**WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?**

**Print Motivation**
- Make book-sharing time a special time for closeness between you and your child.
- Let your child see you reading.
- Visit your public library often.
- Children who enjoy books will want to learn how to read.

**Print Awareness**
- Read aloud everyday print—labels, signs, lists, menus. Print is everywhere!
- Point to some of the words as you say them, especially words that are repeated.
- Let your child turn the pages.
- Let your child hold the book and read or tell the story.
- Hold the book upside down. See if your child turns the book around.
- Being familiar with printed language helps children feel comfortable with books and understand that print is useful.

**Phonological Awareness**
- Say nursery rhymes and make up your own silly, nonsense rhymes.
- Sing songs. Songs have different notes for each syllable in a word, so children can hear the different sounds in words.
- Play word games such as, “What sounds like ‘ran’?” or “What starts with the same sound as ‘ball?’”
- 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 words as they begin to read.

**Letter Knowledge**
- Help your child see different shapes and the shapes of letters.
- Talk about what is the same and what is different between two things.
- Write your child’s name, especially the first letter.
- Make letters from clay or use magnetic letters.
- Point out and name letters when reading alphabet books, signs or labels.
- Read alphabet books with clear letters and pictures.
- Knowing the names and sounds of letters helps children figure out how to sound out words.

**Narrative Skills**
- Tell your child stories.
- Ask your child to tell you about something that happened today.
- Read books together. Stories help children understand that things happen in order first, next, last.
- Read a book that you have read before. Switch what you do—you be the listener and let your child tell you the story.
- Being able to tell or retell a story helps children understand what they read.

**Vocabulary**
- Talk with your child about what is going on around you. Talk about feelings—yours and your child’s.
- When your child talks with you, add more detail to what she says.
- Speak in the language that is most comfortable for you.
- Read together every day. When you talk about the story and pictures, your child hears and learns more 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.

**Dialogic or “Hear and Say” Reading**
- How you read to children makes a difference in how ready they are to learn to read.
- Use dialogic reading to teach new words.
- Choose a book that your child already knows well.
- Ask “what” questions. (“What’s this?” and point to a picture.)
- Follow your child’s answers with another question. (“What is the dog doing?” Child: “Digging.”)
- Repeat what your child says and expand on it. (“I think you’re right. The dog is digging under the fence to go find his friend.”)
- Help your child as needed. Praise and encourage your child.
- Follow your child’s interests.

**Have fun!**

Use dialogic reading to develop comprehension skills.
- Dialogic reading encourages your two- and three-year-old to think and talk by answering open-ended questions.
- Ask questions like: “What’s going on here?” “Tell me what you see on this page.”
- Follow your child’s answer with another question: “What else do you see?” “What is happening over here?”
- Expand what your child says. Add another piece of information.
- Help your child repeat your longer phrases.

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*“The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children. This is especially so during the preschool years.”* From *Becoming a Nation of Readers*

*“Vocabulary is learned from books more than from normal conversation with adults or children or from television exposure.”* From *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children* by B. Hart and T.R. Risley.