

TODAY'S READERS WILL BE TOMORROW'S LEADERS

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Early childhood literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can read and write. Research shows that our kids actually get ready to read years before they start school, and you'll never guess where they learn it....yep, right at home. Every time you read to your young child, you teach and reinforce six pre-reading skills: Print Motivation (being interested and enjoying books), Narrative Skills (being able to describe things and events and tell stories), Vocabulary (knowing the names of things), Phonological Awareness (being able to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words), Letter Knowledge (knowing letters are different from each other, knowing their names and sounds and recognizing letters everywhere), and Print Awareness (noticing print, knowing how to handle a book and knowing how to follow the words on a page). So when they ask for an extra story or two at bedtime go ahead, you're not only making them smarter, you're getting them ready to become tomorrow's leaders. Didn't know you were imparting so much knowledge into your little ones just by reading *Goodnight Moon* did you?

Have your kids ever spent time singing, clapping, and dancing? What child hasn't? Next time join them, they're actually making themselves smarter. Children are born with the ability to respond to music and sound. That means that before they can talk, they connect with sound. Singing, clapping, and dancing alters the anatomy of the brain. Early musical experiences intensify the development of interconnections between brain cells (neuronal synapses). Essentially, early musical experiences enhance a child's ability to think, learn, reason and create. But for music to have a profound effect on the brain, your child must actively participate in the

musical activities. They need to feel, make, hear, and memorize sounds and patterns; basically they need to sing, clap, and dance.

Having said that, have you ever attended CRDL Lapsit Storytime or CRDL Music & Movement at your library? CRDL Lapsit Storytime is a time for you and your little one to bond over books, rhymes, and music. For the first part of the program, we explore different ways to share books with your child, play with nursery rhymes, and move to some music. After that, parents get a chance to chat with other parents as they all play with their children with library provided age-appropriate toys. During CRDL Lapsit Storytime, we pick one or two of the six pre-reading skills and put together a series of stories, music and activities designed to develop those particular skills. While we can't focus on all six skills at once, we make it a priority to spotlight at least one or two of the skills at each CRDL Lapsit Storytime and give parents ideas of how to work on developing those skills at home.

CRDL Music & Movement gives you a chance to sing and dance with your child! Wave some ribbons, play with scarves, tap some rhythm sticks, and shake some shaker eggs. Let your inner child come out and play as you help your child develop interconnections between brain cells and develop their ability to learn.

Lifelong learning starts from the moment we first open our eyes. Are you giving your children the opportunity to become tomorrow's leaders?