The First Years Last Forever

Tips to Remember

*Give your child love and attention*
- Read, sing and talk with your child every day
- Meet your child’s needs right away
- Answer your baby’s cries and your child’s questions

*Make safe play areas for your child*
- Give your child time to run, jump and dance
- Let your child do art, or play with blocks and puzzles
- Give your child a chance to do things on their own

*It is also good to:*
- Set up times to play with other children
- Let your child have a few choices
- Be a kind and caring example for your child

Your Child’s Learning Starts Early

You can help your child do well in school even before s/he starts kindergarten. You child learns when you:
- *Love and care for them*
- *Make sure s/he is safe and healthy*
- *Play and talk with he or she everyday*

Ready to Learn – Help Your Child Get Ready for School

Reading out loud helps your child get a good start at learning. It is the most important way for your child to learn the skills s/he needs for reading and writing. You can start to read out loud even when your child is a baby.

*Start by Reading Out Loud to Your Child*
- Read out loud to your child every day
- Start to read when your child is a baby; your baby gets used to the sound of your voice and gets used to touching books
- Read the same book over and over; it helps a child learn words
- Keep reading to your child; even a child over 5 years old love to read books with you

*Use Board Books With Babies*
- Use board books with few words and many pictures, point to the colors and the pictures and say their names

Simple books can teach your child things that will help them learn to read. Your children learn:
- A book is read from front to back and right-side-up
- Print goes from left to right and there are spaces between words

Point to things in books, try to help your child relate the things to real life. “Look at the dog. Remember the dog we saw at the park?”

*Tell Stories*
- Have your child ask questions
- Talk about the story with your child; ask your child to guess what will happen next
Find Good Books
- Ask friends, teachers and librarians to suggest good books for your children
- Have your child help pick out books

Read Yourself
- Let your child see you reading books, newspapers, and magazines
- Your child learns by example. Tell your child how much you like reading

Give Your Child Paper and Crayons
- Give your toddler crayons and large pieces for drawing
- Give older children paints, markers, tape, crayons and paper
- Arts and crafts can help your child learn to write
- Show your child how you use writing; write grocery and shopping lists together

Buy a Children’s Dictionary
- Buy one that has pictures next to the words and look up words together

Limit TV
- Don’t let your child watch too much TV
- Watch TV with our child. Talk about the show and let your child ask you questions
- Have your child watch educational TV programs

Visit the Library Often
- Start visiting the library when your child is very young and set a regular visit time
- Get a library card for your child as soon as you can. Some libraries give them to children as soon as they can print their names
- Local libraries also have reading programs for children

You Can Help Your Child Be Ready to Read and Write
- Ask your child to draw a picture and tell you what the picture is about. Write down what your child tells you
- Match a picture with the written word
- Write words or help your child cut out words from a magazine
- Encourage writing skills, even scribbling, at an early age

Use Play to Help Your Child Learn
- Your child can use reading and writing during play time
  - Use junk mail to play post office
  - Use a notepad to play waiter/waitress in a restaurant
  - Use scrap paper, pencils and an old phone to set up an ‘office’ for your child

Help Your Child Learn New Words
- Practice clapping out sounds in words. Say letters and sound out words
- Use songs, finger plays, games and rhymes (like Itsy Bitsy Spider)
- Teach your child new words; explain their meaning in words your child can understand

You Can Help Your Child Learn to Talk Well
- Talk to your child about the colors, sounds and smells in your home and other places
- Talk to your child about everyday tasks. Name clothing as you help your child dress
- Ask your child questions and have your child ask you questions
- Talk in whole sentences, use lots of different words when speaking to your child
- Ask your children to tell you what is important to them