

Dear Parents,

Parents everywhere want to help their children be prepared for reading, writing, and other literacy experiences. Here are some ways you can work in partnership with your child's teacher so that you are both promoting pre-literacy opportunities for your child:

- 1>>** Read bedtime stories nightly to your baby. Choose oilcloth books and sturdy cardboard books for teething babies who have a strong urge to chew! As you read, ask your baby cheerfully, "Where is the puppy?" Express your delight as he learns to point and babble at each animal in a storybook you have read over and over.
- 2>>** Babies like books where they too can do something as you point to pictures and talk about them. Some books allow a little one to open a page flap to see a scene or they let the toddler insert a plastic bear, for example, into a high chair or into a wading pool.
- 3>>** To help your child learn to turn pages in sequence, hook your fingers into the top of the next page in the picture book you are reading together. Then ask your little one: "Can you turn the page please?" Since your finger is already holding that place unobtrusively, your baby will turn the page just right and you can say "Thank you!" in admiration as you continue talking about the next page.
- 4>>** Try to provide a special place for books for your little one. Take your baby to the local library and bring home an armful of new books to read with your child every week. By the time he is a toddler, he will be able to run to his shelf and find a picture book with another alligator in it if you are currently reading him a story about an alligator.
- 5>>** Babies and toddlers love repetition. Your child will delight and crow with pride by chanting the words out loud with you every time they appear in the story.
- 6>>** Some older toddlers like to "read" a book to you. Appreciate when your older toddler wants to turn the pages and tell you the story! He has learned story sequences and some of the rhymes. He is making good guesses from pictures about the characters and the story line in each book.
- 7>>** Notice what kinds of books hold your baby's attention. Some children love books that show pictures of babies doing things in families, such as eating at a picnic, or having a bath. Some babies really love books with lovable or imaginative animal characters. Tune into your baby's preferences so that you can choose books with pictures that really hold your child's attention.

You are the gatekeeper for joy in your little one's life. As you make book sharing and story reading a deeply pleasurable daily activity for your little one, you can be so proud of the special role you play, together with your child's teacher, in starting your child on a lifelong love affair with books and with reading.