Talking in a way that encourages children to talk will help them understand what they later read. <em>Ask what questions and open-ended questions that cannot be answered with yes/no.</em> <em>Allow time (may take several seconds) for child to process what they hear and formulate a response.</em> <em>Use decontextualized speech (not only the here and now, use past future, what would you do, imagine).</em></td>
<td>Shared reading (interactive reading) is the single most important activity you can do to help your child get ready to read.</td>
<td>Reading and writing are both representations of spoken language. Writing develops from scribbles to writing letters and sentences.</td>
<td>When children pretend play, they use one object (a block) to represent another object (phone). Symbolic play uses the same concept as early literacy—a picture or the text represents the real item, just as a picture of an apple or the word “apple” represents the real apple.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonological Awareness</td>
<td>Singing helps children: hear smaller sounds in words because words are drawn out. Children hear each syllable because there is a different note for each syllable.</td>
<td>Speak in “parentese” until child is around 9 months of age because they will listen to you longer and they can hear the smaller sounds in words more easily than with adult talk. Make animal sounds and point out environmental sounds. Say nursery rhymes. Point out and talk about words that start with the same sound. Point out and talk about words that rhyme. Have children fill in the rhyming word. Point out sounds you hear as you go for a walk.</td>
<td>Share books with animals in them and say the sounds they make. Share nursery rhyme books. Share song books. Rhyme a word in a book. Think of words with same starting sound as a word in book. Share books with alliteration Share books with rhyming words.</td>
<td>Draw a picture of an animal—what sound does it make? Write child’s name, point out the sound of first letter.</td>
<td>Clap out words into syllables. Play I Spy game—I spy something red that rhymes with _____ or that starts with sound ____. Books are baby’s first toy. Keep books will animal sounds, with rhyme, where babies and children can easily play with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonological Awareness</td>
<td>Songs have words not heard in every day conversation with young children (“fetch” in the song “Jack and Jill”). Many songs help children with concepts such as opposites, size, shapes.</td>
<td>Speak in “parentese” until child is around 9 months of age because they will listen to you longer and hear more words. Talk about feelings using books and in situations throughout the day. Talk about concepts (color, shape, size, texture, spatial relationships). Add new words to what your child says. Explain words or give synonyms. Avoid replacing unfamiliar words with familiar ones. Use words for ideas—responsibility, honesty, loyalty.</td>
<td>Language of books is richer than the language of conversation, more rare words are used. Informational texts offer different vocabulary than story books.</td>
<td>Have children draw a picture and tell you about it. Add a new word or two to what the children are saying, or clarify meanings of words they are using.</td>
<td>As babies handle objects and toys describe how they feel, what they look like, sounds they make. Enhance children’s play by adding new words and descriptions to the words they use as they play. Children learn new words best when they learn them in context, that is, in a natural setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background Knowledge</strong> [includes print motivation and narrative skills]</td>
<td><strong>Sing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Talk</strong></td>
<td><strong>Read</strong></td>
<td><strong>Write</strong></td>
<td><strong>Play</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Prior knowledge (what children already know) includes:  
  * general knowledge  
  * conceptual thinking*  
  * content knowledge  
  * book/story knowledge  
  * enjoyment—print motivation  
  * story structure—narrative skills  
  * uses of books  
*Conceptual thinking is not just about the development of a specific concept (seasons, shapes, etc.) but about use of strategies to encourage understanding and thinking skills | Go through a sequence (This is the way we...) Mary songs help children with concepts such as numbers, size. Sing songs about loving books: The More We Read Together, for example. Share songs that tell a story like Mary Had a Little Lamb. | As children explore objects, describe them and their uses; compare and contrast objects. Put processes in sequence (recipe, making things, plants growing, seasons) Give children time to figure things out, to problem solve; if you solve it, explain what you did and why Tell children what you know on a variety of topics. Encourage children to tell you what they know. Encourage children to recount events and to describe things. Allow time (may take several seconds) for child to process what they hear and formulate a response. Use decontextualized speech (not only the here and now, use past future, what would you do, imagine). Encourage children to retell stories. Talk about concepts (color, shape, size, texture, spatial relationships like above/below, opposites, number and quantity) Encourage children to guess and predict what might happen Encourage children to solve problems and resolve conflicts. Embed conversation into every day routines such as bathtime, dinnertime. When you share information that you read, tell your child how you learned the information. | Read informational books. Read books on topics of interest to child. Have children tell you what they know about the book you are reading. Relate what is happening in the book to children’s experiences Encourage child to join in while sharing books. Retell stories with or without prop/flash/annel/puppets. Read books on various concepts and that bring out ideas. Encourage your baby to enjoy books, even when chewing on them. Allow the child to choose what to read Read with expression If your child loses interest, try another time. Talk about what books you like and what you like about them. | Have children draw pictures for a story; write what they say. Have children draw or write down what they know on topics. Draw and describe objects that are different sizes, opposite, etc. Use charts and graphs to classify objects. | Play matching and sorting games. Puzzles for problem solving. Play is a good way to develop background knowledge through role playing different situations: restaurant, doctor’s office, school, car repair shop, library. Dramatic play—act out stories together; can use puppets and/or props. Provide toys that can represent the characters in a favorite book to act out book or extend story in imaginative play. |

| **Print Conventions**  
* Also called Print Awareness  
Knowing that print has meaning; how to handle a book: direction of print; author/title; environmental print | Have flipcharts of words to songs to follow along. Use song books and point out words in the chorus or repeated lines. Sing “Oh no my book is upside down” to tune of London Bridge is Falling Down. | Point out signs and logos everywhere and labels on containers. Hold a favorite book upside-down or start reading it backwards from the last page. Encourage your child to talk about what is “wrong” with the way you are reading the book. Point out picture/text represents real thing. | Babys will chew on and bat the pages of books. Point to the title of the book; Point to words in repeated phrases as children say words. Tell children what the author and illustrator do as you say their names. | Have children make lists, write invitations and cards, write/draw their own books. | Add print to play. For example, menus to restaurant, labels to stores or restaurants, prescriptions for doctor play, etc. |

| **Letter Knowledge**  
Same letter can look different; letters have names and represent sounds | Sing the Alphabet song. Sing the alphabet to Mary Had a Little Lamb. Sing other songs with letters such as BINGO. Sing songs that highlight shapes. | Talk about letters—start with letters in child’s name; talk about shapes. Make observations comparing items—what is alike and different; explain as you sort or match items. | Read alphabet books, not necessarily from beginning to end. Point out shapes in books; point out how two pictures of same object or character might be alike and different. | Scribble, draw shapes, air writing, draw/write letters; make your own book. | Play with blocks—shapes, colors, size, so many ways to sort and categorize. Play with puzzles. Play matching and sorting games—notice what is alike and different. Include foam, magnet, block letters in play. |
Lions Roar!

Early Literacy Practices: Reading, Singing

Early Literacy Skill: Phonological Awareness, Background Knowledge, Vocabulary, Print Motivation

1.) Introduction to Storytime (improvise) – use lion finger puppet (to highlight stories we will be reading today – books about lions)

2.) Opening Song: “If you’re Happy & You Know It”

3.) Early Literacy Aside - Description & Tip (Introduction): During our storytimes, I point out ways in which you can help your child develop his/her early literacy skills through everyday easy practices. Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing even BEFORE they learn how to read and write. Developing early literacy skills now will make it easier for your child to learn to read when he/she starts school. One of the most important things you can do to develop these skills is to read and share books daily.

4.) READ: Roar! A Noisy Counting Book - Pamela Duncan Edwards

Early Literacy Aside - Description & Tip: Helping your child hear the smaller sounds in words is called phonological awareness, one of the six early literacy skills researchers say is important for the decoding part of reading (sounding out words from the letters a child will read). Reading rhythmic and rhyming books such as the one we just shared, helps your child to hear the smaller sounds in words, repetitive sounds and the cadence of language.

There are many wonderful picture books with rhyming, playful text – read these to your child.

5.) Flannel Board: “One Little Lion”

Early Literacy Aside - Description & Tip: Sharing rhymes and fingerplays with your child and allowing your child to talk/recite along with the rhyme is another way to build phonological awareness.

6.) READ: How to Hide a Lion – Helen Stephens

7.) Action Rhyme with Song: “I'm A Lion” (Sung to: “Three Blind Mice”)

I'm a lion, I'm a lion (point to self)
Hear me roar, hear me roar (shout - ROAR! )
I love to sleep out in the sun (pretend to sleep/rest head on hands)
And chase other animals just for fun (run in place)
In all the jungle I'm Number One, I'm a lion (hold up one finger)

Early Literacy Aside - Description & Tip: In many songs, there is a different note for each syllable, so your child is hearing words broken down into smaller sounds. Singing slows down language which makes it easier for your child to hear. Singing helps to build phonological awareness, which will help your child once he/she starts to learn to read. Sing often at home, in
the car and during playtime. Children learn through repetition, so sing or play in the car the same songs over and over.

8.) There is a famous saying that the month of March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. That means that the beginning of March is cold and wintry (which was true this year!) and the end of March can be almost spring-like (we hope!).

Fingerplay with Lion and Lamb finger puppets --

March is so cold  *(wrap arms around self and pretend to shiver)*  
And it comes in roaring like a lion.  *(hold up lion puppet and roar loudly)*  
Then spring comes and the birds sing,  *(say “tweet tweet”)*  
The grass grows  *(wiggle fingers)*  
And it leaves us warm like a fluffy lamb.  *(hold up lamb puppet)*

9.) READ (nonfiction factual book): *Lions* - Kate Riggs

**Early Literacy Aside - Description & Tip:** Sharing factual books with children is a great way to build **background knowledge**, which will help your child later understand what they read.

Factual or nonfiction books expose your child to new **vocabulary**, which will also help him/her later once he/she learns to read. Explain these new vocabulary words while reading with your child and don’t “dummy” them down. The more vocabulary words a child knows, the easier it will be for your child to learn to read once the time comes.

Some children enjoy factual books more than storybooks, so allow your child to self-select books that speak to his/her interests (e.g. dinosaurs, dogs, trucks). This supports the early literacy of **print motivation**, which is a child’s interest in and enjoyment of books and reading.

We have many easy to understand factual books with beautiful and engaging photos (like *Lions* by Kate Riggs) here at the library for you and your child to check out.

10.) DVD: Jerry Pinkney’s “The Lion and the Mouse”

11.) Art Activity: Construction Paper Lion Face Cut & Paste
Pizza Party

Early Literacy Practices: Reading, Singing

Early Literacy Skills: Letter Knowledge, Phonological Awareness

1.) Introduction to Storytime (improvise) – What is round, something you eat for lunch or dinner, has a crust, sauce and cheese and maybe some special toppings and is really delicious? PIZZA

Today we will be sharing some yummy stories about pizza!

2.) Write words on flip chart and post: This morning, we are going to do something a little different with our opening song

Opening Song: “PIZZA SONG” (sung to “If you’re Happy & You Know It”)

If you want to eat some pizza
Clap your hands.
If you want to eat some pizza
Clap your hands.
If you like bubbly cheese,
Then just say, “Pizza please!”
If you want to eat some pizza,
Clap your hands.

...Stamp Your Feet
...Wiggled Your Nose
...Nod Your Head

3.) Early Literacy Aside - Description & Tip (Introduction): During our storytimes, I point out ways in which you can help your child develop his/her early literacy skills through everyday easy practices. Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing even BEFORE they learn how to read and write. Developing early literacy skills now will make it easier for your child to learn to read when he/she starts school. One of the most important things you can do to develop these skills is to read and share books daily.

The early literacy skill we will be focusing on today is a fun and easy one that researchers agree that children should master before they actually begin kindergarten. Letter knowledge is knowing that letters are different from each other, that the same letter can look different, and that each letter has a name and is related to specific sounds. There are lots of fun things you can do to help your children develop letter knowledge -- by singing, talking, reading, writing and playing with them. I will mention a few as we go through our storytime today.

4.) Hold up the letter P:

- What letter is this?
- What sound does the letter P make?
- Do any of you have a P as the first letter in your name?
• Hold up the first book - *The Little Red Hen (Makes a Pizza)* by Philemon Sturges
  ✓ Point to the letter P in the word pizza. What letter is this? This is the word PIZZA? So, the word PIZZA begins with the letter P.

5.) READ: *The Little Red Hen (Makes a Pizza)* by Philemon Sturges

  Point out the two letter Ps in the title and in some of the text while reading.

**Early Literacy Aside - Description & Tip: Reading** alphabet books is one way to help children learn letters, but you don’t need an alphabet book to talk about letters. Take any book -- just like I did with *The Little Red Hen (Makes a Pizza)* -- and point out specific letters. You can even hunt for the first letter of your child’s name. Point out letters as you read books together and point out words and letters in everyday activities like grocery shopping or driving in the car. Knowing the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they make are important first steps in getting ready to read.

6.) Fingerplay & Clapping: “Pizza and Pop” (work with the sound of the letter P) - do twice

Clap along with this chant and emphasize the sounds in the letter P. Talk about the letter P and its sound to help build letter knowledge.

  Pizza and Pop -
  Pizza and Pop -
  When I get started, I just can’t stop.
  The smell is delicious,
  The taste extra yummy.
  I love it the most when it gets to my tummy!
  But, not too much or I’ll have an upset tummy! *(rub tummy)*

**Early Literacy Aside - Description & Tip: Phonological awareness** is the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words and is one of the early literacy skills researchers have identified in helping children get ready to read. **Clapping** along to rhythms helps children hear the sounds and syllables in words, which will help them decode words when later learning to read. Clapping also improves motor skills.

7.) READ: *Pizza Pat* by Rita Golden Gelman - or - *Grandpa and Me* by Karen Katz

8.) Flannel Board: “Pizza Party Chant”
9.) Action Rhyme: “Pizza Man, Pizza Man” (stand up and move; suit actions to words)
   Pizza man, pizza man, turn around.
   Pizza man, pizza man, touch the ground.

   Pizza man, pizza man, give the dough a toss.
   Pizza man, pizza man, ladle on the sauce.

   Pizza man, pizza man, sprinkle the cheese.
   Pizza man, pizza man, bend your knees.

   Pizza man, pizza man, put it in the oven.
   Pizza man, pizza man, press the oven button.

   Pizza man, pizza man, rub your tummy.
   Pizza man, pizza man, eat some pizza. Yummy!

10.) READ: *The Pizza that we Made* by Joan Holub

11.) **Early Literacy Aside - Description & Tip: Singing** the alphabet song is one way that children learn the names of the letters. Let’s sing the song together now --

Sing Alphabet Song: youtube (use ipad) and sing along with the children

**Alphabet Song, ABC, ABC song, ABCs (tinygrads.com)**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCDxiJm-FX4

12.) DVD - William Steig’s “Pete’s a Pizza”

13.) Art Activity: Coffee Filter Pizza
Early Literacy Storytime Resources

Books


Websites


Born Learning (United Way) - [http://www.bornlearning.org/](http://www.bornlearning.org/)
Calgary Public Library’s “Grow a Reader” app –
  http://calgarypubliclibrary.com/books-more/mobile-apps
Center for Early Literacy Learning - http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/
Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy - http://www.clel.org/
Deschutes Public Library’s “Raise a Reader” - http://www.deschuteslibrary.org/kids/earlylit/
Hennepin County Library’s “Birth to Six” - http://www.hclib.org/BirthTo6/ and Ideas Exchange
Library of Virginia’s “Early Literacy Begins with You” –
Multnomah County Library’s “Every Child” - https://multcolib.org/every-child
Ohio Ready to Read - http://www.ohreadytoread.org/index.html
Pierce County Library System’s “Early Learning” –
Reading Rockets - http://www.readingrockets.org/
Saroj Ghoting: Early Childhood Literacy Consultant – http://www.earlylit.net/
Sue McLeaf Nespec’s Kid Lit Plus - http://www.kidlitplus.com/
Storytime Share (Saroj Ghoting) - http://www.earlylit.net/storytimeshare/
Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families –
  http://www.readingrockets.org/

Gail J. Brown
Librarian, Youth & Family Services, Voorheesville Public Library
gail.brown@voorheesvillelibrary.org