

# Early Learning Parents' Pages

## January 2017



New Year's Resolutions...

- #1 Read more with my kids.
- #2 Help them learn.
- #3 Reduce toddler whining.

## Start the New Year right!

**S**tart the New Year off right by reading to your child.

Research shows that one of the most important ways to help your child become a reader is to read to him daily. You can begin at birth and continue throughout his childhood. Reading stories together is a good way to build your child's vocabulary, word knowledge and early literacy skills. That time together also supports emotional development.



Cuddling with your child and a storybook is a nurturing activity that helps you both feel closer. Your child will see reading as fun and be more likely to read for enjoyment as he gets older.

When you read your child a book, talk to him about **how** you read a book. "Did you notice this is the front of the book and this is where we start to read the story? The pictures tell us about the story. Look at the picture and tell me what you think will happen."

As your child gets older, point to words while you read. This teaches him that words tell the story and each series of letters is a word. Be expressive. Make your voice loud and excited for exclamation marks and soft or quiet when the baby in the story is falling asleep. Talk about some of the words such as adjectives that describe a character or verbs that tell about the characters' actions. "Wow! That must have been a very big strawberry because the mouse said it was enormous!" or "The kitten must be resting because it says the kitten curled up on the sofa."

Read to your child throughout the day. Varying reading time can be fun. Read when he is in the tub or having a snack. Reading before or after a nap can help him settle down or wake up. Waiting in a doctor's office is a great time to read a story. You can share a story when riding on a bus or in a car by retelling a favorite.

Making reading an important part of your child's day is important and will encourage him to be a reader as he grows older.



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LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.

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## Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!

is **January 23-27, 2017**. That's when child care providers, teachers and parents all focus on encouraging children's literacy skills.

The foundation for reading starts at infancy. A child's early experiences with books and language are a base for reading success. When you read, talk or play with children, it stimulates their brains and builds connections that become building blocks for reading. Brain development research shows language and literacy skills begin developing at birth. Reading aloud to children every day increases their brains' capacity for language and literacy skills.

Reading aloud is not only a good way to stimulate language and cognitive skills, but it builds motivation for reading along with curiosity and memory. The more words parents use when speaking to an infant, the greater the size of their infant's vocabulary.

You provide early literacy experiences when you

- Hold young children on your lap or close to you. Read an age-appropriate book to engage in some back-and-forth dialogue about the words and pictures.
- Engage in repeated series of interactions between you and the child. Point out something on the page and ask questions like "What's that?" or "What's that kitty doing?" as well as open-ended questions.
- Allow the child to respond and then provide feedback.

Many schools and



## Start the year reading

For more information about reading to your child, see



<http://www.allprodad.com/5-ways-to-bond-through-reading/>

<http://www.booktrust.org.uk/books/children/how-to-share-books/>

<http://www.storylineonline.net/>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/early-learning/early-literacy>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/213-helping-your-child-become-a-confident-reader-and-writer-starting-from-birth>

## January is National Mentoring Month

Mentoring is a way to support and encourage children and young people in your community to be the best they can be and have a better life. Consider mentoring a child or young person. If you belong to an organization, encourage members to mentor. Research shows youth with successful adult mentors are 52 percent more likely to earn higher grades and feel better about how they are doing in school. Volunteering at your child's child care program or school may help support your child's learning as well as others. When your child sees you helping at her child care program, she knows you value education and care about things she does there. You may also discover a child who needs some extra encouragement. If possible, connect with his family and invite him to play dates or special trips to local parks, museums or library events with your child.

If you feel your child or a child you know would benefit from having a mentor, you may contact one of the following agencies in your community:

- USA Freedom Corps (<http://www.volunteer.gov>)
- The National Mentoring Partnership (<http://www.mentoring.org>)
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (<http://www.bbbsa.org>)
- MENTORYOUTH.com (<http://www.mentoryouth.com>)

Learn more about mentoring in the [National Mentoring Month Toolkit](#).

child care centers invite parents and community members to come in and read with the children. The School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten programs encourage child care providers to participate in a simultaneous read-aloud activity Wednesday, Jan. 25 at 9 a.m. The book chosen for infants and toddlers is *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle and the one for preschoolers is *I Don't Want to be a Frog* by Dev Petty.

The Florida Department of Education has [30 Literacy Tips for Parents](#) in the Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! Toolkit on the DOE [website](#).

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## Wind Down Whining

Do you have a "whiner" in your family?

Most families with preschoolers have a child who whines. Whining is at the top of the list of most frequent problems for preschool parents. Why is whining so prevalent?

Because, more often than



Children can easily wear down their parents' patience by continuing to whine until they get what they want. Whining produces results. Roslyn Ann Duffy writes in *The Top Ten Preschool Parenting Problems* (2008, Exchange Press, Inc.), when children whine enough, adults will "Leave you alone; quit bothering you or asking you to do something you don't want to do; give you what you want; or change their behavior in some way to get you to stop whining." This is why whining is a universal parenting problem. Children use whining as a form of communication to get attention, power, revenge, and address feelings of inadequacy or insignificance. Becky Bailey refers to these as mistaken goals in *Positive Discipline for Preschoolers* (2007, Random House) and relates them to a child's need to belong. When adults listen and respond to mistaken goals with appropriate attention they meet the child's belonging issues and reduce whining.

Children are often expressing an emotional need when they whine. They may not be able to tell you what they are feeling (sad, scared, bored, lonely) so they appear uncooperative and demanding. Children may be telling you what they want and need your help to understand the difference between what they want and what they need. They may **need** a new pair of shoes but **want** an expensive pair of boots. It is up to you to explain that

## ...in Preschoolers

a different pair of shoes will be better and boots may be an option in the future. Whining is often related to physical needs, especially when the child is too young to tell you what she needs or feels. She may be tired, hungry or not feeling well.

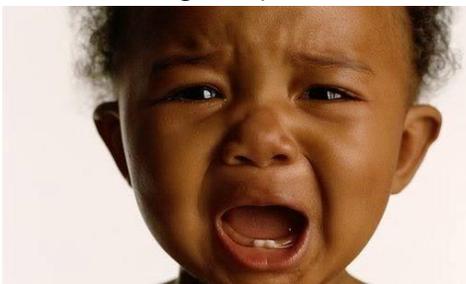
When your child whines, the best thing to do is take a deep breath and ask her to do the same. Then have her tell you what she wants in a normal tone of voice.

"Tell me what you want" is the best

response to whining. If your child is tired or hungry, take her somewhere she can nap or rest or give her a snack. Do not lecture your child if she is anxious about a real physical need.

If the whining is irrational, it is probably an emotional message. Respond with, "You seem very upset. Come sit with me and get a hug. It sounds like you need a hug or to cuddle with me." Sometimes life is too hectic and your child just needs to calm down and relax with you.

Teach your child how to ask for things in an appropriate way. "I want a cookie, please" is the right way to ask for a cookie, not yelling "give me a cookie!" When she asks for a cookie politely, respond with "That is the way to ask for a cookie. Thank you for being polite." Then give her a cookie or tell her she can have a cookie after she eats lunch since she asked nicely. Modeling the behavior you want is a great way to teach your child good manners and patience. When you ask your child, "Please bring me your coat," wait patiently for her to do



so and say, "Thank you for bringing me your coat." Then say, "It is so helpful for me when you bring me your coat."

Eliminating whining may take awhile, but

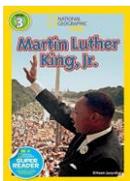
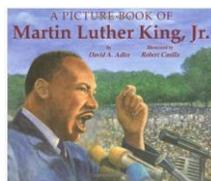
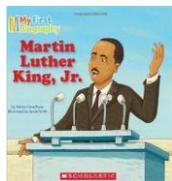
it will be well worth the time and effort and will create a better relationship between you and your child.

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## Martin Luther King Day – a Day of Service

Jan. 16, 2017, was Martin Luther King Day. The day has become known as a **Day of Service** and we are asked to work in our communities in ways that honor Dr. King's life and teachings. Dr. King said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'" His goal? To serve and help others make their lives better.

Teaching your child how to serve others in your family and community honors Dr. King. Help your child find things he can do to help. Picking up litter in a park, around a church or school would be a good project or visiting someone who is elderly or sick. Helping with laundry, setting the table or picking up toys are ways your child can do service for the family. Here are some books about Dr. King's life and teachings and how he served the country.



*My First Biography: Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Marion Bauer  
*A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr.* by David Adler  
*National Geographic Readers: Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Kitson Jazyanka

## Jan. 20 is Inauguration Day



January brings Inauguration Day and a new president of the United States. If your preschooler has heard about that at child care or on the news, she may be curious. Talk about leaders in your family

and compare their responsibilities to the role of the president. Watch parts of the inauguration on television and talk about the Oath of Office being the president's promise to lead the country and uphold the laws.

Help your child make an American flag out of construction paper. Watch the inaugural parade. Let your child wave the flag she made and cheer.

For more information on the inauguration to share with your child, visit these sites:

*Elmo is the First Monster President:*

<http://bit.ly/2jBawy4>

Inauguration (Kids.gov): <http://bit.ly/2joMWmE>

Inaugural Day Events: <http://bit.ly/2hraRRT>

You Tube Video – *Duck for President:*

<http://bit.ly/2jBf714>

You Tube Video – *Grace for President:*

<http://bit.ly/2jcNgYi>

You Tube Video – *The Berenstain Bears – The Big Election:*

<http://bit.ly/2ilzcHx>

## February Upcoming Events

- Your Child's Social Timeline
- Valentine's Day
- National Children's Dental Health Month
- Parents of Preschoolers: Turn behavior challenges into opportunities to teach life skills
- Read Across America



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