

Importance of Reading at Home

Years of research show a child's home environment during the first five years of life, when children develop more rapidly than any other time, will significantly impact the development of his or her early language and reading skills. And one of the most important things a parent can do to support their child's development is to read with them, which means starting when they are newborns and not even able to talk, and continuing well beyond the years that they can read by themselves.

Studies show that early reading with children helps them learn to speak and interact, as well as bond with parents. Benefits of shared reading time also include fostering the development of listening skills, spelling, reading comprehension and vocabulary, and establishing essential foundational literacy skills.

Reading books aloud with young children also contributes to the development of their emergent literacy abilities, which are defined as the foundational skills or knowledge that children develop before learning the more conventional skills of reading and writing.

During shared book-reading, children learn to recognize the alphabet, understand that print represents the spoken word, and learn how to hold a book, turn the page and start at the beginning. Shared book-reading also builds phonological awareness, exposes children to story structures (e.g. stories have a beginning, middle and end) and literacy conventions such as syntax and grammar which are essential for understanding texts.

Early reading with children also helps them become early readers themselves. And reading at an early age has been shown to contribute to children's academic successes, their critical thinking abilities and their creativity and inquisitiveness. Also, early exposure to books is proven to help increase a child's brain development and better prepares them to learn.

Parents are by far the most important influence in children's lives in establishing the importance of education, which is why parental involvement is the number one predictor of early literacy success and future academic achievement.

And that is why it is essential for parents to be their child's reading role models with daily practice at home in order to navigate successfully through beginning literacy skills.