

Print Awareness



Print awareness is a general understanding of how print works:

Print conveys meaning

Print is speech written down

Print moves left to right, top to bottom

Print is made up of sentences, phrases, words, letters

Print uses symbols (letters and punctuation) to convey meaning

Without print awareness reading and writing cannot occur. In order to read children must be able to translate symbols into sounds. In order to write they must translate sounds into symbols. To do both they must understand how print works.

The most effective way to teach letters and sounds is to combine them into activities that are meaningful to children. Whenever possible, everything we teach children should be taught within the context of their world to make it more meaningful to them.

Reading books to children, with children and listening to books read by children is one of the most powerful ways to support print awareness. Conversations before during and after reading can incorporate some of the following strategies:

Picture walks – go through the book without reading the words. Engage the child in a discussion of what is happening in the pictures.

Book conversations –

Discuss what is going on to help children follow the story line

Help children relate the story to their own life

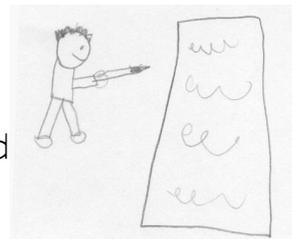
Help children explore new ideas presented in the story

Point out new words and use them later, to build vocabulary

Point out the pictures and the text –

Talk about how the pictures always match the text.

Notice and point out the author, title, illustrator, sentences and pictures.



Point to words as you read – showing the direction of the print.

Point out punctuation –

use your voice to exaggerate the meaning of ? and !

Discuss your thought processes out loud – model for your child how to think about books and reading. For example: “I’m wondering why ...” “I noticed ...”

