

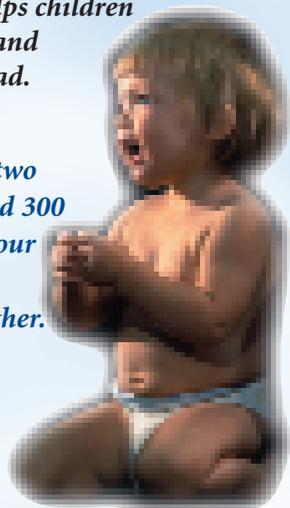
## Parent Guide to Early Literacy for Early Talkers: Birth to Two-Year Olds

# WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

### 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.**

*By the time children are two years old, they understand 300 to 500 words. You help your child learn new words by talking and reading together.*



### 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!
- ✦ **Being familiar with printed language helps children feel comfortable with books and understand that print is useful.**

### 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.



**Make sharing books something your baby or toddler wants to do often. Children learn best when they enjoy what they are doing.**

- ✦ Look for books with clear and simple pictures.
- ✦ Choose a good time to read, when you and your child are relaxed and happy.
- ✦ Point to pictures. Talk about them in an excited voice.
- ✦ Notice what your baby looks at, and then talk about it.
- ✦ It is natural for babies to play with books, even to chew or tear them.
- ✦ Stop for a while if your baby loses interest or gets upset. A few enjoyable minutes at a time is better than a longer unhappy time together.
- ✦ While you read, make your child feel loved and special.
- ✦ Share books with your baby every day. Even a few minutes are important.

**Talk and have fun!**