

## WHY BOOKS ARE IMPORTANT

Do you remember the first time you found a book that you really liked? Do you remember that you couldn't wait to read more of the story and that you didn't want the story to end? In fact, you might even have read it again. Well, children learn to do the same thing when parents read to them. They can't wait for you to read to them and often they want you to read the same book over and over. There's a reason for this.

Books provide children with a way to practice using words by putting sentences together and learning to organize their thoughts. When parents read with their children and ask simple questions, children create new ideas and communicate their thoughts. When parents and children talk about what they read together, children become active readers. And when children become active readers, they become lifelong learners.

There are a few simple things that parents can do to help their children pave the path to reading. Visit the library and visit often. There are thousands of free books to borrow and library staff will happily help you find the right book for your child's age and interests. Request a library card for your child and let children select the books that they would like to read. When you read to your children read slowly and pause occasionally to think out loud about the story. You can ask questions like, "I wonder what's going to happen next" or, "Do you know what a steam shovel is?" Or you can point out: "Look what the little mouse is doing now". Answer your children's questions about the book. Don't worry about interrupting the story.

Most importantly of all, model your own love of reading. Children love to imitate whatever adults do, so show them the many ways you use words and books in your life. Place reading materials throughout the house and read, read, read!

For more information about literacy programs and activities in the Boundary please contact Lizanne Eastwood, Community Literacy Coordinator, Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy. (250) 442-2533  
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