Sing, Talk & Read
Tips for Parents and Caregivers with Children Birth – 8 years old
learndc.org/earlychildhood
Give Your Kids A Smart Start

Your baby is ready to learn the moment she’s born. As your child’s first and most important teacher, it’s never too early to put your child on the path to success.

Whether you’re a parent, grandparent or someone who takes care of small children, take time to sing, talk and read to your little ones. These activities help children get ready to learn when they enter school.

SINGING is a fun way for your child to learn new words.

TALKING with your little one helps her learn more words and form sentences.

READING with your little one gets her ready to learn to read and helps her pay attention when she gets to school.

Writing and playing with your child are also important. Even when your child is first trying to write, she will know that printed letters stand for words.

Here are a few easy, fun tips to help you Sing, Talk and Read with your child throughout the day.
Activities for children

BIRTH – 1 YEAR OLD

Babies grow in many ways. They play with their fingers and toes, coo and babble, and say “mama,” and “dada.” Singing, talking and reading to them at this age makes a big difference.

Sing

- Sing to your baby. Choose simple songs like *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*.
- Sing along with the radio or make up a song.

Talk

- Talk with your little one as you feed, dress and carry him.
- Talk about what you see while pushing him in the stroller.

Read

- Your infant can best see black and white images and bright colors on white background. Read books with black and white or brightly colored pictures with lots of white space.
- Read books with faces of other babies and “touch and feel” books with pages that are bumpy, smooth or furry.
- Read books that your child can hold, like those with cardboard pages.

*More activities at stardc.org

Find these books at your library:

- *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* by Jane Taylor
- *White on Black* by Tana Hoban
- *Little Black Book* by Renee Khatami
Activities for children

1 – 3 YEARS OLD

As a toddler, your child is a ball of energy. He is talking and moving around more, and touching and grabbing items. Include these ideas in your everyday activities.

**Sing**

- Sing while giving your toddler a bath or combing her hair.
- Sing face-to-face so that she can make eye contact and learn from your expressions, actions and words.

**Talk**

- Talk about things that your child knows like the family pet or relatives.
- Talk about the sky, the door or his toys, or things that he is doing at that moment.

**Read**

- Read books with words that rhyme.
- Read books that make her stand up, jump, wiggle or dance.

*More activities at stardc.org

Find these books at your library:

- *My Clothes/Mi Ropa* by Rebecca Emberley
- *In the Tall, Tall Grass* by Denise Fleming
- *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle
Activities for children
3 – 5 YEARS OLD

Your preschooler is quickly learning. She communicates better, understands what is said and speaks in complete sentences. She is learning how to listen and follow instructions – kindergarten is coming and you’re getting her ready.

Sing
• Lots of children’s songs are in book format. Sing from these.
• Make up a song to help your child remember his phone number or to brush his teeth.

Talk
• Talk with your preschooler about her day.
• Talk with her while cuddling on the couch or as you get her ready for bed.

Read
• Read books with simple stories and words. Encourage your child to talk about the story and the pictures.
• Read alphabet books so he will learn letters. Talk about the sounds letters make.

*More activities at stardc.org

Find these books at your library:
• Chicka, Chicka, Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr., John Archambault
• The Napping House by Audrey and Don Wood
• Jamberry by Bruce Degen
Activities for children
5 – 8 YEARS OLD

Your child is in school. He learns more words, reads better, identifies letters and numbers, and writes his name. Continue to bond with him and find moments to sing, talk and read together.

Sing
- Your child learns more and more words. She can make up a song that you both can sing together.
- Encourage your child to sing around the house and join in with her.

Talk
- On the way to school, talk about your child’s friends. Who is his best friend and why?
- Ask questions that need more than a “yes” or “no” answer so he can use new words.

Read
- Continue to read picture books, but begin to add books with chapters that can be read over a period of time.
- As your child becomes more interested in the world, read books on different topics such as other countries or famous people.

*More activities at stardc.org

Find these books at your library:
- Donovan’s Word Jar by Monalisa DeGross
- Duke Ellington by Andrea Davis Pinkney
- Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale by John Steptoe
Services for Families

Washington D.C. has many organizations that assist families with young children and resources that help your child to learn and grow. For more information, stop by your local library or visit learndc.org/earlychildhood.

At learndc.org, you can get information on:

- **HEALTH** – Proper healthcare and nutrition during your child’s early years
- **CHILDCARE AND EARLY EDUCATION** – Skills that your young child will need to succeed later in school
- **FAMILY SUPPORT** – Resources for child safety, parenting and family activities and financial assistance
- **EVENTS** – Fun events and activities to help give your children safe and healthy places in which they can grow and learn

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dc public library
check it out!