

# How Parents and Families Support Book Knowledge and Print Concepts

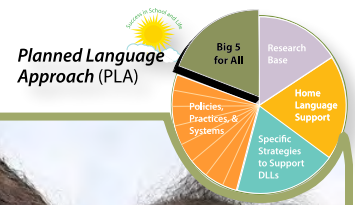
### Introduction

Long before they can read, young children are developing book knowledge and print concepts. Book knowledge is the understanding of how books and print “work.” Print awareness includes the understanding that print is speech written down (Justice & Kadaravek, 2004). Young children show that they are developing book knowledge and print awareness when they:

- ▶ Notice and talk about print in the environment in signs, symbols, and logos
- ▶ Enjoy books and other experiences with print
- ▶ Ask to be read to (from new books or the same book over and over)
- ▶ Memorize parts of stories
- ▶ Pretend to read (considered part of emergent reading)
- ▶ Participate in conversations about the books they have heard

Children learn book knowledge and print concepts in the languages that are read to them and shared with them. Book knowledge and print concepts that children develop in any language support children’s book knowledge and print concepts in English. So it is important for parents and family members to support book knowledge and print concepts in their home language.

When parents and family members share books and talk about print, children learn that print is meaningful and that reading together can be fun.



Contents . . .

for **Babies**  
page 2–3

for **Toddlers**  
page 4–5

for **Preschoolers**  
page 6–7

# Supporting babies to develop Book Knowledge and Print Concepts

## STRATEGIES

Long before they can read themselves, babies and young children are learning important information about books and print. They watch how parents and family members hold books and turn the pages. They listen to the rhythm of words in stories. In fact, when babies are read to often, adults may observe them “book babbling,” which involves babbling in a way that mimics a reader (Baghban, 1984). Book babbling is different from other forms of babbling. It is what babies do when they are beginning to understand that reading books is different from talking.

### **Babies begin to develop Book Knowledge and Print Concepts when parents and family members:**

- ▶ Hold them closely as they talk, sing, and read (Gentry, 2010)
- ▶ Share stories, poems, and songs in the children’s home language (Birkmayer, Kennedy, & Stonehouse, 2009)
- ▶ Cuddle up and “read” books together every day by, for example, labeling or describing the pictures (Zambo & Hansen, 2007)
- ▶ Look where the baby is looking and support her interest by labeling the pictures or objects that she looks at or points to (e.g., “That? That is a banana!”)
- ▶ Let babies explore and carry cloth and board books (Hoffman & Cassano, 2013)
- ▶ Encourage babies to follow a pattern by getting their attention, asking them a question, and then waiting for them to respond (e.g., “What do you see? A doggie? That’s right! I see a doggie too. It’s a cute little doggie with a bone.”) (Swain, 2006)
- ▶ Label and describe pictures in books (e.g., “Oh, look! A kitten. A kitten says, ‘meow.’”) (Ninio & Bruner, 1978)
- ▶ Encourage babies to play familiar games, such as peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake, or invent games (e.g., “Can you find the ball?”) (Field, 2008)
- ▶



# Some ways parents and family members support babies' Book Knowledge and Print Concepts

## At Home



Six-month-old Lân is having tummy time. His mother places several of his favorite board books in front of him as he lies on the floor on his tummy. When Lân looks at the book with faces, his mother brings it closer. "You want this book about faces? See, here is a boy," she says as she opens the book. "This is a boy like you. See! He has a nose and two eyes—just like Lân." Lân looks at the pictures for a few moments and then looks away. His mother follows his gaze to see what book he wants to "read" next or if he has finished looking for now. When tummy time is over, she picks him up, cradles him in her arms, and sings, "*Con ơi, con ngủ cho lành . . .*"

## On a Home Visit



Eleven-month-old Santiago is reading a book with the home visitor, Myae, and his mom. "Gaa!" Santiago says and points to the bear on the first page. "Yes. A bear! That's a big brown bear," Myae says. "Do you know what a bear says?" "Ahh! Ahh!" Santiago shouts. "Yes," Myae says. "A bear can say 'ahh!' It can also say 'grrrr.' Can you say 'grrr?'" "Grrr," Santiago growls. "Oh my! What a scary bear you are!" Mom laughs and growls too, and then says, "Let's see what is on the next page." As Myae gets ready to leave, she hears Santiago's mom saying, "Do you want to keep reading? Here's another book. It's about cats. Do you know what cats say?"



# Supporting toddlers to develop Book Knowledge and Print Concepts

## STRATEGIES

Toddlers learn about their world through observing, listening, and touching everything in reach and by having their questions answered in the language(s) they know. Talking about print at home and out in the community helps toddlers begin to understand that print is meaningful and important. Many toddlers are interested in books and will ask to have their favorites read over and over. Some toddlers may only listen to a few words before drifting away, and some others develop their interest in books later on. Despite differences, caring adults should continue to provide opportunities for toddlers to discover the joy of story reading by reading and talking about books.



### Toddlers develop Book Knowledge and Print Concepts when parents and family members:

- ▶ Share stories, poems, and songs in their home language(s) (Birckmayer, Kennedy, & Stonehouse, 2009)
- ▶ Provide them with durable books, such as board or cloth books designed to hold up to their active explorations as they carry books around and turn the pages (Hoffman & Cassano, 2013; Schickedanz & Collins, 2013)
- ▶ Read (and reread and reread) favorite stories, poems, and chants in their home language(s) (Murphy, 2004)
- ▶ Talk about books and ask questions during and after story reading (e.g., “The hippo is going up the hill. Where do you think he is going?”) (Whitehurst et al., 1988)
- ▶ Model how to use books appropriately by opening them and turning pages carefully, for example, and returning them to their shelf or basket (Schickedanz & Collins, 2013)
- ▶ Respond when they ask what print, signs, and logos say (e.g., “That says ‘Push’—so we need to push this door to get it open.”) (Baghban, 1984)
- ▶ Point out and label letters of the alphabet, especially those in a child’s name (e.g., “Oh look! The word ‘kite’ has a K in it—K for ‘Kai!’”) (Adams & Osborn, 1990)
- ▶ Make a place for toddlers to keep their own books, for example, a low, sturdy shelf or a box or basket for easy reach, and teach toddlers how to put books away carefully (Schickedanz & Collins, 2013)

# Some ways parents and family members support toddlers' Book Knowledge and Print Concepts

## STRATEGIES

### In the Community

Eighteen-month-old Kabil is going for his afternoon walk with his babysitter Megan. As they walk, they play their favorite sign game. "Dat one!" Kabil says, pointing. "That one says 'Stop,'" Megan explains. "It means that all the cars and busses have to stop." "Stop car, stop bus!" Kabil chants and then points to another sign. "That one says 'One Way,'" Megan tells his. As they continue down the street, Megan reads the signs that Kabil points out. They play this game so often that Kabil is beginning to recognize some of the signs on his own. It won't be long before she knows them all!



### In the Community

Two-year-old Soledad is waiting for her doctor's appointment. "Read," she says, grabbing a magazine and handing it to her *abuelita* [grandmother]. "How about this book instead?" Abuelita suggests, reaching for a nearby children's book. Soledad wants the magazine. Abuelita agrees and says, "This is a magazine for grownups, but let's see what we can find in here for you." Turning the pages she says, "Oh, look! This is a recipe for pumpkin bread. Have you had pumpkin bread? I haven't, but it looks delicious." Pointing to the recipe she adds, "It says here that you can use canned pumpkin. That's good because I have no idea how we would make bread out of a pumpkin." Soledad laughs. "More, more," she begs. "Okay," Abuelita says, turning the pages again. "Here we see different outfits to wear in the fall. Hmm. Which one do you think would look good on your abuelita?"

### In the Community

Two-year-old Lilah is looking at books with her dad. "I can tell you really like this book!" Dad says. "More, more," Lilah says. "Okay," Dad says and reads the book again. When they finish he asks, "How about a different book?" But Lilah wants to hear it again and again. Dad agrees. He knows that there is something about this book that makes it special for her. So he'll keep reading it until a new book becomes her favorite.

# Supporting preschoolers to develop Book Knowledge and Print Concepts

## STRATEGIES

Preschoolers notice print everywhere, particularly when guided by responsive parents and family members! As adults intentionally read and discuss print with them, preschoolers learn that print is meaningful and that it carries a message. Reading to preschoolers in their home language(s) helps them learn that print provides information, tells an interesting story, and sometimes makes the reader laugh. Many preschoolers pretend to read books, demonstrating their emerging understandings about print.



### Preschoolers develop Book Knowledge and Print Concepts when parents and family members:

- ▶ Share a range of stories, poems, and songs in their home language (Birckmayer, Kennedy, & Stonehouse, 2009)
- ▶ Set aside time to read age-appropriate books together every day (Zambo & Hansen, 2007)
- ▶ Read (and reread) funny stories, stories that encourage children to use their imagination, and stories that surprise
- ▶ Read informational texts to help them learn concepts and ideas; for example, to learn about insects, animals, and habitats (Schickedanz & Collins, 2013)
- ▶ Teach children to care for books by holding them and turning pages carefully
- ▶ Discuss a story after reading it to support children's comprehension without interrupting the flow of the reading (Schickedanz & Collins, 2013; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1988)
- ▶ Talk about how print is used for different purposes, such as following a recipe, following directions, sending an email, or making a list, as well as how print "works"—that words are made up of letters and that there are spaces before and after them (e.g., "Look. There are four letters in 'Papi,' four letters in 'Mami,' and four letters in your name, 'José.'") (Adams & Osborn, 1990)
- ▶ Draw children's attention to letters, words, signs, and logos in meaningful contexts (e.g., "Look at the red sign by the door. It says 'Exit'! The exit sign tells us that we use this door to exit, or get out of, our building.") (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984)
- ▶ Point out and label familiar and unfamiliar letters, especially those in a child's name ("I notice that the word "Stop" on our stop sign and "Soledad" both start with the letter S. What else starts with S?") (Roberts, 2003)
- ▶ Provide them with age-appropriate writing materials, including markers, crayons, pencils, assorted paper, and envelopes (Schickedanz & Collins, 2013)

# Some ways parents and family members support preschoolers' Book Knowledge and Print Concepts

## STRATEGIES

### At Home



Mom and Vinnie are reading Vinnie's favorite alphabet book. "V is for vulture," Mom reads. "And V for me!" Vinnie says, pointing to his chest. "Yes," Mom laughs. "V is for Vinnie and vulture and . . ." Vinnie interrupts and says, "and V is for TV." Mom thinks for a moment and then reaches for a nearby piece of paper and a pen. "Look at this," she says as she writes the letters T and V on the paper. "See! There is a V in this word, but look. There is also a T." Vinnie happily reads "TV" before picking up the alphabet book. "Can you read some more?" he asks. Mom nods, opens the book to the W page, and continues reading.

### On a Home Visit



Brenda, a home visitor, is talking with Camilla about reading to 3-year-old Lillianna. Camilla shares that Lillianna loves books and that they read every night. Camilla also shares that, although she tries to read books in English, she finds reading in Armenian to be much easier. "That's even better," Brenda explains, "It is so important to



read to Lillianna in her home language—in *your* language. Everyone in this family speaks in Armenian—right? Lillianna will learn English later, and the fact that she knows Armenian already will help her learn English well." Brenda gives Camilla a few picture books in Armenian and promises to bring her more on her next visit. "There are a lot at the library," Brenda explains. "Do you have a library card? If not, I can take you there on your next visit to get one. It is free, and they welcome parents and their children there!"



## Resources for Book Knowledge and Print Concepts

## STRATEGIES

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