

A powerful language and literacy building tool for children is in every home!

What is found in every home that helps build children's language and literacy skills?
Books!!

Books are fantastic resources that help support children's vocabularies, listening skills, oral language skills (which underpin literacy acquisition and competence), and sound awareness skills.

However, it is not as simple as just having books in the house and encouraging the kids to look at them. In fact, there are 6 principles that must exist in a child's environment to promote language learning.

1. Children need to hear many words often (so read the book over and over again)
2. Children learn words when they are interested (books have colours, fun topics and they help you both to have joint attention- which is very important in learning)
3. Children learn best when adults are responsive to them (so respond to their utterances; points; eye gazes when sharing books together)
4. Words are learned when meanings are made clear (explain; use intonation and gestures to add meaning)
5. Vocabulary and grammar are learned together- so books are a wonderful example!
6. Keep it positive (have a joint focus; actively engage together; don't worry if you haven't read word for word and want to turn the page- go with the flow!)

A question I am commonly asked is- "what are good books for children?" This is a fair question as in book stores I commonly see books that would not be good at facilitating the above skills. Additionally, just because a book may have a literacy award winning sticker on it- again does not mean it is a fantastic book.

To assist with this dilemma Speech Pathology Australia award books each year that promote oral language and literacy development in varying age groups (birth - three; 3 - 5 years; 5 - 8 years; 8 - 10 years and Indigenous). To see the list of winners from 2005 - 2020 (this year's winners will be announced on October 29th - in time for Christmas presents!)

Follow this link-

https://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/SPAweb/whats_on/Book_of_the_Year/SPAweb/What_s_On/Book_of_the_Year/Book_of_the_Year.aspx?hkey=6d7d21b1-0cd6-4b86-91e3-11884f031a02

And click on- "Who else has won The Book of The Year awards'.