



Starting Strong Connection

The Role of Fathers in Their Child's Literacy Development

From Reading Rockets www.ReadingRockets.org

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Dads play a critical role in their children's literacy development by modeling reading, sharing stories, exploring the world together and engaging in meaningful conversations that build critical thinking skills.

What should I read?

Children will respond to your enthusiasm. You can select a variety of books. The important part is that you are enthusiastic about the book. Stop by the children's section of the Rapid City Public Library for great book ideas.

What if I'm not with my child every day?

If you don't see your child each day, try arranging a regular time to read books over the phone, or create your own podcast! Your child will look forward to this individual time with you, and you will also be modeling behavior that will keep your child on a path toward learning.

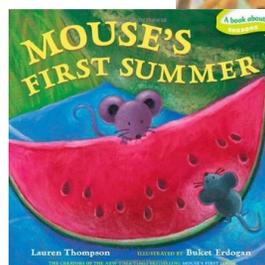
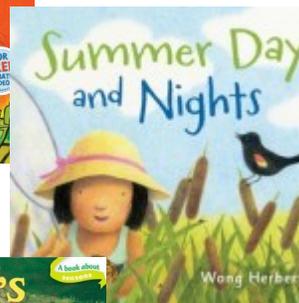
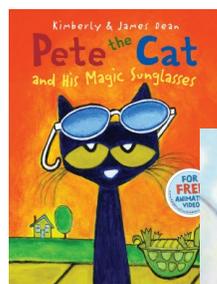
What if I don't like reading?

Even if you're not a reader yourself, you just need to send the message that reading is important! Here are some other simple ways to incorporate literacy into your everyday routine with your child:

- Tell stories about when you were young.
- Recite nursery rhymes or jingles.
- Read environmental print (road signs, brand names on food containers)

- Check out picture books and talk about the pictures.
- Involve your child in everyday writing tasks like shopping lists or paying bills.
- Create games that use letters, words, or problem solving.

Great books for summer reading:



Scholarship Recipients:

- ☺ Please remember to inform Early Childhood Connections of any changes in your address or contact information.
- ☺ If you plan to withdraw from the program please call Kim Booth at:
342-6464
or email at:
kimbooth@rushmore.com

Inside this issue:

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| The Journey of Mixed Emotions: How to Help Your Child Manage Time & Understand Expectations. | 2 |
| Growing Up Wild: Ants on Parade | 3 |
| Child Development and Learning: Summer Scavenger Hunt | 3 |
| Summer Safety | 4 |

The Journey of Mixed Emotions— How to Help Your Child Manage Time and Understand Expectations

Time is an unclear measure for children. It is very common for parents to feel frustrated with a child when he has not done what he was asked to do (e.g. pick up toys, put on shoes) even after given a five-minute warning. It is important for parents to know that there is little difference between 5 minutes and an hour to young children because of the way they experience time. Children live in the moment and the future is difficult for them to measure. When parents use time (rather than events such as “when I get to the top of the stairs”) to communicate what they expect the child to do, it can lead to the child feeling confused and frustrated and ultimately, expressing his emotions through a tantrum.

Timers are excellent tools parents can use to help young children measure time and understand expect-

tations. Sand timers can help children see the sand fall to the bottom to measure time. Sand timers empower children and help them to feel that they are a part of the process rather than simply being told what to do. Sand timers also give parents an opportunity to encourage and compliment their child when he is moved to action to “beat the clock” Much more enjoyable and effective than nagging.

Try this at Home

The skills needed to share, trade and take turns can be taught using a sand or kitchen timer.

Taking Turns: “I see that your sister is playing with the puppet right now. When this three-minute timer is done, it will be your turn.”

Trading: “You are having so much fun playing with your train. When the timer is done, you and your brother can trade. He will give you his car and you can give him your train.”

Sharing: “You and Ben are both playing in the sand. There is only one shovel and two boys. You have the bucket and Ben has the shovel. First Ben can shovel the sand into the bucket and when the timer is done, you can shovel the sand into the bucket. That is a great way to share the sand toys!

Timers can help with transitions, or children moving from one activity to another. “I see you are happy playing with your Legos. It is time to go to school. Would you like to put your shoes on now or in one minute?” Then use the timer and you may be surprised how your child is able to make the transition on his own.

Timers can help move an activity along (e.g. clean-up). “I wonder if you can put all your trains into the box in 3 minutes.”



The Bottom Line

Time is a difficult concept for young children to grasp. Timers give children something they can see and touch to help them measure time. When timers are used to help children understand expectation, take turns and transition to new activities, they can reduce the frequency of challenging behavior.

(From Backpack Connection Series www.challengingbehavior.org)

Growing Up Wild: Ants on Parade

from the Council for Environmental Education Growing Up Wild Curriculum

There are thousands of ant species in North America. Though some species are considered pests, ants play an invaluable role in many ecosystems. Many are important predator of small invertebrates, including other insects, while others are very effective disperser of seeds they harvest. All ants go through a four-stage life cycle -egg, larva, pupa and adult. All ants live in social groups called colonies. You may have seen the familiar "ant hill", the above ground opening for the colony. Underground, ant colonies may have many chambers-used for things like nurseries or food storage-just like rooms in a house are used for different things.

Ant colonies are made up of queens, female workers and winged males.

Find an anthill near your house and visit the colony everyday. Write or draw the story of your ant neighbors in a journal. Stretch your imagination by completing these statements: If I were as small as an ant...or If had six legs...

Serve ants on a log for snack. Celery, cream cheese and raisins.



Child Development and Learning: Summer Scavenger Hunt

I remember how excited I would get when I was a little girl and my siblings and I would have a scavenger hunt. Something about the accomplishment of finding the items on the list was so exciting. A great way to get kids outdoors in the summer is a Nature Scavenger Hunt.

Make a list of at least 10 objects that are commonly found in your area and available in the summer. Add pictures to help young children identify the object. If you have several children you can have them play in teams. Provide a paper bag to collect the objects. List of possible nature items:

- Pinecone
- Heart-shaped leaf
- Roly-poly bug (what child is not fascinated with these creatures!)
- Egg-shaped rock
- Feather
- 3 daisies
- Dandelion flower or puffball
- Large flower
- Small flowers
- Something that smells good



Here is a website for free downloadable lists with pictures:

<http://www.fivelittlechefs.com/craft/summer/nature-scavenger-hunt-for-kids-free-printable.html>

Starting Strong Program Partners

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Banana Bunch Children's Learning
Center

Fit-n-Fun Preschool

St. Elizabeth Seton Preschool

Dream Kids Preschool and Child Care

YMCA Zoo Crew Preschool



Summer Safety

Sun Protection

- Avoid sun exposure during peak sun hours (10 AM - 6 PM).
- Wear protective clothing and a wide brimmed hat and sunglasses (with 99-100% UV protection).
- Sunscreen is a must (on sunny and cloudy days)! Look for products with UVA and UVB protection and an SPF of at least 15 (according to the American Academy of Pediatrics and American Association of Dermatology).
- Sunscreen should be applied liberally 30 minutes before going out in the sun, and reapplied every two hours or sooner if swimming, sweating or toweling off.

Look for shade whenever possible.

Dehydration and Heat-Related Illnesses

- Keeping well hydrated is very important.
 - Children (and adults) must remember to drink.
 - Do not wait until a child says he is thirsty before offering fluids. At this point, he is already dehydrated, so be sure to provide plenty of fluids before going outside, while out in the heat and afterwards.
 - Playing in the hot summer sun means lots of fluid loss, so avoid strenuous activity during peak sun hours (10 am- 6 pm). Look for shade and take lots of breaks.
 - Seek medical attention immediately for any signs of heat-related illness.
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