

Bookless Wonders

Wonderful ways to help a child learn to read— Without using books!

*Reading, Writing, Listening & Speaking are the 4 Language Arts.
Improvement in 1 area always leads to improvement in the other 3!*

- Give every item and room in the house and garage a name (table, chair, bedroom) instead of simply using “this”, “that” “there”.
- When you go grocery shopping, name the fruits, vegetables and dairy items for a child. Discuss the various colors and shapes. (This may be a revelation. A friend jokes that she was in high school before she knew that food didn't naturally grow in a boiling bag!)
- Speak to a child in complete sentences and ask him to do the same. Children are expected to become fluent readers—when they read aloud, it should sound as natural as speaking. Fluency will be difficult to master if speaking in and listening to full sentences do not come naturally. Through your speech, you are communicating the natural flow of language.
- Tell a child a simple story. Ask him to retell the story. Did he cover the important parts? Was he able to retell what happens in the proper sequence?



- When telling stories, use words that tap into the five senses—seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting. Your descriptions should create a “movie” in the child’s mind; in short, he should feel like he is part of the action.



When introducing a child to new experiences, ask him what he sees, hears, and smells, how something feels when he touches it and, if applicable, what a new food or beverage tastes like.



To paraphrase a favorite quote: *Until you see its bright, shiny skin, smell its distinctive scent, hear the crunch as you bite into it, taste its sweetness or tartness, and feel its juice dribble down your chin, “apple” is nothing but a label.*

Without life experiences, a child has nothing to connect to the words on a page, and he is simply reading a list of “labels” that hold little or no meaning.

- Take advantage of environmental print such as restaurant signs, street signs, billboards, cereal boxes, etc. Environmental print offers early practice in letter identification and vocabulary development, as well as examples of how adults use the written word to function in everyday life.

- Play “I Spy” using descriptive phrases: *I spy something that is red and has four corners. I spy something that is white and soft to the touch.*

- Give a child simple, 1-step instructions. Once he masters these, go to 2-step instructions, then 3-step instructions. Use colorful words and vary the instructions to enrich vocabulary and enhance listening skills.

