

Parenting Counts

Reading, Learning, Living

Helping Your Child Use the Library

By Kathryn Perkinson - www.libraryinstruction.com/child.html

As soon as you can, it is a good idea to include children in weekly trips to the library. Libraries are often open in the evening for working parents, and most will issue a library card to any children who can print their names and whose parent will countersign for them.

Some libraries invite parents to bring in their children of any age for special programs, such as parent-child story hours. Some libraries also offer special training programs for childcare workers and even invite large groups of children from daycare centers in for special programs. If you have children in daycare, be sure that the caregivers contact the local public library to plan such activities. Exposure to books and reading should be an integral part of daycare activities, and the library is a good resource available for developing such programs.

The kinds of materials available for checkout for children ranging from infants up to age 5 vary among libraries, but usually include hardcover books, board books, picture books, paperbacks, and magazines. The variety of subjects is tremendous. When your kids ask you endless questions about where they came from and why the sky is blue, chances are good there's a book at your library with answers they can understand.

Most libraries also offer recordings of children's stories and songs. Many also offer cassette tapes, compact discs, videotapes, book/cassette kits, and even puppets and educational toys.

Although public libraries welcome children there are guidelines for behavior that parents need to stress:

- Library books are everybody's property and should be treated carefully.
- Be sure that you know the library's policies regarding loan periods and fines for overdue books.
- Explain to your kids that the library is there for the whole community and they need to be considerate of others' needs.
- Keep in mind that it is your responsibility to see that your children behave acceptably and are not disruptive to others using the library.

See what your local public library has to offer. You and your kids may be surprised. And the only thing it will cost you is some time.

Make the Most of Visits to the Library

From *About.Com*

- Take your child *with you* to the library and set aside at least one hour to spend at the library. Don't rush the visit.
- Choose books for your child to look at while at the library. Observe your child's reactions to the books you choose to see what kinds of books your child prefers.
- Branch out into other types of books or subjects. For example, if you know your child loves books about dinosaurs, get some books on other subjects: space, plants, weather, etc.
- Nurture your child's interests, but help her or him broaden those interests as well. Children can only be interested in things they know about and their worlds are generally limited to what their parents provide. Help them see more of what's in the world.
- Choose some books to take home. Remember to take enough books to keep him or her occupied for a while. You'll be better able to see which books, too, your child goes back to over and over.

Did you know that many songs for young children are sung to the same tune, such as "The Alphabet Song", and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"? Some tuneful reads to get your sing-along started are: Down by the Bay by Raffi, There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly by Simms Taback and The Itsy Bitsy Spider by Ira Trapani.

why read
today

funny bones



- Q. Where do books sleep?
A. Under their covers!

- Q. What is the longest word in the dictionary?
A. Smiles, because it has a mile between the two s's.



United Way

Book for Kids Program

You receive this newsletter as part of United Way's Books for Kids Program. Anyone who works or lives in a 30-mile radius of Mankato and has a child age birth through five is eligible for this program. Please make sure to contact Laura Stevens at 345-4551 or lauras@mankatounitedway with any address changes. If you know of someone who does not currently receive our mailings but would like to, you can contact Laura as well.

United Way 211 – Community Help Line

Do you need help finding services in your area? Dial 211 from a landline phone to find local information about education, health services, legal help, transportation, counseling, immigration, childcare, housing, youth services, food, employment and more. It's free, confidential and available 24/7. If you only have a cell phone, dial 1-800-543-7709.

Volunteer Solutions

Looking for a way to give back to the community by volunteering? Visit www.mankatounitedway.org and click on Volunteer Opportunities – Volunteer Solutions to find the volunteer opportunity that's right for you!

kids in the kitchen

Get Smart As You Shop

www.fruitsandvegiesmatter.gov

Fruits and vegetables can fit into any budget. The following tips can help you save money as you strive to eat more fruits and vegetables.

1. Purchase fresh fruits and vegetables in season when they tend to be less expensive.
2. Buy whole fruits and vegetables instead of pre-cut or pre-packaged forms which tend to be more expensive.
3. Consider frozen and canned if fresh are too expensive. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables keep longer than fresh.
4. Shop smartly! Look out for added sugar in canned fruits; look for fruit packed in water or juice. Choose veggies with low sodium.
5. Consider generic or store brands instead of name brands. Store brands tend to cost less and have similar taste and nutrition.
6. If your budget allows, buy larger bags of frozen fruit and vegetables. They may be a better bargain and you can use what you need and keep the rest of later use.
7. Buy canned and dried beans and use them in recipes instead of meat which is more expensive. Traditional recipes made with meat such as chili, soups, and Mexican dishes like burritos are delicious with beans.

activity block

Looking for some new activities to do with your child? Visit the Children Museum of Southern Minnesota's website at www.cmsouthernmn.org and click on "Fun." Each month you will find a calendar with daily activities based on your child's age and compiled by local early childhood experts. You will also find a recipe of the month and a song of the month on this site. Here are a couple of examples from their calendar:

Literacy/Sensory/Music – Sing "The Itsy Bitsy Spider", first in a normal voice range, then sing it in a high, squeaky voice and finally in a low voice.

Visual Recognition/Self-Esteem/Language – Place pictures of family members under clear Contact © paper. Place these on the floor or high chair tray. Practice saying the names and blow kisses to the faces.

Visual Stimulation/Science – Fill a small plastic jar 2/3 full of water. Add food coloring and fill up the rest with mineral oil. Secure the lid tightly. Tip and watch.

Early Math – Count cars, trees, chairs, beds, steps...in your house and yard.

Sensory - Put beads, marbles, bells into plastic containers and hot glue the lids on. Roll, shake and explore the different sounds.

Repetitive Play, Fun, Developing Trust - Play peek-a-boo five times today.