



Communication, Language, and Literacy

Preschool Age Children

Adults promote communication skills and early literacy skills as they talk with, read to, and sing with children. Check out these strategies to help with communication, language, and literacy!

Communicating and Oral Language Development

Engage your child in conversation while at play, at snack time, at lunch, and during other routines.

Sing songs, say rhymes, and do finger plays.

Use a variety of words when you talk, including labels for things, action words, and many descriptive words. Say things like "Look at the squirrel with the long, fluffy tail! It is running and jumping all over the yard."

Give your child two-step directions with visual cues, if needed. Say "Would you please return this book to the shelf, and then come outside with me?"

Foundations for Writing

Establish daily reading routines, and give your child consistent access to reading materials (books, magazines, etc.).

Help your child tell stories and act out parts of stories they have heard using words, pictures, movement, puppets, and toys.

Point out words in books and in the environment, like street signs, toy boxes, and words in stores and restaurants.



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Foundations of Reading

Give your child frequent opportunities to draw and print in a variety of ways.

Provide dictation opportunities, such as “What would you like to say in your card to grandma?” or “Tell me what you like to do outside, and I’ll write it down.” Read the writing back to your child to strengthen the connection between the printed and spoken word.

Discuss letter names and identify specific letter sounds, particularly beginning sounds.

Provide your child with writing tools, such as paper, envelopes, writing tablets, oversized paper, crayons of various sizes and shapes, and other writing materials.

Learning New Languages

Use simple greetings from other languages, such as “Hola” (*Hello* in Spanish) or “Anpetu Waste” (*Good Day* in Lakota).

Sing simple songs in other languages to help your child hear the sounds of the language, such as “Frere Jacques” in French. Use motions to go along with songs to help children learn words.

Provide opportunities for your child to hear stories in another language using CDs or computer applications.



This information was adapted from the South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines. To learn more, talk to your childcare provider or visit sdstepahead.com.