



The Six Skills for Early Literacy

Ideas for Teaching Six Skills

Children need a variety of skills to become readers. The American Library Association has identified these six key skills that will prepare children to become readers when they enter school. The Six Skills for Early Literacy are the foundation for later success in reading and writing. The Prevent Blindness Wisconsin *Your Amazing Eyes* Curriculum includes stories and activities which encourage development of the Six Skills for Early Literacy and also include themes such as sight and seeing your world; why children wear glasses; and practicing eye safety.

Print Motivation: Interest and the enjoyment of books and reading.

Teaching Print Motivation

- Keep children involved in the book. Say repeated phrases together.
- Think of different ways you can talk about what is happening to the book, maybe relating it to child's experiences
- Speak in "parentese." When we talk with children we tend to use a higher pitch than usual. Researchers have found that "parentese" keeps children's attention longer than regular voices.
- Keep interactions with reading and books positive and fun for children.

Phonological Awareness: The ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words. Like rhyming, playing with syllables or parts of words and hearing beginning sounds of words.

Teaching Phonological Awareness

- Practice animal noises to help children hear different sounds.
- Sing songs to help children hear smaller sounds in words. This helps children when they have to sound out words.
- Clapping out syllables in words to help children hear the parts of words.

Vocabulary: Knowing the names of things, concepts, feelings and ideas. Researchers have found that children with a large vocabulary find it easier to read when the time comes.

Teaching Vocabulary

- Use words that are unfamiliar to children and be sure to explain them.
- Don't replace unfamiliar words in books, just explain them to children.
- When reading, don't just read the words. Talk about pictures and describe what is going on. Leave time for children to say something back.
- Talk about a story after reading it.
- Reinforce new vocabulary words.

Narrative Skills: The ability to describe things, talk about events and tell stories.

Teaching Narrative Skills

- Summarize stories after reading them.
- Engage children in a conversation about what they have read.
- Talk with children about the pictures they see, and ask them to describe them.

Print Awareness: Knowing how to handle a book and noticing print all around us; recognizing that print has meaning.

Teaching Print Awareness

- Run your finger under the words of the book as you read. This helps children understand that you are reading the text and not the pictures. Do this only for repeated phrases or titles, so it does not get in the way of sharing the story.
- Name the letters and their sounds based on things you do throughout the day. Use signs, like STOP signs, even when children cannot recognize the letters, they are still recognizing the symbol and can understand that print has meaning.
- Hold a book upside down or backwards. See if children notice it is upside down. If not, point it out. Children need to know how to hold a book-which is the cover and which is the back.

Letter Knowledge: Knowing that letters are different from each other, knowing that letters relate to sounds, and recognizing letters everywhere;

Teaching Letter Knowledge

- Read alphabet books to help children become aware of letters and how they look.
- Use specific names for things, like cat and kitten. This helps children understand differences between similar things.
- Distinguish the difference between different pictures and shapes.
- Name the letters and their sounds based on things you are doing throughout the day, like STOP signs.

759 N Milwaukee Street
Suite 305
Milwaukee, WI 53214

(414) 765-0505
(414) 765-0377 Fax
info@preventblindnesswisconsin.org

Learn more at:
wisconsin.preventblindness.org