

Using Storybooks to Build Language

Reading and telling stories are important skills for children as they go through school. Stories help improve children's listening, speaking and writing skills. Stories are also a good way to learn new things about the world. Books introduce children to many new concepts, events and experiences. These experiences help to build a child's vocabulary.



There are many fun ways you can use storybooks with your child. Here are a few suggestions:

- ☞ Start reading with your child at an early age. Birth is not too soon!
- ☞ Begin with a good book. Good books talk about things that are interesting and familiar to your child and have good pictures.
- ☞ Read regularly with your child. Bedtime is always a good time for stories but there are many other times that are good for reading. For example, you could read with your child while waiting in line at a store. Keep a book or two in the car or in a back pack. You will be ready to read a page whenever you have a chance.
- ☞ Read **s l o w l y** with lots of expression in your face and voice.
- ☞ Sit close to your child so you can share the book and the experience together.
- ☞ Read simple stories your child can memorize so he can fill in the words as you read together.
- ☞ Read the same story many times. Your child learns best when he hears a story over and over again. Your child will enjoy knowing a book by heart!
- ☞ Ask questions that encourage your child to think. Ask *why* and *how* questions like, "Why do you think he did that?" or "How did that happen?"
- ☞ Ask questions that encourage your child to predict what will happen next in the story. Ask questions like, "What do you think will happen next?"
- ☞ Have fun! Your child will learn that reading is fun and it provides a chance to learn something new. Make reading a habit.

For more ideas on using storybooks with your child, call Capital Health Link at 408-LINK (408-5465).

Asking Questions When Reading Books

Asking questions about books helps children to think about what they hear and see. When you talk to children about the books they read, they connect their own experiences with new ideas. By going beyond the story, you encourage children to talk even more.

Here are some questions you can use to get your child talking:

Questions to ask children aged birth to 3 years.

Questions that encourage your child to talk about people and things in the story:

- ★ What is this?
- ★ What color is it?
- ★ What is he doing?
- ★ Who is that?

Questions that encourage your child to describe people and things in more detail:

- ★ What is the girl holding?
- ★ Where is Peter Rabbit?

Questions that encourage your child to describe the events of a story:

- ★ What happened to Big Bird?
- ★ Where did the Bears go?
- ★ What is happening now?

Questions to ask children aged 3 to 6 years.

Questions that encourage your child to think about the reason for an action or cause of an event:

- ★ Why do you think they put on their coats?
- ★ Why did that happen?
- ★ What happened to Peter's snowball?

Questions that encourage your child to add dialogue:

- ★ What do you think the boy will say?
- ★ What could the girl say to the wolf?

Questions that encourage your child to discuss his reactions to people or events:

- ★ What do you think will happen next?
- ★ What do you think of that?
- ★ How did the girl feel when her friend didn't show up?
- ★ Do you think they did the right thing?

Questions that encourage your child to think about what the story means to him:

- ★ Did that ever happen to you? What did you do?
- ★ What would you do if...?
- ★ What would you have done?

***For more information, contact your
community speech-language pathologist.***