

Promoting Social and Emotional Health Through Early Literacy

A handbook created by:

Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PAL)
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and

The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health

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Members of the Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium*

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FOREWORD

Babies come into the world ready to communicate. In their earliest relationships with family members, they build a sense of security. As they grow, they thrive on interaction. Through back and forth conversations with smiles and coos, babbles, gestures, and eventually words, they learn to express their needs, share their discoveries, and expect that their efforts will be rewarded with understanding, connection, and encouragement.

Caring for very young children usually involves two kinds of talk – the practical, to-the-point “business talk” of direction and the more elaborate, fanciful, often silly “play talk” of nursery rhymes, back and forth games, pretending, questioning, story-telling, learning, and having fun together. Children whose parents and caregivers talk with them a lot hear and practice lots of play talk. Their early experiences with language build the foundation for both social-emotional development and literacy.

Talking with babies and toddlers in playful ways isn't "just playing." Words are vital for children's intellectual development and emotional health. Preschoolers who have spent lots of time talking with adults, listening to and telling stories, and using language in playful ways tend to have large vocabularies. Because they can "use their words," they are likely to be chosen as play partners by their peers. With a wealth of stories to draw from, they tend to have good ideas for dramatic play and the words to keep the play going. They can also “use their words” to talk through problems, control their own behavior, and negotiate solutions to conflicts. Because they can ask persuasively for what they want, they are less likely to hit, push, or grab.

When they get to school, children with good vocabularies and language skills will also be seen as more mature and competent by their teachers. Their learning will be faster because they will be able to ask more interesting questions and understand more complex answers. Responding to their sophisticated interests and vocabulary, teachers will provide them with more information, richer language, and more challenges. Facility with the sounds that make up words will give these children a head start on reading. Once they learn to read on their own, they will keep learning new words and information from context, and their learning will accelerate.

But literacy is not just a means for obtaining information; it is also about connection. A child's first language is an enduring connection to her family. Its sounds and cadences provide comfort even before the words are understood. Similarly, as author and kindergarten teacher Vivian Gussin Paley observed in *The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter* (Paley, 1991, p. 44), “The poetry and prose of the best children's books enter our minds when we are young and sing back to us all our lives.”

It is no accident that so many classic stories for toddlers involve searching for a mother, running away and coming back, being lost and found again, or doing something bad and being forgiven. These themes resonate with a young child's struggles to balance her or his desire for independence and closeness. Well-chosen books and made-up stories help children (and their parents) work through strong emotions and difficult issues. Storybook characters provide models of problem-solving strategies. Parents can also tell their own stories as a way of helping children process difficult events or see better choices. Thus the literacy experiences we provide young children – through books, stories, songs, conversation, and pretend play – can be critical supports for their emotional development.

Whether you follow the tips in this book because you want to have fun with a child, to prepare her to be a good reader, or to support his or her social-emotional development, the result will be the same. She or he will enter school with a wealth of words – confident, in love with books and stories, and primed to succeed.

Betty Bardige, Ed.D.

ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

Promoting Social and Emotional Health Through Early Literacy is a guide for mental health staff, parent advocates, parents and volunteers. It is available on the Resources for Parents page of the Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium website: www.doe.mass.edu/familylit/parents

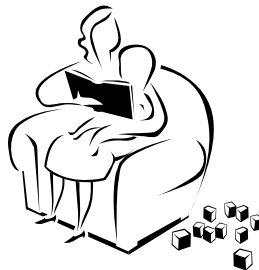
The handbook is intended to expand the skills of adults who live and/or work with parents and/or children with mental illness. It contains new ways to promote social and emotional health in children ages birth to seven (7), and also provides information for parents and other adults looking to upgrade their own literacy skills.

Families come in all shapes, sizes, and colors and include more than parents and children. This diversity brings an added dimension to the social and emotional health of children and their families, contributing strengths and assets to the development of their literacy skills and fostering lifelong connections to families and communities.

INTENTION OF THE HANDBOOK

Users of this handbook will:

- demonstrate and practice literacy activities that promote social and emotional development in young children;
- access an early literacy online screening tool for children in the year before starting kindergarten;
- receive information about:
 - checklists to improve home and/or day care literacy environments;
 - videos that demonstrate how infant massage, lap reading and language play contribute to the development of social, emotional and early literacy skills;
 - quality books for infants/toddlers, library resources, adult and family literacy programs and literacy resources for parents and other adults who live and/or work with young children; and child mental health resources for parents and other adults who live and work with young children.





"TIPS" FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

These "tips" are intended for parents of children ages birth through grade one (1) and other adults who live and work with young children. These practices support our youngest children's social, emotional and literacy development.

For Infants:

- *Start reading as early as birth and in your first language.*
- *Watch for ways your baby communicates with you.*
- *Sing, talk and read to your baby all the time.*
- *Massage your baby gently and often.*
- *Share the importance of reading with the people who take care of your baby.*

For Toddlers:

- *Tell your child stories about him or herself, or you as a child.*
- *Make sure your child can easily reach his or her letters and books.*
- *Make reading a family activity. Give books as gifts. Make books!*
- *Make sure your child sees you read.*

For Preschoolers:

- *Teach your child rhymes and word games.*
- *Make story telling and reading a nap and bedtime ritual.*
- *Give your child chalk, crayons, paints, markers, colored pencils and paper.*
- *Use your public library often – and with the whole family.*

For Kindergartners:

- *Watch for ways your child is getting ready to write.*
- *Write letters and notes to your kindergartner.*
- *Keep talking with – and listening to – your child as often as you can.*
- *Play dominoes, card and board games with your child.*
- *Build a relationship with your child's kindergarten teacher.*

BEGINNING WITH INFANTS

1. Start reading as early as birth and in your first language.

Why? Because babies answer to the tone and beat of your voice.

- Reading is one way to form a healthy and loving attachment with your baby.
- Talk and read to your baby as early as possible.
- *What* you read is less important than *how you act*. That's because your baby answers to the tone and beat of your voice, your eye contact, your smile, and the closeness you create.
- We know children with healthy, loving attachments in the early years develop skills more easily when they reach school.

2. Watch for ways your baby communicates with you.

Why? Because the *give and take* between you and your baby helps your baby's brain grow strong and healthy.

- It is a good sign when your baby can *draw you into his or her world*.
- Answer with enthusiasm when your baby makes a gesture or sound!
- Even before your baby can talk, your baby is communicating with you.

3. Sing, talk and read to your baby all the time.

Why? Because babies understand words before they can say them.

- Frequent talking and reading to your baby is important because the young brain enjoys repetition.
- Between six (6) and twelve (12) months, babies recognize speech sounds. The sounds are repeated in daily interactions with people in their lives.
- Singing, talking and reading helps your baby develop language and get ready for reading.

4. Massage your baby gently and often.

Why? Because your baby's brain is made up of brain cells that are connected to one another by pathways. Early and gentle massage can help develop the pathways for language and learning.

- Touching and massaging helps your baby manage stress. It also makes the emotional bond between you and your baby stronger.
- Gently massage your baby's arms, legs, fingers and toes using baby lotion or oil to calm your baby. Do this after bathing or diapering or before naptime.

5. Share the importance of reading with the people who take care of your baby.

Why? Because high quality care has a lasting effect on children's growth and development.

- If your baby spends time in child care, make sure the caregiver exposes babies to *new words and ideas* from books. Reading is an important way to build vocabulary.
- Bring your baby's favorite books to your baby's caregiver. Ask your baby's caregiver to read them to your baby.
- Ask your baby's caregiver to go to lap reading and story telling programs at the local library.

BEGINNING WITH TODDLERS

1. Tell your child stories about him or herself, or you as a child.

Why? Because *the number of words a child hears through stories and conversation makes a difference in a child's vocabulary* in the early grades. Children have an easier time reading a word if they have already used it in conversation.

- Children love to hear stories about other children, stories about themselves as babies and stories about their parents as children! Stories are important because they create fun, closeness and an understanding of what makes your family unique!
- Tell stories at bedtime, at quiet times, at bath time and during long car or bus rides.

2. Make sure your child can easily reach his or her letters and books.

Why? A low bookshelf, where your child can easily reach his or her books, can create a positive attitude about books.

- Choose letters and books with different textures such as rubber, cloth, board and paper books.
- Have books reachable in the car, the baby carriage, the bathtub, and in other places around the house.
- Help your child label the books with his or her name in large letters. This helps develop a sense of ownership.

3. Make reading a family activity. Give books as gifts. Make books!

Why? When we read to a child, we help him or her learn that letters are distinct from numbers and pictures and that print moves from left to right. (Note: This is not so in the Arabic and Hebrew languages.)

- Knowing about books and letters before entering school gives a child more confidence in learning to read.
- Listening to books and watching each page as it is read brings words and ideas to life.
- Giving books and children's magazines builds a child's personal library.
- Homemade books with photos or drawings also make family memories and a great way to capture and save family stories.

4. Make sure your child sees you read.

Why? A child's ideas and values about reading begin to form as he or she watches others read and write.

- A child wants to be like the important people in his or her life. Sometimes a child imitates reading long before knowing how to read.
- Show your child you are reading cereal boxes, toothpaste tubes, recipes, calendars and other items around the house.
- Fill your home with newspapers, magazines, books, dictionaries, library books and other reading materials.

BEGINNING WITH PRESCHOOLERS

1. Teach your child rhymes and word games.

Why? Words have parts and patterns. *When we help a child hear the parts and patterns of words, we help him or her get ready to read.* Rhymes and word games are important because they teach the sounds of language.

Examples of rhymes and word games

<p>Rhymes:</p> <p>One little flower, one little <i>bee</i>. One little blue bird, high in the <i>tree</i>. One little brown bear smiling at <i>me</i>. One is the number I like, you <i>see</i>.</p> <p>This is my garden. I rake it with <i>care</i>. And then some seeds I put in <i>there</i>. The sun will shine. The rain will <i>fall</i>. And my garden will grow, straight and <i>tall</i>.</p>	<p>Word games with word parts:</p> <p>Adult says: "Say bluebird." Child says: "bluebird" Adult: "Say it again but don't say bird." Child: "blue"</p> <p>Adult: "Say eyebrow." Child: "eyebrow" Adult: "Say it again but don't say eye." Child: "brow"</p>
<p>Word games with smaller word parts:</p> <p>Adult says: "Say pencil." Child says: "pencil" Adult: "Say it again but don't say pen." Child: "cil"</p> <p>Adult: "Say elbow." Child: "elbow" Adult: "Say it again but don't say el." Child: "bow"</p>	<p>Word games with even smaller word parts:</p> <p>Adult says: "Say sit." Child says: "sit" Adult: "Say it again and don't say [s]." Child: "it"</p> <p>Adult: "Say make." Child: "make" Adult: "Say it again but don't say [m]." Child: "ake"</p>

2. Make story telling and reading a nap and bedtime ritual.

Why? Most three (3) to four (4) year olds are eager to learn new words. This means a child can handle being read to *and* retelling a story and answering questions about it.

- When we talk to a child about a story, we help him or her think, compare and solve problems. A child who expresses his or her thoughts in words is showing readiness for kindergarten.

- Hearing the same story time and time again is soothing to a child in the same way a special blanket, stuffed animal or toy is soothing.

3. Give your child chalk, crayons, paints, markers, colored pencils and paper.

Why? Your child can use these tools to express a feeling or thought. This will help you understand your child and support his or her learning.

- Even before your three (3) or four (4) year old goes to school, he or she needs the space and opportunity to scribble, draw and print.
- Your child moves from scribbling to drawing to printing and then on to words, little sentences and stories. These words, little sentences and stories show that your child is beginning to connect the sounds he or she hears to letters.
- Save your child's early words and spellings, sentences and stories. Put them in a box or book and read them with your child.
- Teach your child to print his or her name. This is an important skill and a way for your child to show pride in his or her work.

4. Use your public library often – and with the whole family.

Why? Helping your child understand and use the public library at an early age can encourage his or her interest in reading and begin a life-long friendship with the library.

- Massachusetts public libraries are early learning resource centers for parents and caregivers of young children. The libraries provide a large selection of books, tapes, videos and learning activities at no cost.
- Most libraries will give a library card to a child when he or she can print his or her name.
- To encourage parents to read to their children, some libraries offer *lapsit* and preschool story hours. Other libraries offer family literacy programs such as *Mother Goose Asks "Why?"* This program uses stories and hands-on activities to teach basic science questions to young children and their parents and caregivers.

- Parents who want to improve their own literacy skills can also find information about programs for GED (General Educational Development) diploma programs, English for speakers of other languages and family literacy.
- Ask your librarian to help you find the early literacy screening tool *Get Ready to Read* (www.getreadytoread.org). You can use this tool to find out if your child is developing the necessary skills for learning to read. See the Screening Tool section of this handbook for more information on using the *Get Ready to Read* website.

BEGINNING WITH KINDERGARTNERS

1. Watch for ways your child is getting ready to write.

Why? When your child *scribbles, draws and invents letters and words, he or she is getting ready to take risks in writing.* This will help him or her get ready for first grade.

- Spelling mistakes are a normal part of children's early literacy.
- You can reinforce letter sounds, letter names, letter order and an understanding of print.
- Ask your child to tell you a sentence or short story and have him or her watch your hand as you *slowly* print the words he or she says.
- Save your child's sentences and stories. Put them in a box or book and read them with your child.

2. Write letters and notes to your kindergartner.

Why? Writing to your young child helps him or her see the purpose and power of writing and reading.

- *Model* writing by putting notes under bed pillows or in lunch boxes. Let your child see *you* write!
- Help your child write post cards, thank you notes, shopping lists or short notes.
- Help your child address envelopes and send cards to the important people in his or her life.

3. Keep talking with – and listening to – your child as often as you can.

Why? Because teachers report that children's ability to communicate and follow directions are the most important skills to have upon entering school.

- Teach your child to use his or her words to express his or her needs and wants.
- Teach your child to be a good listener by modeling how to listen.
- An important measure of a child's ability to succeed in school and in life is his or her language skills.

4. Play dominoes, card and board games with your child.

Why? Because kindergarten teachers report that children who take turns and share are ready to learn.

- Dominoes, card and board games help children learn to follow directions, play with others and take turns.
- Parents, grandparents and older siblings can model these important readiness skills.
- These games also help children develop counting, vocabulary and thinking skills.

5. Build a relationship with your child's kindergarten teacher.

Why? Kindergarten is a critical year for your child because it gets your child ready for first grade when formal reading instruction begins. When you work closely with your child's kindergarten teacher, early learning difficulties and remedies can be identified more quickly.

- Attend school open house and parent/teacher conferences.
- Call your child's teacher with any questions or concerns you have.
- Share this handbook and its resource lists with your child's teacher.
- Tell your child's teacher about any home issues that might impact your child's school day. These issues might include, for example, illness or death of a family member.
- Help your child pick out holiday and thank you cards for his or her teacher. Better yet, help him or her make a card.
- Volunteer in your child's classroom.

SCREENING TOOL

The National Center for Learning Disabilities designed *Get Ready to Read* to build the literacy skills of preschool children. The two components of *Get Ready to Read* are a literacy screening tool and skill-building activities. Both are available free on the *Get Ready to Read* website: www.getreadytoread.org. Scroll to: Screening Tool.

The screening tool and literacy activities can be used by parents and caregivers, child care providers and early educators to help preschool children acquire important pre-reading skills. Printed versions of the tool can be obtained online or by calling Pearson Early Learning toll free at 1-800-526-9907.



CHECKLISTS

The *Get Ready To Read* website also offers parents and caregivers, child care providers and early educators a checklist to help create environments for children that are literacy-rich. The checklists are provided in both English and Spanish and can be obtained online at www.getreadytoread.org or by calling *National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)* toll free at 1-888-575-7373.



VIDEOS

The following videos that address early development and early literacy may be purchased online:

- ❖ “The First Years Last Forever,” 1997, The Reiner Foundation - I am Your Child Campaign (www.parentsaction.org or www.amazon.com)
- ❖ “Ten Things Every Child Needs,” 1997, The Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation, WTTW Chicago and the Chicago Production Center (www.amazon.com) (Please note: This video, no longer available through the McCormick Tribune Foundation, may also be obtained by calling 1-800-756-8792.)
- ❖ “Ready To Learn,” Dorling Kindersley (www.parentsaction.org)
- ❖ “Talking and Play” and “Talking and Books” (www.wlearning.com)

The American Psychological Association Magination Press website (www.maginationpress.com) is another source for books and videos about psychology, mental health, and development.

CHILDREN'S BOOK LISTS

BOOKS THAT BUILD LITERACY WITH LOVE

The following books support social and emotional development in young children. The list is reprinted with permission from Betty S. Bardige and Marilyn M. Segal, authors of “*Building Literacy With Love.*” Titles marked with an asterisk (*) are also available in Spanish.

INFANTS (Birth - Age 1)

Ain't No Mountain High Enough - Charles R. Smith, Jr.
Baby Faces - Margaret Miller
How Sweet it is to be Loved By You - Charles R. Smith, Jr.
My Girl - Charles R. Smith, Jr.
Sugar Pie Honey Bunch - Brian Holland, Charles R. Smith, Jr., Lamont Dozier, Eddie Holland

TODDLERS (Ages 1 – 3)

Ain't No Mountain High Enough - Charles R. Smith, Jr.
The Daddy Book - Todd Parr
*The Little Engine That Could** - Watty Piper
My Daddy and I... - Eloise Greenfield
*The Rainbow Fish** - Marcus Pfister
The Runaway Bunny - Margaret Wise Brown
Ten, Nine, Eight - Molly Bang

PRESCHOOLERS (Ages 3 – 5)

Abby - Jeanette Caine
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day - Judith Viorst
Amazing Grace - Mary Hoffman and Caroline Binch
Are You My Mother? - P.D. Eastman
Best Friends - Miriam Cohen
The Big Box - Toni and Slade Morrison
Bright Eyes, Brown Skin - Cheryl Willis Hudson and Bernadette G. Ford
A Chair for My Mother - Vera Williams
Eat Up, Gemma - Sarah Hayes
Even if I Did Something Awful? - Barbara Shook Hazen
The Feelings Book - Todd Parr
Go Away, Big Green Monster! - Ed Emberley
Grandpa's Face - Eloise Greenfield
Honey, I Love - Eloise Greenfield
Mean Soup - Betsy Everitt

The Mommy Book - Todd Parr
No, David! - David Shannon
On Monday When It Rained - Cherryl Kachenmeister
Over the Moon: An Adoption Tale – Karen Katz
Pet Shows - Ezra Jack Keats
Peter's Chair - Ezra Jack Keats
*The Rainbow Fish** - Marcus Pfister
Runaway Bunny - Margaret Wise Brown
*Tell Me a Story, Mama** - Angela Johnson
There's a Nightmare in My Closet – Mercer Mayer
Tight Times - Barbara Shook Hazen
Tikki Tikki Tembo - Arlene Mosel
Too Many Tamales - Gary Soto
The Trip - Ezra Jack Keats
Where the Wild Things Are – Maurice Sendak
Whistle for Willie - Ezra Jack Keats
*William's Doll** - Charlotte Zolotow

The following books also support social and emotional development in young children. Parents and staff from the Department of Early Education and Care compiled the list.

Ages 0 – 4

Goodnight Moon (for Bedtime Routines) - Margaret Wise Brown
Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! - Mo Willems

Ages 3 – 8

Proud of Our Feelings - Lindsay Leghorn
Guess How Much I Love You - Sam McBratney
Love You Forever - Robert Munsch
I'm Gonna Like Me: Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem - Jamie Lee Curtis

LITERACY LINKS AND BOOKS FOR ADULTS

The following links and books contain information about learning to read for all ages. The lists are reprinted with permission from the *Reach Out and Read* national office, Somerville, Massachusetts (www.reachoutandread.org). The U.S. Department of Education (www.ed.gov), the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (www.acf.hhs.gov), and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (www.naeyc.org) also have helpful websites.

LINKS

- ❖ American Library Association - Born to Read: How to Raise a Reader www.ala.org
- ❖ America's Literacy Directory www.literacydirectory.org
- ❖ The Annie E. Casey Foundation/KIDSCOUNT www.aecf.org/kidscount
- ❖ The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy www.barbarabushfoundation.com
- ❖ Books for Kids www.booksforkidsfoundation.org
- ❖ Center for the Book/Library of Congress www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook
- ❖ Children's Defense Fund www.childrensdefense.org
- ❖ First Book www.firstbook.org
- ❖ High Scope Educational Research Foundation www.highscope.org
- ❖ International Reading Association www.reading.org
- ❖ Jim Trelease Home Page www.trelease-on-reading.com
- ❖ Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium www.doe.mass.edu/familylit
- ❖ National Center for Family Literacy www.famlit.org
- ❖ National Center for Learning Disabilities - Get Ready to Read! www.getreadytoread.org
- ❖ National Coalition for Literacy www.national-coalition-literacy.org
- ❖ National Education Association www.nea.org/readacross
- ❖ National Institute for Literacy www.nifl.gov
- ❖ Reading is Fundamental www.rif.org
- ❖ Zero to Three zerotothree.org

BOOKS ABOUT READING TO CHILDREN FOR ADULTS

- ❖ *Reading Magic: Why reading aloud to our children will change their lives forever* by Mem Fox, 2001
- ❖ *Read it Aloud! A parent's guide to sharing books with young children* by Monty and Laurie Joy Haas, 2000
- ❖ *Choosing Books for Children: a commonsense guide* by Betsy Hearne and Deborah Stevenson, 1999
- ❖ *Valerie and Walter's Best Books for Children: a lively opinionated guide* by Valerie V. Lewis and Walter M. Mayes, 1999.
- ❖ *New York Times Parent's Guide* by Eden Ross Lipson, 2000
- ❖ *The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease, 2001

ADULT AND FAMILY LITERACY RESOURCES

Adult literacy education refers to educational services for adults ranging from basic literacy including English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and numeracy to high school equivalency (GED) and adult diploma programs (ADP).

In Massachusetts, the Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) unit of the Massachusetts Department of Education oversees and works to improve no-cost adult literacy education services. ACLS funds a broad network of programs provided by local school systems, community-based agencies, community colleges, libraries, volunteer organizations and correctional facilities.

Individuals seeking to enroll in one of Massachusetts' adult literacy programs can find a program by visiting the ACLS online directory (acls.doemass.org/pAbeDirectoryHome) or calling the toll free Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline at 1-800-447-8844.

EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Below is a list of early childhood mental resources, particularly organizations and support networks for parents and families with children birth to age seven (7). The Departments of Early Education and Care, Education, Mental Health, and Public Health are committed to the expansion of and further development of resources for the social and emotional development and literacy skill foundation in early childhood. These agencies may be accessed through their websites:

Department of Early Education and Care: www.eec.state.ma.us

Department of Education: www.doe.mass.edu

Department of Mental Health: www.mass.gov/dmh

Department of Public Health: www.mass.gov/dph

<p>❖ Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PAL) Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PAL) is an organization that promotes a strong voice for families of children and adolescents with mental health needs. PAL advocates for supports, treatment and policies that enable families to live in their communities in an environment of stability and respect. PAL focuses on helping parents on a one-to-one basis through the establishment of family support groups.</p>	<p>www.ppal.net</p> <p>59 Temple Place Suite 664 Boston, MA 02111 617-542-7860</p> <p>Parent Resource Network: 1-866-815-8122 (toll free)</p>
<p>❖ United Way Parent Line Find information, referral services and support groups for parents and families. If you are looking for a support group, United Way Parent Line will help you find one.</p>	<p>1-800-231-4377 (toll free)</p>
<p>❖ Federation for Children with Special Needs The Federation is a center for parents and parent organizations to work together on behalf of children with special needs and their families. It provides workshops and individual assistance to families, schools and community organizations about the importance of family involvement in education. It is a resource for information and referral services for families dealing with children who have disabilities.</p>	<p>www.fcsn.org</p> <p>1135 Tremont Street Suite 420 Boston, MA 02120 1-800-331-0688 (toll free)</p>
<p>❖ Community Support Line (Department of Public Health) The Division for Perinatal, Early Childhood, and Special Health Need's Community Support Line offers information, technical assistance and referral for families with children with special health needs.</p>	<p>http://www.mass.gov/dph/fch/community_support.htm</p> <p>Community Support Line: 1-800-882-1435 (toll free)</p>
<p>❖ Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health The Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health is a national organization run by families aiming to better the lives of other families who have children with mental health needs. They are advocates at the national level for the rights of these children and families.</p>	<p>www.ffcmh.org</p> <p>1101 King Street Suite 420 Alexandria, VA 22314 1-800-537-0446 (toll free)</p>

<p>❖ <i>Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health</i> This center is committed to serving families who have children with mental and behavioral disorders. It is a tool to provide effective services to those who need it.</p>	<p>http://rtc.pdx.edu 1600 SW 4th Avenue Suite 900 Portland, OR 97201 503-725-4040</p>
<p>❖ <i>National Mental Health Association: Children's Mental Health Matters</i> The Children's Mental Health Matters campaign is an advocacy group working to educate teachers, primary care providers and families on children's mental health needs.</p>	<p>www.nmha.org/children/children_mh_matters/index.cfm 1-800-969-NMHA (6642) (toll free)</p>
<p>❖ <i>American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry</i> The AACAP website is a resource for parents and families trying to understand behavioral, developmental, emotional and mental disorders affecting families. It contains information on child and adolescent psychiatry and fact sheets for parents and caregivers.</p>	<p>www.aacap.org 3615 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20016-3007 202-966-7300</p>
<p>❖ <i>Experience Journal: Depression (Children's Hospital Boston)</i> The Experience Journal websites are set up to assist children and their families who have been tackling childhood mental or emotional disorders. It helps families connect with other families who share similar experience and provides resources through the Department of Psychiatry at Children's Hospital Boston.</p>	<p>www.experiencejournal.com/depression Children's Hospital Boston 300 Longwood Avenue Boston, MA 02114 617-355-6000</p>

BOOKMARKS

The following pages include the "tips" for parents and caregivers of young children in reproducible bookmark format.



Tips for parents and
caregivers of infants

Start reading as early as
birth and in your first
language.

Watch for ways your baby
communicates with you.

Sing, talk and read to your
baby all the time.

Massage your baby gently
and often.

Share the importance of
reading with the people
who take care of your
baby.

Courtesy of the Massachusetts
Department of Mental Health
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Tips for parents and
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Tips for parents and
caregivers of
toddlers

Tell your child stories
about him or herself, or
you as a child.

Make sure your child can
easily reach his or her
letters and books.

Make reading a family
activity. Give books as
gifts. Make books!

Make sure your child
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Tips for parents and
caregivers of
preschoolers

Teach your child rhymes
and word games.

Make story telling and
reading a nap and
bedtime ritual.

Give your child chalk,
crayons, paints, markers,
colored pencils and
paper.

Use your public library
often – and with the
whole family.

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Tips for parents and
caregivers of
kindergartners

Watch for ways your child
is getting ready to write.

Write letters and notes to
your kindergartner.

Keep talking with – and
listening to – your child as
often as you can.

Play dominoes, card and
board games with your
child.

Build a relationship with
your child's kindergarten
teacher.

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A Chair for My Mother
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day
Bear on a Bike
Brown Bear Brown Bear, What Do You See?

Promoting

Ferdinand the Bull
Goodnight Gorilla
Green Eggs and Ham
Mama, Do You Love Me?

Social and Emotional Health

Leo the Late Bloomer
Make Way for Ducklings
The Little Prince
The Penderwicks

Through Early Literacy

The Snowy Day
Stellaluna
Tacky the Penguin
Where the Wild Things Are