

Using Children's Books at Family Home Visits

Lend families books from the school/library or give new books to keep!

Why encourage adults to read aloud to children?

- Reading to children improves their future success with reading.
When children have good experiences at home with books, they are more likely to have good experiences with books at school and when learning to read.
- Books and reading aloud strengthens the relationships between the adult and child, the agency/school and family.
Reading aloud to a child is a wonderful way to spend quality time together and show a child he or she is loved.
- Having direct contact with families is a unique opportunity to make a huge positive impact in the lives of families and children by being a model and a support to the family.

What is the ideal way to use books during a home visit?

- Read to children whenever possible to model reading-aloud for adults in household.
- Give a book as a gift for family to keep if possible. Having a book at home makes it easier to include reading on a daily basis. Giving a book as a gift makes it special.
- Use a book as a lead in to an activity if time permits. This relates books to real life and shows the adult how to extend the book beyond the story to the child's life.
- You can also use a children's story book during a visit to demonstrate a parenting concept the family is learning such as kindness, sharing, patience, etc.

A Recipe for Great Read-Aloud

INVITE

- Instead of asking a question that may get a "no" answer, such as, "Do you want to read a book?" you can say "I brought one of my favorite books to share with you. Please come sit close to me so that you can see the pictures."
- If possible create a "listening environment" by asking adult to turn off radio and TV and finding a quiet place to read.

ENGAGE/INCLUDE

- Make the reading experience interactive by using some of these techniques:
 - Take a "picture walk" through the book by just looking at the pictures and talking about what might be happening before you even read any of the words.
 - As you read, ask questions or dialogue with the child. You can ask "What happens next?" or "How many do you see..." or "Can you find..." or "How do you think that character feels?" questions. This is a great way to introduce counting, naming colors, and talking about feelings.
 - Read with expression by making your voice soft or loud, fast or slow when appropriate.
 - Relate what you have read to the life of the child either by pointing out parts of the story, such as "You went grocery shopping yesterday just like they did in the book." or by create an activity to extend the book such as going for a walk in the park after you read about it.

ACKNOWLEDGE

- You can say "Thank you for sharing this book with me" or "I noticed you are a great listener" or "I love all the ideas you had about what would happen next."

Resources:

- "Make Read-Aloud Part of Every Day" bookmark gives you words and phrases to say to encourage adults to read to children and information about what children are learning. This can be left with the family for reference and inspiration.
- "Word Play with Baby" is a special bookmark for you to read aloud, giving tips on how to share the joy of words and books even if the adult can't read.
- Find more read-aloud ideas at Family Reading Partnership's website: www.familyreading.org

