

# Letters, Letters, Letters!

## Dear Families,

Children are naturally interested in the letters they see in their world. You don't need flashcards or computer games; instead, take advantage of "teachable moments" with some of these ideas.

- ① Point out letters in your home (on cereal boxes, household items, clothing, and appliances).
- ② As you travel in the car, talk about letters on stores, restaurants, and signs.
- ③ Magnetic letters are a must! Children can play with these on a refrigerator or cookie sheet. Start with one or two letters and slowly add more. Point out the lines, circles, and unique configuration of each letter. Talk about the sound each letter makes. "This is the letter \_\_\_\_ and it makes the sound \_\_\_\_."
- ④ Look for crackers, cookies, or cereal in the shape of letters. You can also purchase letter-shaped cookie cutters, sponges, blocks, and other toys that will spark your child's interest in letters.
- ⑤ Talk about letters as you read to your child. "Can you find the letter \_\_\_\_ on this page?"
- ⑥ Write names of family members on index cards and attach them to the refrigerator or a poster. Talk about the different letters in each person's name.
- ⑦ Invite your child to dictate stories to you about their artwork or photographs you have taken. (Carefully write down what your child says and point to the words as you read them back to him or her.)
- ⑧ Write the words for objects in your child's room on sticky notes. Play a game where your child matches up the words with the objects.

The publisher grants permission for this page to be photocopied for distribution for the teacher's classroom use only. © Gryphon House, Inc. 800.638.0928. [www.gryphonhouse.com](http://www.gryphonhouse.com)



# Paper, Pencils, and Props



## Dear Families,

Did you know that every time your child scribbles, he or she is setting the stage for future writing? Those little squiggles and lines will turn into letters, words, and stories one day! Here are some great tools that will give your child the opportunity to explore and develop small motor skills.

**Note!** Monitor the use of these materials and set rules and limits to where and when they can be used.

- ① Keep pencils, pens, crayons, colored pencils, notepads, paper, spiral notebooks, and so on in a basket or old briefcase. The basket or briefcase makes the items portable. Encourage your child to play with the materials inside or outside.
- ② Provide playdough, tape, watercolors, a hole punch, safety scissors, washable markers, construction paper, stickers, and other art media. You might want to store these materials in a plastic tub to make them convenient to get out and clean up.
- ③ Value your child's work by framing it or hanging it on the refrigerator.
- ④ Children enjoy drawing with chalk on the sidewalk. Or you could place a chalkboard in your garage or basement.
- ⑤ Save forms from magazines or junk mail for children to write on.
- ⑥ A magic slate, dry-erase board, seasonal pencil, note cards, and other props will engage your child in writing.

**Happy writing!**

■ ■ ■ ■ ■  
**Hint!** These materials are great to give as birthday gifts.

The publisher grants permission for this page to be photocopied for distribution for the teacher's classroom use only. © Gryphon House, Inc. 800.638.0928. [www.gryphonhouse.com](http://www.gryphonhouse.com)



# Play, Play, Play!

## Dear Families,

Have you ever heard the phrase, “play is a child’s work”? This is so true! Children have their whole lives ahead of them to be adults and work, but only a short time to be young and have fun! The good news is that as you play with your child, you are actually laying the foundation for future learning. Children don’t need more “stuff.” What they want and need most is time and attention from you! The important thing is to follow your child’s lead as you create special memories! Here are some “play activities” to get you started:

- Tell a joke.
- Sing a song.
- Play hide and seek.
- Hum a tune.
- Play a card game.
- Make a puppet and put on a puppet show.
- Swing on a swing.
- Sit on the floor together and build something with blocks.
- Blow bubbles.
- Go outside and take a walk.
- Cut pictures out of magazines.
- Skip.
- Play a board game.
- Skate on paper plates.
- Make a wish on a star.
- Jump or hop as long as you can.
- Play a memory game.
- Cook something together.
- Work a puzzle.
- Make a band of pots and pans.
- Play “I spy.”
- Draw a picture or color in a coloring book.
- Go to the library.
- Make a card for someone.
- Play a rhyming game.
- Play with playdough.
- Play follow the leader.
- Make silly faces in a mirror.
- Put on some music and dance.

**Happy playing!**

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

**Hint!** Write these suggestions on paper and cut them into strips. Place the strips in a sack. Let your child choose a strip and then do that activity together.

The publisher grants permission for this page to be photocopied for distribution for the teacher’s classroom use only. © Gryphon House, Inc. 800.638.0928. [www.gryphonhouse.com](http://www.gryphonhouse.com)



## Newsletter #1

# Read, Read, Read!



### Dear Families,

You've heard it before, and I'll say it again. **You are your child's first and most important teacher!** Over the next few weeks I'll be sending home letters with suggestions for how you can help your child at home. You'll discover how much fun reading, talking, singing, and playing with your child can be! And you'll be laying the groundwork for a lifetime of learning and a love of reading.

The best way to help your child learn to read is to read, read, read to him or her!

- ① Model reading in front of your child. Read in front of your child often. Read the newspaper, directions on recipes, labels on clothing, and street signs. Show your child the importance of reading, and also the pleasure you get from reading.
- ② Set aside a special time each day to read with your child. It might be right before bed, or you could wake your child up each morning with a story.
- ③ Point your finger under the words as you read them.
- ④ Talk about the title of the book, the author, illustrator, and so on. Ask questions. "Where does the story take place (the setting)?" "Who are the characters?" "Could this really happen or is it a pretend story?" Do this in a fun way.
- ⑤ Take your child to the library. Help your child get his or her own library card and encourage him or her to take responsibility for books.
- ⑥ Create a special basket or shelf in your home where you keep books and magazines for your child to read. You might also want to keep a backpack filled with books in your car.

**Happy reading!**

The publisher grants permission for this page to be photocopied for distribution for the teacher's classroom use only. © Gryphon House, Inc. 800.638.0928. [www.gryphonhouse.com](http://www.gryphonhouse.com)





## Newsletter #4

# Rhyme, Rhyme, Rhyme!

### Dear Families,

Knowing phonological awareness (rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration) is one of the best predictors of reading success. Your parents or grandparents probably didn't know it, but the nursery rhymes they said to you as a child were actually getting you ready to read!

- ① Tell your child nursery rhymes as you help him or her get dressed, buckle your child in a car seat, or take a walk.
- ② Act out nursery rhymes with your child. Hold hands and pretend to be "Jack and Jill," or jump over the moon and play your fiddle as in "Hey, Diddle, Diddle."
- ③ Sing nursery rhymes to the tune of "100 Bottles of Pop on the Wall" or "Yankee Doodle." Believe it or not, most rhymes can be sung to these two tunes!
- ④ Clap your hands to the rhythm of nursery rhymes.
- ⑤ Visit these websites to learn nursery rhymes and download some fun activities:

[www.curry.edschool.edu/go/wil/rimes\\_and\\_rhymes.htm](http://www.curry.edschool.edu/go/wil/rimes_and_rhymes.htm)

[www.kiddles.com](http://www.kiddles.com)

[www.rhymes.org.uk](http://www.rhymes.org.uk)

[www.enchantedlearning.com](http://www.enchantedlearning.com)

- ⑥ Children love silly words and rhymes, so make up your own rhyming games. For example, think of all the words that rhyme with your child's name.
- ⑦ Encourage your child to pick out words that rhyme as you read books or sing songs.

### Happy rhyming!

The publisher grants permission for this page to be photocopied for distribution for the teacher's classroom use only. © Gryphon House, Inc. 800.638.0928. [www.gryphonhouse.com](http://www.gryphonhouse.com)



# Sing, Sing, Sing!



## Dear Families,

You don't have to be a great singer to enjoy singing with your child. Music is a powerful way to help children get ready to read.

- ① What songs do you remember from your own childhood? Sing those to your child.
- ② Ask your child to teach you a song that he or she has learned at school.
- ③ Check out children's recordings from the library. These are great to listen to as you do chores around the house or travel in the car.
- ④ Make up motions for songs. You can dance, clap, jump, patty cake, or do other movements.
- ⑤ Can't think of a song to sing? You'll probably remember some of these!

*Alphabet Song*

*The Bear Went over the Mountain*

*BINGO*

*The Eensy Weensy Spider*

*The Farmer in the Dell*

*Hickory, Dickory, Dock*

*Hush, Little Baby*

*If You're Happy and You Know It*

*I've Been Working on the Railroad*

*London Bridge Is Falling Down*

*The Mulberry Bush*

*Old MacDonald*

*Pop! Goes the Weasel*

*Rain, Rain, Go Away*

*Ring Around the Rosie*

*Row, Row, Row Your Boat*

*She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain*

*Skip to My Lou*

*This Old Man*

*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*

*Yankee Doodle*

*You Are My Sunshine*

*The Wheels on the Bus*

**Happy singing!**

The publisher grants permission for this page to be photocopied for distribution for the teacher's classroom use only. © Gryphon House, Inc. 800.638.0928. [www.gryphonhouse.com](http://www.gryphonhouse.com)





## Newsletter # 2

# Talk, Talk, Talk!

### Dear Families,

Oral language is the foundation of literacy. Children with good verbal skills are generally better readers. Here are some simple things you can do to improve talking and listening at home.

- ① Turn off the radio or CD player in your car. Talk about your day or just listen to your children talk.
- ② Turn off your television! Limit television viewing to 30 minutes a day. When your child does watch, watch the programs with your child and talk about what is going on. Ask questions. "Who is your favorite character?" "Is it real or pretend?" "What do you think will happen next?"
- ③ Eat meals together. Try to eat at least one meal a day as a family. Turn off the radio, TV, and cell phone and you'll be amazed at how talking will increase.
- ④ Model correct language for your child. If your child says something incorrectly, don't reprimand him or her. Simply repeat it correctly so your child hears how it should be said.
- ⑤ Talk about what you see as you drive down the road or what you are doing as you prepare a meal. The more your child hears you talk, the more your child will want to talk.
- ⑥ Listen, listen, listen! Stop what you are doing and look your child in the eyes when he or she talks to you. Demonstrate to your child that what he or she has to say is important to you.

### Happy talking!

The publisher grants permission for this page to be photocopied for distribution for the teacher's classroom use only. © Gryphon House, Inc. 800.638.0928. [www.gryphonhouse.com](http://www.gryphonhouse.com)



# Additional Resources on the Internet

## Websites

abc123kindergarten.com  
abcteach.com  
aslpro.com  
atozteacherstuff.com  
brainpop.com  
busyteacherscafe  
calicocookie.com  
carlscorner.com  
carlscorner.us  
coolmath.com  
crayola.com  
disciplinehelp.com  
dltk-teach.com  
dolch-words.com  
drjean.org  
edhelper.com  
educational press.com  
enchantedlearning.com  
eric-carle.com  
everythingpreschool.com  
farm@aol.com  
freeclipart.com  
gigglepoetry.com  
help4teachers.com  
homestead.com  
hubbardscupboard.org  
hummingbired.com  
ilovekindergarten.com  
innovativeclassroom.com  
janbrett.com  
jmeacham.com  
jmeacham.com  
kellyskindergarten.com  
kidconcoctions.com  
kinderart.com  
kinderbykim.com  
kinderfriends.com  
kindergarten4thearts.com  
kinderhive.com

kinderkorner.com  
kinder-l@mail.cmsd.bc.ca  
(Canadian list serve)  
kindernetonline.com  
kinderpond.com  
kizclub.com  
krampf.com (science experiments)  
lessonplanet.com  
lessonplans.com  
lindaslearninglinks.com  
littlegiraffes.com  
loveandlogic.com  
makinglearningfun.com  
marcias-lesson-links.com  
members.shaw.ca/henriksent/  
index.htm  
mrsalphabet.com  
mrslminnie.com  
mrslminnie.com  
mrsmcgowan.com  
mrspohlmeyerskinderpage.com  
ncpe4me.com/energizers  
(brain breaks)  
nuttinbutkids.com  
ourschoolfamily.com  
perpetualpreschool.com  
pre-kpages.com  
preschooexpress.com  
preschoolprintables.com  
proteacher.com  
puzzlemaker.com  
readinga-z.com  
readwritethink.org  
sewhat4you.corp (teacher resources)  
sharonmacdonald.com  
signwithme.com  
songsforteaching.com  
starfall.com  
storytellin.com  
teacherhelpers.homestead.com



teachers.net  
teachingheart.net  
teachingisaworkofheart.com  
teachingmadeeasier.com  
technospud.com  
thebestkidsbooksite.com  
theideabox.com  
thekcrew.net  
thereadinglady.com  
thereadinglady.com  
theschoolbell.com  
thevirtualvine.com  
tinsnips.org  
tlcart.com  
tobey.ushaonline.net

#### **Sites for Children and Parents**

aplaceofourown.org  
bemboszoo.com  
billybear4kids.com  
bobthebuilder.com  
childfun.com  
ed.gov/Family/RWN/Activ97/begin.  
html  
familyfun.com  
funbrain.com  
funschool.com  
jellybelly.com  
kidfun.com  
kidsdomain.com  
nea.org  
nncc.org  
parentsoup.com  
pbskids.org  
smarterkids.com  
smarterkids.com  
yahooligans.com

#### **Sites for Resource/Research**

brainconnections.com  
britannica.com  
dictionary.com  
edpubs.gov  
encyclopedia.com  
google.com  
howstuffworks.com  
infoplease.com  
libraryspot.com  
naeyc.org  
nifl.gov  
reading.org (ira)