

Talking

Talking with children helps them learn oral language, one of the most critical of early literacy skills.

- ◇ Talk to your baby about who is in your family
- ◇ Talk to your baby about animals & their sounds
- ◇ Talk to your baby about body parts and clothes as you help him get dressed
- ◇ Talk to your baby about the foods she is beginning to eat
- ◇ Talk about the illustrations on the cover of a book

Singing

Songs help children develop listening skills and to pay attention to the rhythms and rhymes of the spoken language.

- ◇ Check out music from the library & listen to a song with your baby
- ◇ Make up a song with your baby's name
- ◇ Sing your baby's favorite song fast & then slow
- ◇ Clap to the rhythm of a song
- ◇ Make up new words to a traditional tune with your child



Writing

Writing helps children learn that letters and words stand for sounds and that print has meaning.

- ◇ Watch your baby play with non-toxic finger-paint
- ◇ Help your baby hold a crayon & practice scribbling
- ◇ Practice writing out the letters of your child's name with her & say each letter as you write
- ◇ Encourage your child to "sign" his name on his drawings, even if it starts out as a scribble

Reading

Reading together with your child is the single most important way to help them get ready to read.

- ◇ Help your baby turn the pages of a board book as you read
- ◇ Point out words on signs & explain what they mean
- ◇ Point out connections between a story & your baby's life
- ◇ Discuss the meaning of an unfamiliar word with your child
- ◇ Ask your child to guess the next word in a story
- ◇ Ask your child to guess what will happen next in the story
- ◇ Ask an open ended question at the end of the story



Playing

Playing is one of the primary ways young children learn about the world.

- ◇ Play with clean sponges & water on paper, explain what is happening as your baby plays
- ◇ Play peek-a-boo with your baby & hide behind a book
- ◇ Act out a story as you read it to your baby
- ◇ Play make believe with your child
- ◇ Make up a story with props or toys



How to get your child ready to read even when you're on the go You can help children learn pre-reading skills while you're in the car, in the grocery store, or anywhere you and your children can talk.

Ask a Children's Librarian for the best rhyming books for your child's age. You and your child can say the rhymes as you're getting ready in the morning, during the day as you go from one activity to another, or in the evening as you prepare dinner or get ready for bed .

Digital Resource:

Tumblebooks: Access ebooks for children anytime from the library's website at <http://www.countyofnapa.org/Library/Kids/FunLinks/> for free! A library card is required to access.