



A project of
From the Start:
A Birth to Five Literacy Coalition

PLAY-GROW-READ! Around the House

Early Literacy Activities
for Babies, Toddlers,
and Preschoolers.



Early Literacy: Why It Matters

Research shows that development of language begins at birth. Sharing activities with your child will help them develop the pre-reading skills needed so they will enter school ready to succeed.

Narrative Skills (fun with stories)

Tell stories together, share books, and encourage pretend play.

Letter Knowledge (fun with letters)

Help your child identify the first letter in his/her name and recognize that letters are different from each other. Show them letters in books, on street signs, and on package labels.

Print Awareness (fun with reading)

Help your child discover how to hold a book and turn the pages. Show your child that words are everywhere, and that they have meaning.

Vocabulary (fun with words)

Teach your child the specific names of things, like vegetables at the grocery store.

Print Motivation (fun with books)

Find books that speak to your child's interests and share them often.

Phonological Awareness (fun with sounds)

Sing songs, play games and share rhymes to help your child play with sounds in words.



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Early Literacy Activities for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

When your baby was born, the doors of learning opened wide! From birth, children learn best through their emotions and senses, and when a loving bond is created.

You can make a difference by talking to your baby while diapering, or sharing a bedtime story with your child. Take every opportunity inside and outside your home to add to the special moments of childhood, while giving your child important literacy experiences.

These simple, yet powerful activities require no special materials or preparation. Talking, singing, reciting rhymes, playing games, sharing books, and listening to music are fun and meaningful ways to spend time with your child.

For more information about early literacy, visit the Public Library Association website, "Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library" at www.pla.org





IN THE FAMILY SPACE: PRESCHOOLER

Play With Your Preschooler

- Play “I Spy a Letter” by finding objects that start with the first letter of your child’s name.
- Call someone special on the phone, and let your child talk.
- Play a fun game, like “Simon Says,” to improve listening skills.
- Collect boxes of all sizes, paper towel rolls, plastic containers, and other safe, empty objects for stacking and creating.
- Help your child say words in many different ways by listening to the beat

of the word. For example, elephant, say el /e / phant. Practice saying any words aloud you like using the following actions:

Say it with your mouth
(just say the word)

Say it with your hand
(clap hands)

Say it with your head
(nod head up and down)

Say it with your feet
(stamp feet)

Say it with your eyes
(blink eyes)

Rhyme and Play

Willowby, Wallowby Woo
An elephant sat on you.

Willowby, Wallowby Wee
An elephant sat on me.

Make up your own
rhymes like this:

Willowby, Wallowby Wary,
an elephant sat on Mary.

Willowby, Wallowby Wuzzle,
an elephant played
with a puzzle.

Willowby, Wallowby Woo,
an elephant went to the zoo.

Books to Share

- *Knick-knack Paddywack!*, by Paul O. Zelinsky
- *My Very First Mother Goose*, by Iona Opie
- *Off to the Sweet Shores of Africa and Other Talking Drum Rhyme*, by Uzo Unobagha
- *Children Just Like Me*, by Susan Elizabeth Copsey

Fun with Music

- *Anna Moo Crackers*, by Anna Moo
- *Can a Jumbo Jet Sing the Alphabet?*, by Hap Palmer
- *Children of the World Multicultural Rhythmic Activities*, by Georgiana Liccione Stewart



IN THE KITCHEN: PRESCHOOLER

Play With Your Preschooler

- Cooked, cooled spaghetti noodles are a fun way for children to form letters and shapes.
- When using a cookbook or recipe card, let your child look at it with you.
- Read the Dr. Seuss book, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and make it for a meal — with a dash of green food coloring.
- Make words and spell names with ABC refrigerator magnets.
- Put sugar on a cookie sheet so children can draw, or write letters with their fingers.
- Have a tea party where children can help set the table and practice manners.
- Spread peanut butter on a slice of bread, and add some Alphabits cereal to spell their name.
- Let your child watch you write out the grocery list or to-do list.

Rhyme and Play

Give me a P, Give me an I
I've almost got my pizza pie!
Two Zs and one A
We'll have a pizza today!
Here's the sauce, Here's the cheese,
Would you pass the pizza, please?

Old Mother Hubbard
went to the cupboard
To get her poor dog a bone.
When she got there,
The cupboard was bare,
And so the poor dog had none.

Books to Share

- *Seven Silly Eaters*, by Mary Ann Hoberman
- *Green Eggs and Ham*, by Dr. Seuss
- *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, by Laura Numeroff
- *If You Give a Moose a Muffin*, by Laura Numeroff

Fun with Music

- *Bon Appetit*, by Cathy Fink



IN THE BEDROOM: PRESCHOOLER

Play with Your Preschooler

- Before bedtime, create a happy, story-dream for your child to think about before going to sleep.
- Ask your child to tell about the worst and best part of the day.
- Place stuffed animals around the room, and use a flashlight to search for them.
- Keep a box of old clothes and hats for dress-up play.
- Use blankets, chairs, and imagination to make fun forts.
- Keep a calendar in your child's room, and talk about it.
- Share a book with your child before bed each night.

Rhyme and Play

Playfully chase your child into bed while reciting this rhyme:

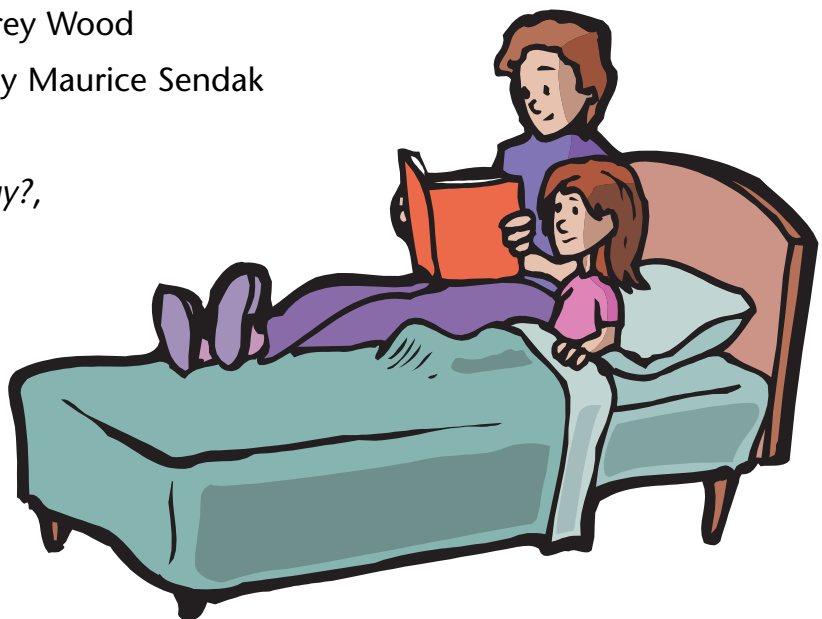
We Willie Winkie
Runs through the town,
Upstairs, downstairs
In his nightgown.
Rapping on the windows,
Crying through the locks,
"Are the children in their beds?
For now it's eight o' clock."

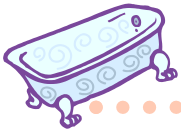
Books to Share

- *The Napping House*, by Audrey Wood
- *Where the Wild Things Are*, by Maurice Sendak
- *Sleepy Bears*, by Mem Fox
- *Did I Tell You I Love You Today?*, by Deloris Jordan

Fun with Music

- *Latin Lullaby*, by Jeffery Charno
- *Getting to Know Myself*, by Hap Palmer





IN THE BATHROOM: PRESCHOOLER

Play with Your Preschooler

- While your child is taking a bath, put different objects in the water—like a sponge or a ball—and make guesses if they will sink or float.
- With no-tear shampoo, create crazy hairstyles, and take a picture.
- Use rubber letters that stick to the tub walls to spell out names and words.
- Put an ice cube in the warm bath water, and watch it melt away.

Rhyme and Play

Tea for two in the tub!
Here's a cup,
(make fist with one hand)

And here's a cup,
(make fist with other hand)

And here's a cup of tea.
(stick out thumb of one hand)

Pour a cup,
(pour motions)

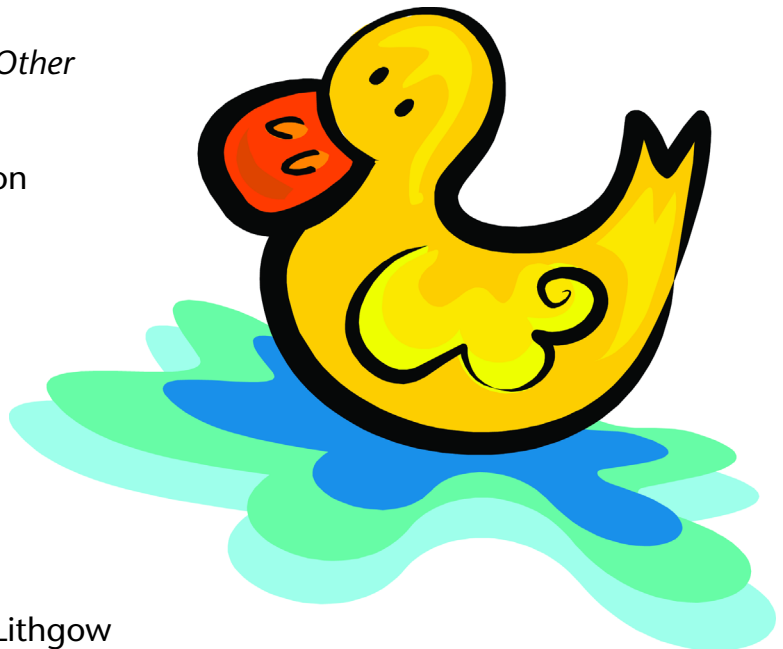
Pour a cup,
And have a cup with me!
(pretend to drink)

Books to Share

- *Take me out of the Bathtub and Other Silly Dilly Songs*, by Allan Katz
- *Tub Toys*, by Terry Miller Shannon
- *Dirt Boy*, by Erik Jon Slagerup
- *Dinosaur!*, by Peter Sis
- *The Very Lonely Bathtub*, by Ann Rasmussen

Fun with Music

- *Singing in the Bathtub*, by John Lithgow





IN THE CAR: PRESCHOOLER

Play with Your Preschooler

- Count objects seen while driving, like farm animals, car colors, or restaurants.
- Point to and read all the signs, billboards, bumper stickers, and logos.
- Choose a car color to count together.
- Look at license plates, and say the letters and numbers.
- Keep an Etch-a-Sketch or clip board with paper and crayons in the car.

Rhyme and Play

Sing to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell"

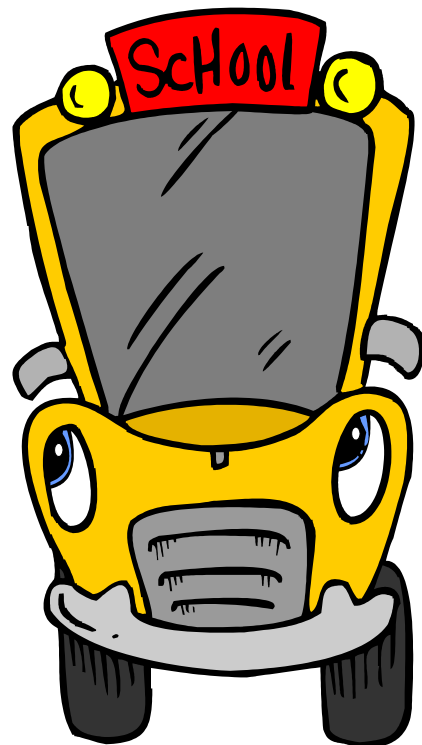
I'm driving in the car,
I'm driving in the car,
Beep, beep, beep, beep,
I'm driving in the car.
The light is turning red,
The light is turning red,
Stop, stop, stop, stop
The light is turning red.
The light is turning green,
The light is turning green,
Go, go, go, go,
The light is turning green

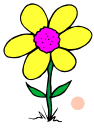
Books to Share

- *The Wheels on the Bus*, by Paul O. Zelinsky
- *My Freight Train*, by Michael Rex
- *Are We There Yet?*, by Dandi Daley Mackell
- *Night Driving*, by John Coy

Fun with Music

- *Traffic Jams*, by Joe Scruggs
- *Songs of Hispanic Americans*, by Ruth De Cesare
- *Kids in Action*, by Greg & Steve





OUTSIDE: PRESCHOOLER

Play with Your Preschooler

- Look up in the sky and see what kinds of shapes the clouds make.
- Talk about the weather, and help your child decide what to wear.
- Take a nature walk, and gather treasures along the way—like pinecones and rocks.
- “Play Ring Around the Rosie,” “Tag,” “Hide and Seek,” and “Hopscotch.”
- Search outside for a variety of rocks, and sort them by size, color, and texture.
- Play jump rope and practice rhymes.
- Plant a garden or an indoor plant together so your child can watch it grow.

Rhyme and Play

Recite this rhyme, beginning with your hand clenched into a fist.

This is the beehive,
Where are the bees?
Hidden away where nobody sees.
Watch, and you’ll see them
come out of the hive,
On, two, three, four and five!

It’s raining, it’s pouring
The old man is snoring.
Went to bed, that sleepy head,
Won’t get up until morning!

Rhyme and Play continued...

Father caught a bug
(hold up thumb)

Mother caught a worm
(hold up index finger)

This one got the bug
(hold up ring finger)

This one got the worm
(hold up index finger)

The little one said,
“Now it’s my turn!”
(hold up pinky)

Books to Share

- *Apples*, by Ken Robbins and *Seeds*, by Ken Robbins
- *Long Night Moon*, by Cynthia Rylant
- *The Wide Mouth Frog*, by Faulkner
- *The Tiny Seed*, by Eric Carle
- *Growing Vegetable Soup*, by Lois Ehler

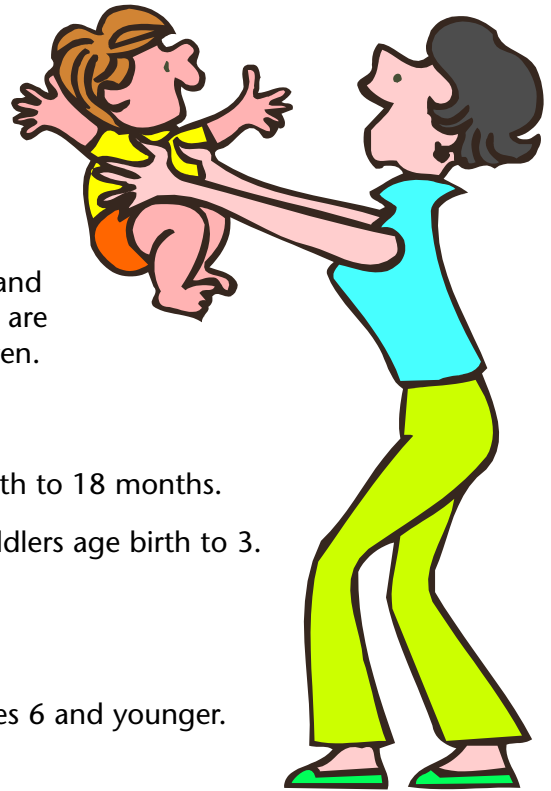
Fun with Music

- *Under a Shady Tree*, by Laurie Berkner
- *Get a Good Start*, by Georgiana Liccione Stewart
- *We Sing Games, Games, Games*, by Pamela Conn Beall

Early Literacy Library Programs

Storytimes are a good way to introduce children to the library. At storytimes, librarians and other specially trained staff present stories, songs, games and seasonal crafts. Librarians can also answer questions about books, library programs and reading in general.

Check the KDL website, www.kdl.org, for program dates and times and registration information. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to stay and participate along with their children. All programs are free.



Babytime: For parents/caregivers and babies, birth to 18 months.

Laptime: For parents/caregivers and babies/toddlers age birth to 3.

Storytime: For preschoolers ages 3 to 6.

Family Storytime: For all children, ages 6 and younger.

Pajama Storytime: Evening programs, for all children ages 6 and younger.



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For further information about PLAY-GROW-READ! contact:

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This report/project was made possible by grant number 90LO0113/01 from the Child Care Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Total project costs include federal funding in the amount of \$943,072 (85%) and non-federal funding in the amount of \$166,424 (15%). The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not represent the official views of the funding agency, nor does publication in any way constitute an endorsement by the funding agency.