Encouraging Literacy at Home

Create a Literacy-Friendly Environment

You can set up your home to encourage and support reading easily and without any additional materials!

- **Find a quiet, comfortable place.**
  Try to avoid distractions. Even the best readers have a difficult time focussing on reading when there are too many distractions.

- **Treat books with respect.**
  Find a special shelf or space in the house to keep books. This will show children that books are valuable, and so is the act of reading.

- **Use the community.**
  If there is a public library in your community, visit it with your child, or attend events that encourage literacy together, such as storytelling events or cultural events such as singing, drumming, or Inuit games.

- **Read anything.**
  Reading any age-appropriate material is beneficial, including books, magazines, newspapers, online content, and song lyrics.

- **Tell stories.**
  Share your own stories, and ask your child to share theirs or make up a fictional story. Talk about these stories together.

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Practise Reading with Your Child

When you are reading with your child, practise the following strategies to help them build confidence and skills.

- **Take turns.** Read to the child, read with the child, and let the child show you his or her reading skills.
- **Sound it out.** Encourage the child to recognize symbols, sound them out, and put them together to read words aloud.
- **Give gentle corrections.** Don't interrupt the child or correct them, but support them as they sound out symbols, letters, and words. This will also allow the child to show you how he or she is improving.
- **Focus on successes, not mistakes.** Focus on praising success and progress, as this will build confidence in the child.
- **Ask questions.** As you read through the book, pause and ask questions about what is going on and what the pictures are telling them. This will help the child think about and understand what he or she is reading. Remember, even though the books are written in the educational dialect, you can use the dialect you are most comfortable with to talk about the books.
- **Read it and experience it.** If possible, make connections between what the book is about and what children have experienced. For example, if the book is about food, talk about food you eat together at home.
- **Read it again and again.** It is good to read the book a few times. Repetition helps develop a child's confidence in reading.
- **Write it down.** As the child is reading, you can encourage them to trace over symbols with their finger or onto paper. Once they are ready, you can encourage them to copy the symbols and words onto paper.

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