



NEA'S READ ACROSS AMERICA

YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD, TOO WACKY, TOO WILD, TO PICK UP A BOOK AND READ WITH A CHILD

Celebrate Dr. Seuss' Birthday March 2

NEA's Read Across America 6 Keys to Help a Child Become a Good Reader

Starting Early

The ideal time to begin sharing books with children is during infancy, even as young as six weeks old. From early on, children should own books, be read to often and see others reading and writing. Also, children should be encouraged to talk about books they already know and to elaborate or add their story lines or create new endings.

Surrounding Your Child With a Reading-Rich Environment

The home environment is critical. Make it a print-rich one. Make sure to put up some signs around the house that use the child's name. Have toys like alphabet refrigerator magnets, writing materials and high quality books. The National Education Association has a list of favorite children's books on its web site at www.nea.org/readacross.

Talking With Your Child

There's no substitute for a caring adult who takes time to spend with a child. Vocabulary, language skills and knowledge about the world are acquired during interesting conversations with responsive adults.

Teaching Your Child While You Read Aloud

When you read with your child, help him or her learn the basic rules of print. Point out how spaces separate words. Occasionally run your fingers along with the words as you read so your child can learn that sentences start on the upper left and go to the right. Point to the period at the end of sentences and say, "That's the end."

Helping Your Child Develop Critical Thinking Skills

As children move from being toddlers to school-age, they should increasingly be able to grasp the meaning of language. When you read, stop to discuss unfamiliar words so your child will learn what they mean. Pause to ask questions to help the child predict what is coming next. Help children understand the main characters of stories and encourage them to talk about why these characters act the way they do.

Finding a Good Preschool Setting

What things to look for in a high quality preschool—

- A well-supplied, well-designed space
- A varied curriculum
- Strong parent-teacher conferences
- Strong teaching methods and teamwork among teachers
- A regular daily routine
- Language experience

This tip sheet draws heavily on *Starting Out Right—A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*, The National Academy Press, Copyright 1998.



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