

Baby Steps to Reading

by Ginger Hester, Director of Parent Education and Family Support, Iredell County Partnership for Young Children (Smart Start)

Babies and toddlers need books to feed their brains the way they need food to fuel their bodies. Reading to even the youngest babies helps their brains grow. To encourage reading, families in Iredell County are getting a boost through the Parents As Teachers (PAT) "Books for Babies" program.

Using free books recommended to stimulate various age-appropriate responses in children birth to three, parent educators incorporate book reading in every monthly family visit. Along with the books, parents learn about their child's language and literacy development and how to encourage a love of reading in their children.

Reading with your child

Babies want to explore and handle or chew on the book.

- ◆ Talk to the baby about what he is doing.
- ◆ Hold your baby in your lap and tap the pages of a book to get attention.
- ◆ When the baby is on her tummy, prop an open book with bright pictures in front of her.
- ◆ Books with photo pictures of faces and other babies are especially appealing.

Next your child will begin to pay more attention to the pictures and

your words. By six months he may want to turn the pages himself.

- ◆ Follow his lead and ask him what he sees.
- ◆ Choose simple books that interest her.
- ◆ Your baby will enjoy hearing you make animal sounds.

At the toddler stage your child will begin to react to pictures and point to familiar pictures.

- ◆ Toddlers enjoy repetition and

will want to read the same book over and over.

- ◆ Rhyming words and repeated phrases are fun to share.
- ◆ Attention span is longer.

Some suggested books for children:

The 2001 Caldecott Medal winner is ***So You Want to be President?*** illustrated by David Small. Text: Judith St. George (Philomel)

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type illustrated by Betsy Lewin. Text: Doreen Cronin (Simon & Schuster)

The 2001 Newbery Medal winner is ***A Year Down Yonder*** by Richard Peck (Dial Books for Young Readers).

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst. Illustrated by Ray Cruz (Atheneum).

Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing by Judi Barrett. Illustrated by Ron Barrett (Atheneum). Ⓢ

For more suggested reading please check website:

<http://www.dalton.org/libraries/fairrosa/lists/index.html>



School Bus Safety

All vehicles are required to stop for a school bus when it is stopped. However, not all drivers do stop. The National Safety Council encourages parents to teach their youngsters these rules for getting on and off the school bus:

- ◆ When waiting for the bus, stay away from traffic and avoid roughhousing.
- ◆ Do not go onto streets, alleys or private property.
- ◆ Stay away from the street as the school bus approaches. Wait until

the bus has stopped to step into the road.

- ◆ Use the hand rail when stepping onto the bus.
- ◆ When on the bus, find a seat and sit down.
- ◆ Loud talking or other loud noise can distract the bus driver.
- ◆ Never put head, arms or hands out of the window.
- ◆ Keep aisles clear—books or bags are tripping hazards and can block the way in an emergency.



- ◆ Before you reach your stop, get ready to leave by getting your books and belongings together.
- ◆ At your stop, wait for the bus to stop completely. Then get up, walk to the front door and exit, using the hand rail.
- ◆ Walk at least ten feet in front of the bus. Make sure that the bus driver can see you.
- ◆ Wait for a signal from the bus driver before beginning to cross. Keeping an eye out for other cars.
- ◆ Stay away from the bus' rear wheels at all times.

Be sure to report any complaints of school bullies or unhealthy behavior your child shares with you.

The Council also suggests that parents review with their children the correct way to cross the street.

- ◆ Always stop at the curb or the edge of the road and look left, then right, and then left again before crossing.
- ◆ Continue looking in this manner until safely across.
- ◆ If vision is blocked by a parked car or other obstacle, move out to where drivers can see them and they can see other vehicles—then stop, and look left-right-left again.

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For more information you can visit the National Safety Council at: <http://www.nsc.org/>

Ten Tips for a Successful Kindergarten Year

Adapted by Julie Smith, Campbell University

1. *Read together.*

Children who read at home with their parents perform better in school.

2. *Stimulate your child's vocabulary.*

Point out words to children wherever you go.

3. *Establish a daily routine.*

Have a set wake up time, set homework time, set fun time, and a set bed time.

4. *Keep in touch with the school.*

Ask what you can do to help your child be successful.

5. *Promote family involvement in your child's education.*

Get involved with local Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).

6. *Enroll your child in preschool.*

They get a feel for what school will be like and they are exposed to a lot of valuable learning experiences.

7. *Encourage your child's independence.*

Ask him to help with simple chores.

8. *Teach your child responsibility.*

Teach your child to complete a chore.

9. *Visit the school with the child before the first day of school.*

Allow him/her to see the classroom and meet their teacher.

10. *Talk to your child.*

Tell them that you love them and listen to them.

