



Issue One

# Supporting Early Learners

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## Dear Parents,

Children have the best possible chance to reach their full potential when educators and parents work as partners to provide supportive learning environments. These newsletters have been written by Bev DeMonyé and Gloria Gustafson for parents wanting to help their children at home. You are welcome to email us at [learningtoread@telus.net](mailto:learningtoread@telus.net) or visit our website [www.readwritewithkids.com](http://www.readwritewithkids.com) to view other resources.



**Bev DeMonyé** has wide experience as a preschool, primary and intermediate classroom teacher and in teaching children requiring support. She has a Master's Degree in Literacy and a Diploma in Special Education. Bev has also taught in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia.



**Gloria Gustafson** has taught at all elementary levels as a classroom teacher and has experience working with parents and teachers as a District Consultant. She has a Master's Degree in Elementary Education and has taught in the Faculty of Education and in Field Programs at Simon Fraser University.

## This series of ten newsletters covers the following topics:

- Issue One: Reading to Children From the Beginning
- Issue Two: Reading with Children as They Learn to Read
- Issue Three: Children Reading on Their Own and Getting Better Every Time
- Issue Four: Phonics Plus
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## Reading to Children From the Beginning

Sharing the joy of reading on a daily basis helps children develop a love for books, reading and learning. Reading to babies and toddlers is one of the best ways to introduce them to the world of books. Children discover that reading is an enjoyable learning experience and become readers for life!

Reading out loud to children introduces new words, ideas and information. Talking with children before, during and after reading helps develop listening and speaking skills. This type of talking also improves depth of understanding.

Reading out loud provides a natural way for children to learn about:

- holding and caring for books
- covers, titles, authors and illustrators
- how pictures and words tell a story or provide information
- letters, words and sentences
- where to start reading: reading left to right and from top to bottom
- rhyme and the flow of language in books
- the many types of books such as fiction, story, information and poetry books



## Tips for Reading to Children

- Read daily to your child when you have time to enjoy it.
- Be playful, enthusiastic and expressive as you read books you and your child are interested in.
- Children love to have favourite stories read over and over again. When children no longer have to concentrate on the plot, they naturally focus on the flow of language and start memorizing some words and phrases which is a beginning step in learning to read.
- Reading titles and looking at pictures before you read helps to captivate your child's interest and develop predicting skills.
- Encourage your child to retell the story using the pictures as prompts.
- When reading a fact book ask your child what was the most interesting thing they learned.
- Demonstrate a sense of curiosity as you are reading using prompts such as: *I wonder why . . . Isn't this interesting . . . This makes me think about . . . or Wow . . .*
- Share ideas, feelings and thoughts to help your child make connections between their own life experiences and what you are reading.
- Encourage your child to visualize and act out parts of the story to help the stories come alive.
- Use your finger to track words as you read. This reinforces reading left to right, top to bottom and helps develop the idea of matching the spoken word to the printed word. Sometimes children want to take responsibility and do the finger tracking themselves. Using bookmarks and pointers vary the tracking process.
- Reading material can be at various levels of difficulty: from very easy picture books to books with a lot of print. It is amazing how much children can enjoy and understand what they hear long before they read.