

# Stages of Early Literacy Development

Your child is growing and developing in many ways, physically, mentally and socially. From birth, your child is also developing early literacy skills. Here is a guide of skills for each age level and suggestions to promote your child's early literacy development. REMEMBER, all children are unique and develop skills at different times.

## By 3 months

- Shows interest in contrast between light and dark
- Makes eye contact with pictures in book
- Looks intently at pictures for several minutes



### *What can you do to help?*

- Introduce your baby to books right from birth
- Sing lullabies and recite your favorite nursery rhymes
- Offer books that have faces or contrasting colors

## By 6 – 12 months

- Enjoys music, songs and rhymes
- Reaches for and explores books with hands and mouth
- Sits on lap and holds head up steadily
- Shows preference for photographs of faces
- Uses both hands to manipulate the book to make the pages open and close



### *What can you do to help?*

- Hold your infant comfortably with face-to-face gaze
- Follow your infant's cues for "more" and "stop"
- Point to and name pictures

## By 12 – 18 months

- Shows interest in looking at books
- Holds book with help
- Tries to turn several pages at a time
- Looks at pictures, vocalizes and pats picture
- Points at pictures with one finger
- Enjoys tickle, bounce and nursery rhymes
- Identifies pictures in a book (e.g., Show me the baby)
- Able to carry book and turn pages well
- Holds a crayon or pencil in fist and marks paper, scribbles
- Labels a particular picture with a specific sound
- Enjoys being read to and enjoys looking at books
- Relates an object or an action in a book to the real world



### *What can you do to help?*

- Respond to your baby's request to read books
- Let the baby control the book
- Be comfortable with your baby's short attention span
- Ask "where is the...?" and let her point to it
- Go visit your local library or family resource centre, they offer great story time for little ones.



### By 18- 24 months

- Asks for favourite books to be read over and over again
- Pretends to read to dolls or stuffed animals
- Names familiar pictures
- Fills in the words in familiar stories
- Holds books the right way and turns pages easily, Relates events in books to his/her own past experiences
- Notices print rather than just the pictures



#### ***What can you do to help?***

- Relate the books you read to your toddler's experience
- Use books in routines and bedtimes
- Ask "what's that" and give your toddler time to answer
- Pause and let your toddler complete the sentence in books with repeating of familiar lines

### By 24 -36 months

- Goes back and forth in books to find her/his favorite part or pictures.
- Recites whole phrases and sometime the whole book
- Is able to find the work that matches the pictures
- Protest when you get a word wrong or skip a page
- Recognizes familiar logos and signs – (e.g., stop sign)
- Starting to recognize some words that rhyme

#### ***What can you do to help?***

- Keep using books in routines
- Read to your toddler at bedtime
- Be willing to read the same story over and over again.
- Ask "What's that?" and "Where else have you seen that?"
- Relate book to your toddlers experiences
- Do other activities that relate to the book

### By 3 years

- Pretends to read familiar books aloud
- Knows how to use a book (holds/turns pages one at a time, starts at beginning, points and talks about pictures)
- Looks carefully and makes comments about the book and story
- Fills in missing word/phrases in familiar books that are read aloud
- Talks about events that relate to a story
- Understands that print carries a message and is aware of the function of print – in menus, signs

#### ***What can you do to help?***

- When reading the story, ask "What's happening?" or "How do you feel?"
- Create a reading corner for your child
- Always have books that your child can get to
- Sing songs and do rhyming games

***REMEMBER***, all children are unique and develop skills at different times.

When it comes to developmental markers of any sort, the most important thing is:



***The fact that a child reaches a marker or passes through a stage is almost always more important than the age of the child when he or she does it.***

You know your child best. If you have any concerns make sure to speak to a professional.

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