

BUILDING LITERACY SKILLS FROM INFANCY TO ADULTHOOD TEENS AND BEYOND



TALK ALL THE TIME

- ▶ Talk about interests and find books to learn more.
- ▶ Hearing more words helps young people build a bigger and better vocabulary.

PROVIDE INTERESTING BOOKS

- ▶ Offer informational books as well as fiction.
- ▶ Comic books/graphic novels may hold interest.
- ▶ Look for age-appropriate themes at the young person's reading level.
- ▶ Suggest chapter books or harder books to increase vocabulary.

READ ALOUD EVERY DAY

- ▶ Read together taking turns with pages or chapters.
- ▶ Have discussions on what you are reading, and make predictions.
- ▶ Foster independent reading by reading your own book while the young person reads theirs.
- ▶ Have the young person read to you or to younger children.

MODEL READING AND WRITING

- ▶ Have books/magazines/newspapers you like to read around the house.
- ▶ Let the young person see you read, talk about what you are reading, or read and discuss the same book.

PRACTICE WRITING REGULARLY

- ▶ Set up a writing area. Have writing materials accessible.
- ▶ Have the young person help you make lists.
- ▶ Write greeting cards, letters or in a journal.
- ▶ Work on independence using a dictation app.
- ▶ Find a pen pal or an email pal.

FUN TIME CAN SUPPORT LITERACY TOO

- ▶ Find apps to work on reading or play games like Scrabble that promote literacy.
- ▶ Minimize screens. Choose educational DVDs or shows (e.g. NOVA ScienceNOW, Born this Way, Speechless).
- ▶ Download audiobooks.

NOTE TO PARENTS: Building literacy skills doesn't have to be expensive. Check out your local public library, yard sales, second-hand stores, BuyNothing and other community groups for free or low-cost books. Tar Heel Reader offers free books in multiple formats (tarheelreader.org).



Boston Children's Hospital
Down Syndrome Program