By Getting Involved in Your Child’s Learning,
You Will Make a Big Difference

Helping You Child to Read, Write, Speak and Listen

In the early years of primary school, students learn to read through rhymes and storytelling, and by following along with their favourite book. Learning to write begins with scribble and drawings. The following activities will help your child develop these skills.

• Share rhymes and songs and encourage your child to join in.
• Have a dress up box for your child to use for imaginative play.
• Listen to your child and respond to their ideas with questions and ask for more information.
• Write down your child’s stories as they tell you and encourage him or her to read it back to you.
• Point out and talk about letters and words all around you. For example, on cereal boxes, car numbers, signs.
• Cook simple things together. Read out the recipe, talk through what you are doing.
• Look at junk mail and talk about the things for sale.
• Provide materials and create a writing / drawing table or area.
• Talk about family photos and histories.

Story Telling

Story telling is a great way to extend your child’s language and listening skills, as well as expanding on their imagination. Either you can tell the story, or encourage your child to tell the story.

Story telling might be about;

• a favourite character from a book or TV program,
• another family member,
• your child’s favourite toy, or
• a visit to a special place.

Make it exciting with different voices, puppets, props or a finger play.
Reading together

Reading is an important way to make the link from spoken words to written words.

Reading to your child is a valuable thing to do.

Here are some tips:

• encourage your child to select the books, magazines, multimedia stories or DVDs,
• discuss the pictures in a book and encourage your child to talk about the pictures,
• share wordless picture books to develop imagination, ideas and vocabulary by naming things in the pictures,
• re-read your child’s favourite books and stories,
• look for rhyme or repetition in books, and
• support your child to make their own books with pictures and then ‘read’ the story to you,

Things to keep in mind:

• Reading with your child will begin when your child becomes familiar with the story and can take over some of the reading.
• When your child reads to you, allow time for working out words and ask questions to see if he or she understands what they have read.

If your child is trying to read a long or tricky word, give your child time and the following prompts:

- Look at the picture, what can you see that might start with that letter?
- Look at the picture, what word makes sense?
- What letter does it start with? What sound does the letter make? What letter does it end with?

• It is also important for you to show your child how you read every day for different purposes including recipes, greeting cards, calendars, shopping lists, food labels, instructions, maps, newspapers, emails, signs and websites.

Book Talk

Book Talk is an important part of reading. Chat about the book before, during and after reading and really encourage your child to talk about their ideas and ask questions about the book.

You can ask these questions, and use these prompts, at different times – before, during and after reading the book.

• What would you like to read about?
• Look at the cover – what do you think this book is about?
• What is happening in the pictures?
• What do you think is going to happen next?
• What was your favourite part of the book?
• Who was your favourite character? Why did you like this character?
• If you could change the ending of this book, what would you change it to?

Try some of these writing ideas at home.
• Write a shopping list. Tick off the items as you buy or unpack them.
• Keep a board to write family messages.
• Give your child a pad of sticky notes to write reminders for themselves.
• Write captions for photographs in your family photo albums.
• Write labels for your child’s art works and creations.
• Make words using magnetic letters and stick them on the fridge.
• Make and write greeting cards, birthday cards and thank you notes.
• Keep a family calendar on display and write down family events. Talk about upcoming events with your child.

**Maths**

Counting
• Counting is one of the first experiences of maths for young children.
• Learning the counting words often begins with a favourite rhyme and the repetition of number names.

Doing Maths together at home

Children need lots of experiences in making, counting, drawing and talking about numbers. Make connections for your child by explaining how numbers and counting are a part of everyday life.

These activities may help you:

**Playing Shop**
• Collect food and grocery items and label them with prices written on sticky notes or prices cut out of shopping catalogues.
• Talk about how we pay for items using coins and notes.
• Make paper money or use play money to buy and sell goods from the shop.
• Order food items by height or by cost.
• Introduce kitchen scales to the shop to weigh some food items.

Playing games
• Play *I Spy* or other games to identify shapes, numbers and patterns.
• Dice games
  - Roll the dice and say, make or write the numbers identified.
  - Roll the dice and add the numbers together to find the total.
• Play number games online with your child [www.abc.net/countusin](http://www.abc.net/countusin)

Making patterns
Recognising and making patterns are important maths skills for exploring numbers, shapes and symmetry.
• Identify and explain visual patterns on clothing, wrapping paper, crockery, cards and furniture.
• Use coloured pegs, blocks, beads or cutlery to begin a pattern for your child to continue.
• Encourage your child to draw, create, and describe their own patterns.

Measuring things
• Use a wall measuring chart to measure the height of people in your family.
• Cut a piece of string for your child. Use the string to measure objects in your house to find out what is longer and shorter than the string.
• Explore other ways of measuring using a cup, teaspoon, icy pole sticks.
• Build a tower of blocks that is taller than a favourite toy. Ask your child to count the total blocks used.

Go on a number hunt
• With your child find numbers around you, for example house numbers.
• Look at, and say the numbers on car number plates, signs, calendars, shopping catalogues, speed signs.
• Use different numbers as a starting point for practising counting, for example from 6 or 10. Ask your child to count forwards and backwards. Ask what number comes before and what number comes after.
• Identify the numbers on a calculator. Use the online talking calculator at [http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/games/calculator/calculator.swf](http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/games/calculator/calculator.swf)
Moving with maths

• How many throws can we do without dropping the ball?
• How many jumps can you do while I count to 10?
• How many times can you tap the balloon before it touches the ground?

Using playing cards

• Play matching number games.
• Put cards in order form largest to smallest by counting the shapes or using the numbers on the cards.

Ask questions to investigate

Ask your child questions to encourage them to investigate maths.

• What shapes can you see?
• How could we measure the ......?
• How could we find half?
• What is the best way to share....?

Turning maths into a story

Read books to your child that include numbers and counting.

Turn everyday events or objects into a maths story.

• Count the fruit in the fruit bowl
• Cut the fruit into six pieces
• Count the pieces of toast you cooked for breakfast
• Count the number of people travelling in the car or the bus

Encourage your child to draw and talk about the number of things in the pictures they have drawn. Write down your child’s ideas as a story. For example, There are five pieces of fruit in our bowl.

Most importantly, enjoy linking reading, writing and maths to everyday life.