

# Parenting NEWS & VIEWS

EARLY LEARNING AND  
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## Learning to Love Reading

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Language and literacy skills begin to develop in infancy, and continue to grow into adulthood. Helping children discover a love of books, involving them in meaningful conversations, enjoying music together, and practicing basic literacy skills will support children in becoming competent readers. The foundations for early literacy include: concepts about print, phonological awareness, alphabets and word/print recognition, comprehension and analysis of text, and literacy interest and response.

Children learn about print concepts when they explore the different uses of print, practice the mechanics of how to read from top to bottom and left to right, and discover that print is a combination of letters and symbols.



Support your child in learning these concepts by reading aloud together, pointing to each word as you read, identifying punctuation, and writing down the stories your child tells you. Phonological awareness develops when children notice the sounds of letters, and how different sounds come together to create new sounds.

To support phonological awareness, read or sing rhyming books together, and play handclapping games that break words into syllables. Sing songs like "B-I-N-G-O," read books like *Miss Mary Mack*, and play handclapping games like "Patty Cake."

Help your child develop alphabet and word/print knowledge by writing his name on his personal belongings, and label a few things in the house like the *continued on back*

### SUMMER CAR SAFETY

In 2018, fifty one children died from heatstroke caused by being left alone in a car. Safe Kids Worldwide recommends you **ACT**:

- A:** Avoid heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving your child alone in a car.
- C:** Create reminders by putting something you will need in the back of your car next to your child such as a briefcase or a cell phone.
- T:** Take action. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911.

If your child attends a child care program, ask staff to call if you do not show up on time so you can check that your child is safe. These simple steps can save your child's life. Source: [www.safekids.org/tip/heatstroke-safety-tips](http://www.safekids.org/tip/heatstroke-safety-tips)



# Learning Fun at Home

Research has shown that reading to children for just fifteen minutes a day can have a profound impact on their future success. Reading aloud together is also a wonderful way to spend time together as a family. There are many other ways that parents can support their child's language and literacy development. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Visit the Public Library:** The public library is a free resource. You can borrow paper, digital, and audio books; as well as other literacy items such as music, movies, board games, puzzles, and more. Libraries also offer story hours, book clubs, and special events.
- **Create a Home Library:** Collect inexpensive books from yard sales, thrift stores, or dollar stores. Request books as birthday presents for your child, or subscribe to a child-friendly magazine like National Geographic Little Kids, Highlights High Five, or Click.
- **Encourage Storytelling:** Tell your child stories about when you were little, and encourage him to create his own stories with puppets, stuffed animals, or dolls.
- **Create Stories with Art:** Ask your child to draw his favorite story, or a story of his own, and then tell it to you. Write down his story so he can see how writing represents spoken language.
- **Request Postcards:** Ask family members and friends who live in another city or state to send postcards that your child can collect and read with you. Use a map to show your child where the postcard came from.
- **Go for a Letter Walk:** Go for a family walk after dinner and look for letters and words in your neighborhood on signs, windows, or the street.
- **Make Three Dimensional Letters:** Use yarn, playdough, sticks, or other items to form letter shapes.
- **Keep a Journal:** Help your child start a journal. Use any kind of notebook, or bind three-hole-punched paper together with yarn. Your child can draw a face that shows how he feels each day, and add pictures about what he did. You can help him write down any words he wants to share.



## 5 Frozen Treats

These healthy treats are perfect for a hot day! Simply blend the ingredients in a blender until they are smooth, pour the mixture into ice cube trays or plastic molds, and freeze them overnight. For ice cube trays, cover them with cling wrap and push ice cream sticks through the wrap into each square.

### Breakfast to Go

- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 1 cup assorted berries
- 1 cup granola

### Dairy-Free Fudge Pops

- 26 oz. coconut milk
- 2/3 cup cocoa powder
- 4 Tbsp. honey or maple syrup
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 pinch salt

### Frozen Green Smoothies

- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup fresh spinach
- 1/4 cup parsley
- 1 banana
- 1 kiwi
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 1 Tbsp. grated fresh ginger



### Strawberries and Coconut Milk

- 2 cups strawberries
- 1/2 cup full fat coconut milk
- 1 Tbsp. agave syrup or honey

### Raspberry and Lime Treats

- 1- 1/2 cups fresh raspberries
- 1 can full fat coconut milk
- Juice of one lime
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup maple syrup or honey





# Talking about Your Child's Development

Educators can help you understand and support your child's development. Request a conference every six months with your child's caregiver to review developmental milestones and establish learning goals. The first conference should take place after the caregiver has had an opportunity to observe your child learning and playing with others. Once the caregiver has become familiar with your child's personality, interests, and style of learning, you can have your first meeting to discuss your child's needs and how his development can best be supported.

As a parent, you can contribute valuable information to educators about your child. You can share your child's routine, food and sleep preferences, favorite activities, interests, medical history, strengths, and needs. This information helps educators build a picture of who your child is and helps them plan learning experiences that will not only meet his needs, but also be interesting and fun. Educators can share observations and stories about your child that illustrate how he is learning, what skills he is working on, and what he is doing really well.

You and your child's educator can combine your knowledge and make a plan for resolving any developmental concerns you may have. Concerns can include behavior issues, refusal to eat, possible developmental delays, or support for diagnosed special needs. When educators and parents are using the same routines, techniques, and responses to address behavior or developmental concerns, it creates a feeling of consistency and security that helps children overcome learning obstacles.

Before meeting for a conference, make a list of questions, observations, or concerns that you would like to discuss. If the educator uses a word you are not familiar with during your conference, ask for an explanation. Remember that you have the right to disagree, but listen to the caregiver's observations with an open mind and consider any ideas he or she may have to help your child. Ask the educator what tool is used to assess children's development, such as the Desired Results Developmental Profile Revised (DRDP-R), and ask to be given a copy of the evaluation before you leave.

Take the copy of the educator's assessment to your child's next wellness check for the doctor to read. Educators may identify developmental concerns, but children should also be diagnosed by a doctor or professional therapist. Sharing your child's assessment with the doctor will provide a more detailed picture of your child's health and well-being and may lead to receiving further assistance and support if needed.



door, window, etc., so your child can begin connecting letters and words with the items they represent. As children listen to stories, they use the knowledge and experience they have to understand what they hear. Encourage your child to retell his favorite stories, discuss the characters and stories you read together, and teach him how to use informational books like a children's dictionary or nature guide in order to strengthen his knowledge and ability to analyze text.

The most important thing you can do to support your child's literacy development is to share a love of reading. Set an example by reading newspapers, magazines, or books in front of your child, and make books accessible in all areas of the home. For example, books could be in the bedroom and living room, and cookbooks or magazines with recipes could be in the kitchen. If you read on a tablet or smart phone, show your child the screen and explain that you are reading. Introducing your child to different types of print helps him understand the purpose of writing. He can learn that recipes are written to help us cook, newspapers are written to tell us what is happening in the

world, and non-fiction books are written to teach us.

Visit the public library and choose a variety of books that rhyme, tell a story, illustrate math skills (counting, matching, or identifying shapes), or teach about animals, nature, and weather. Children three to five years old are ready to learn how to handle books carefully and turn pages without ripping them. They can also learn to identify the parts of a book such as the cover, spine, pages, and table of contents. Children can also learn how to identify the title, author, and illustrator on the cover, and begin pointing to words as they read.

Establish a reading routine that the whole family participates in to help children understand that reading and learning is an enjoyable and valuable activity. If children see you reading, they will want to read too. Encourage children to express their interests, thoughts, and feelings about the stories and books they read. Creating a positive attitude for reading in the early years will motivate children to continue reading for the rest of their lives.

Source: *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume I*, by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2010).

## ABOUT CHS

For over 125 years, Children's Home Society of California (CHS) has adapted to the changing needs of children and families. Since 1891, CHS has worked diligently to protect our community's children and strengthen their families through diverse programs and services.

At CHS, we view a child not in isolation, but in the context of each family's health, stability, and resources. We believe that families are fundamentally strong and resilient. The mission of CHS is to reach out to children and families at risk with a range of services to ensure every child the opportunity to develop within a safe, healthy, and secure environment.

Therefore, CHS provides a variety of services to children and families in California and nationwide, working to improve their quality of life by offering vital information, education and resource services, and child care assistance.

CHS also serves as an expert resource for child care providers, other social service agencies, and government agencies at the local, state, and national level. To learn more about CHS and resources available to you, please visit our website at [www.chs-ca.org](http://www.chs-ca.org).

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