Vocabulary
- Talk with your baby or toddler about what is going on around you.
- When your baby babbles or your child talks, listen carefully and answer.
- Ask your baby or toddler lots of questions. Even if she does not have the words to answer, she learns that questions are invitations for her to respond.
- Speak clearly. Use short sentences. Repeat yourself when your child shows interest.
- Speak in the language that is most comfortable for you.
- Read together every day. Books have pictures of things you may not see often. Name the pictures as you point to them—this helps children learn new words.
- Research shows that children who have larger vocabularies are better readers. Knowing many words helps children recognize written words and understand what they read.

Print Motivation
- Begin reading books early—even when your child is a newborn.
- Make book sharing time special time—just you and your baby or toddler.
- Let your baby or toddler see you reading.
- Visit your public library often.
- Children who enjoy being read to will want to learn how to read.

Print Awareness
- Use board books or cloth books and have your child hold the book.
- If there are only a few words on the page, point to each word as you say it.
- Read aloud every day—print labels, signs, menus. Print is everywhere!
- Children who enjoy being read to will want to learn how to read.

Narrative Skills
- Talk to your child about what you are doing.
- Tell your child stories.
- Encourage your toddler to tell you about things. Listen patiently and ask questions.
- Read favorite books again and again.
- Talking with children develops comprehension skills that will help them understand what they read.

Phonological Awareness
- Say nursery rhymes so that your child hears words that rhyme. Emphasize the rhyming words.
- Add actions as you sing a song or recite a poem. This helps your child break down language into separate words.
- Singing songs is a good way to help your child hear syllables in words. In most songs, each syllable in a word gets a different note.
- Make up your own silly, nonsense rhymes.
- Say rhymes and sing songs in the language that is most comfortable for you.
- Being able to hear the sounds that make up words helps children sound out written words as they begin to read.

Letter Knowledge
- Help your baby and toddler see and feel different shapes as you play. (Say, “The ball is round.”)
- Read alphabet books.
- Point out letters on toys, food boxes and other objects around the house.
- Talk with your toddler about what is the same and what is different between two things.