

PARENTS ARE A CHILD'S FIRST TEACHER

A parent is a child's first teacher, and a child will learn from a parent for a longer period than from any other person. Because of this, parents are the most important people in a child's educational life. Research has demonstrated that parents have a strong influence on the literacy development of their children.

It will probably not surprise you to know that children need time with their parents. Even though many parents work outside the home, they still find time to spend with their children. What counts most is what they say and do at home, not how rich or poor they are or how many years of school they have finished. When children can count on getting attention at home, their sense of security, self-worth and confidence soars. Creating a safe and loving family environment also lays the foundation for life-long learning and emotional well being.

Having conversations and communicating feelings is probably the most important activity parents can do with their children. Not only does it teach children how to use language, it also brings family members a deep sense of emotional belonging. Children learn how to communicate and have a conversation with others. Communication can happen any time, any place - in the car, at the grocery store, at mealtimes, or at bedtime. Creating a foundation for good communication habits helps children become confident students and succeed at school. The time parents spend exchanging ideas at home with their children is vitally important in setting the tone, the attitudes, and the behaviour that make the difference in school.

Here are some things parents can do when their children are young:

- 1) Let children see you reading. Keep books, magazines and newspapers around the house.
- 2) Keep pencils and paper, crayons and washable markers where children can easily get to them. Writing takes practice and it can start at home.
- 3) Teach children to do things for themselves rather than do the work for them. Your patience when they are young will pay off later.
- 4) Help children learn how to break a task down into small pieces, then do the task one step at a time. This works for almost anything - getting dressed, tying shoelaces or buttoning a button.
- 5) Consistency with family rules is the key to creating a safe environment for learning. Put a plan into action, and follow through.

- 6) Give children an easy-to-reach place to put things away.
- 7) If your children watch television, watch with them and talk about what you see and hear.

For more information on Family literacy in the Boundary please contact:
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