



# Parent Tip Sheet

## Early Literacy Development

**L**iteracy is the ability to read and write. You can help your child develop the skills he or she needs for later reading when reading storybooks, interacting with print, and associating sounds/fingerspelling in his or her environment. Building these skills early will help your child start school ready to learn to read!

Long before your child is taught to read in school, he or she starts developing the skills necessary for later reading. For your child to eventually read, strong language skills, basic knowledge about print, and an awareness of how words are made up of sounds/fingerspelled letters are needed.

There are many ways that literacy development in Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH) children is similar to that in hearing children. However, D/HH children may be at a higher risk for experiencing delays or having greater difficulty learning to read. Here are some activities you can use with your child to promote early literacy development!



- ✓ Share books as early and as often as you can.
- ✓ Tell stories and invite your child to tell you stories. Example: "What happened at school today?" Start with a shared experience to help develop storytelling.
- ✓ Point out signs, e.g., McDonald's. Play games identifying the signs that you see. This is really early reading!
- ✓ In your community, look for signs that are familiar to your child. Point out the letters and words you see on the signs.
- ✓ Associate sounds/fingerspelling with letters as early as possible.
- ✓ Label everything in your home with words, pictures and/or signs.
- ✓ Play games with words starting or ending with a certain sound or fingerspelled letter.
- ✓ Sing songs and teach nursery rhymes to your child.
- ✓ Look at your child while reading, make sure the child sees the signing, the words and the pictures.
- ✓ Play games where you connect a picture/visual with a word.



\*Share these with your Early Intervention providers/parent to parent support providers who have experience with children who are deaf or hard of hearing and discuss ideas on how to implement these tips with your child. <https://handsandvoices.org/fl3/topics/tipsheets.html>

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