



Learning to speak, read, write and communicate well begins at birth. Here's what you can do to build your children's language and literacy skills in fun everyday activities.

Let's Discover the World!

Tip Sheet #1

Why?

Parents and caregivers are their child's first and most important teachers. When a child feels safe and secure and can count on you and others to meet his needs, it fosters his development and confidence to try new things and explore the world. Starting from birth you can provide your child with many simple experiences that will inspire him to explore, create and learn about his world. The more experiences your child has in his life, the more language he learns and the easier it will be when he begins to read.

Tips for Children of all Ages

Provide specific praise. This will help your child feel good about himself. Focus on the positive things your child does. (*"Wow! You worked hard building your tower!"*).

Explore and discover together. Everyday experiences with you are just as valuable as special trips and holidays. Explore your neighbourhood, go to the library, visit a pet store, play in the park, etc.

Encourage independence. Give your child the chance to do things for himself like pouring milk into a cup. Encourage and support your child as he tries, and tries again. It takes practice to learn a new skill.

Follow your child's interests. Children learn best when they choose their own areas to explore. For example, if your toddler hands you a leaf, take advantage of this by talking about it. If your three year old is interested in dinosaurs visit the library to find books about dinosaurs.

Turn off the TV. TV is a reality of everyday life and there are a lot of good things on TV, however it is important to set limits on TV. The Canadian Pediatric Society recommends **no TV** for children under two years old and a maximum daily screen time of one hour for children two to five years of age. This recommendation also applies to computer and video games.

See, touch, taste and smell. Find ways for your child to learn about the world by using all his senses. At the grocery store, let your child pick a fruit he has never tried before. Explore how it feels, tastes, smells and looks. The more senses your child uses, the better he will learn.

Have fun together. Get down to his level, give him all your attention, and enjoy your time together. This quality time is more valuable than the latest toy.