



You Must Crawl Before You Walk

You've probably heard the saying; you must crawl before you walk. It means you have to learn the basics of how to do something and build the skills before progressing to the next step. Before children can read, they must have early literacy skills, which is the foundation for reading and writing. Early literacy skills are the crawl before the walk.

So how do families and caregivers build a child's early literacy skills? Below are some suggestions:

- Have frequent "rich" conversations with your child. For instance, when you are out and about and notice a caterpillar, ask your child, "Why do you think the caterpillar is eats leaves?". If you see a man that looks grumpy, ask your child, "Why do you think that man is sad or mad?"
- Sing children's songs together
- Read children's stories at least #20minutesaday
- Ask your child to retell a story
- Read nursery rhymes together
- Play rhyming games such as what rhymes with cat? What rhymes with hot?
- Point out street signs and letters when driving or walking with your child
- Create a grocery list with your child and then shop for the items
- Play word games such as what does a cow say? What does a chicken say?
- Enroll your 4-year-old in a quality Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program
- Go to the public library every week, and after, have a picnic lunch in the park.
- Ask purposeful questions when reading a story
- Use play dough to create letters (S for ssssnake, L for long, etc.)
- Introduce crayons and paper
- Use alphabet magnets on the refrigerator and foam-shaped letters for the bathtub
- Children will do as they see, so let them "catch" you reading instead of watching television or on your phone.

Check out the resources below:

www.jaxpubliclibrary.org/kids-teens/children-birth-4

www.readingrockets.org/article/top-10-resources-early-literacy-development

www.readaloud.org/

www.pnc.com/en/about-pnc/corporate-responsibility/grow-up-great.html

www.floridaearlylearning.com/parents/understanding-your-growing-child