INTRODUCTION

November is National Family Literacy Month, so this issue of Oregon Parenting Together! features articles on the benefits of reading together regardless of the age of your child, and how you can encourage reading in your own home.

WHY IS FAMILY READING SO IMPORTANT?

Reading together as a family has several benefits, some more obvious than others. Reading with your children from the time they are babies through their preschool years is linked to children having more language skills and having an easier time learning to read. As an added bonus, reading together also helps to build a strong relationship between you and your child. A review of studies of parents that read to their children found that "[reading together] is a wonderful sharing time; it exposed children to ideas, concepts, and language" that might be missed by parents just talking with their children. Studies have also shown that parents who read for fun are more likely to have children who enjoy reading. So pick up one of your children's book and read it together, and also pick up a book for yourself!

American Academy of Pediatrics

Recommendations

- Read together every day for fun, make it part of your routine!
- Rhyme, play, talk, sing, and cuddle throughout the day.
- Nurture your relationship with your children, it will help early brain development.

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NOT JUST NURSERY RHYMES & LULLABIES: Read to your baby!

It might be easy to think that reading to infants is silly because they don't understand what you are saying. But the truth is reading to your baby is very important. When you read to your baby they are becoming familiar with the sound of your voice and it can help you bond. You don't even have to read a children's book. You can read the newspaper, a magazine, or a book you are reading. (As they grow, then reading books written for their age is great too!) What is important is that your baby can hear your voice and your see your expressions. Research shows that infants' attention and exploration during reading is a "fundamentally social process" that helps them learn social cues. Additionally, studies show that children who are read to as infants have a much larger vocabulary than children who were not read to. So spend some quality time with your baby reading. Don't worry if you feel you are not good at reading out loud, your baby doesn't care! Your baby will just be happy to hear your voice, and spend quality time with you!

Babies Show They Like to Read by:

- Looking at the book
- Tapping, biting, playing with the book
- Trying to turn a page
- Smiling
- Snuggling
- Looking at you while reading
- Cooing, laughing, or making noises

FUN WITH YOUR KIDS

Take a family trip to the Library

Take your children to get their own library card and teach them how to use it. Hang out in the children's section, but also take them to the adult section and show them what you like to read. The library may even have some special programs planned. So go have fun!

Find your local parenting resources at:
http://orparenting.org/

REFERENCES