



# Dear Parents,

Did you know that children develop reading skills long before being introduced to written language? Playing with and practicing oral language helps children become better readers. In fact, phonemic awareness—the ability to differentiate and manipulate letter sounds—is critical to beginning reading development. Help your child become a better reader by practicing phonemic-awareness activities at home.

- Draw your child's attention to the sounds of his or her language with silly songs and poems. Include favorites such as *Down by the Bay* by Raffi, *If You're Happy and You Know It* by Nicki Weiss, *Sing Hey Diddle Diddle: 66 Nursery Rhymes with Their Traditional Tunes* by Beatrice Harrop, and *Six Sick Sheep: 101 Tongue Twisters* by Joanne Cole.
- Read and reread stories that play with language. Some excellent books include *There's a Wocket in My Pocket* by Dr. Seuss, *Silly Sally* by Audrey Wood, and *More Spaghetti, I Say!* by Rita Gelman.
- Have your child listen to and chant along with stories on tape. Make your own tape of songs and stories for your child to enjoy.
- Substitute and delete letters from common words to create your own silly sayings. For example, substitute T for N to change *Tommy eats tuna* to *Nommy eats nuna*. Celebrate Silly Word Day by speaking in rhyme or by greeting family members, replacing the first letter of their names with the letter of the day, such as *Faula* for *Paula*.



# What Can We Do?

Ways Parents Can Support Their Child at Home and at School

- Praise your child daily for specific accomplishments.
- Take your child to the library, to community activities, and to museums.
- Set limits on TV-watching. Be selective about what your child views.
- Label the belongings your child takes to school.
- Ask to see your child's schoolwork.
- Establish rules, routines, and chores at home.
- Create a special area for library books and homework. Teach your child to check this area as he or she leaves for school.
- Provide a quiet, well-lighted place where your child can study.
- Keep your child healthy by taking him or her for regular checkups, keeping immunizations current, providing a balanced diet, and making sure he or she gets regular exercise.
- Read to your child and encourage him or her to read to you. Be a reading role model by letting your child see you read.
- Notify your child's teacher of any medical concerns.
- Keep your child at home if he or she has a fever, a rash, a sore throat, an earache, an active cold, or whenever you feel that things are not right with your child.

## Books to Read Together:

Eating the Alphabet by Lois Ehlert

Julius: the Baby of the World by Kevin Henkes

Mr. Grumpy's Outing by John Birmingham

Stellaluna by Janell Cannon

"More, More, More" Said the Baby by Vera Williams

