

Read to Me

A newsletter for families and others who care about the future of young people.

Volume 2, Issue 1
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Special Points of Interest in this newsletter:

- Fun in the Kitchen
- Unlocking Clues to Printed Language
- Teaching Your Child to Write
- Writing Leads to Reading



Fun in the Kitchen



Following is a simple recipe that can engage young children. This helps build motor skills and coordination.

PRETZEL PADDLES

Utensils:

Waxed paper
Measuring cups
Measuring spoons
Thin metal spatula
Storage container with lid

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup reduced-sugar chocolate-flavored puffed corn cereal and/or sweetened fruit-flavored round toasted cereal
- 2 Tablespoons creamy peanut butter
- 4 pretzel rods

How to make it:

Lay the waxed paper on the counter. Spread desired cereal on waxed paper. Set aside.

Using the metal spatula, spread peanut butter in a thin layer over half (one end) of each pretzel rod. Roll each rod in the cereal so it sticks to the peanut butter. Eat right away or put logs in an airtight container and store at room temperature for up to 1 day. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving:

107 calories, 5 g total fat (1 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 195 mg sodium, 14 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro

2226 Children Enrolled in Imagination Library

In November, 2226 young children in our area will receive an age and developmentally appropriate book in the mail. During the past two years over 45,000 wonderful children's books have been mailed to the homes of enrolled children. The books are free to the families. The only 'catch' is that the parents need to take time to read it out loud to their child.

United Way of Southwest Minnesota wants children to succeed. Research shows that one of the best ways to help build vocabulary and positively affect brain development in young children is for parents to regularly read out loud to their children.

Imagination Library costs United Way of Southwest Minnesota \$30 per enrolled child, per year. This is the actual cost of the books plus bulk library rate postage. This is paid locally through contributions to the annual United Way campaign and by other special underwriters like several area Rotary Clubs, other service clubs and interested individuals.

Contributors and underwriters of the program are welcome and appreciated at any time. Contributions can be sent to United Way of Southwest Minnesota, P.O. Box 41, Marshall, MN 56258.

Following are some ways to make reading to young children fun!

With Infants:

- Help them touch books and turn the pages (talk about what you see).
- Bring books everywhere (car, purse, stroller)
- Read and play with books every day (make it a fun and special time)
- Point to interesting pictures as you read (Describe them. Play peek-a-boo with the pictures by covering and uncovering them with your hand)

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United Way
of Southwest Minnesota

Please keep your address current with United Way of Southwest Minnesota.



Imagination Library books are mailed out at bulk library rates and **can not be forwarded** by the post office.

Call us (507-929-2273) or e-mail us (unitedway@unitedwayswmn.org) right away if your address changes. Even though our office changes the database immediately upon notification, it takes 6-8 weeks for address changes to go into effect at the publisher.

BITS OF UNDERSTANDING

X Marks the Spot! Clues to unlocking the treasure of printed language.

Cereal boxes. Books. Street signs. T-shirts.



Printed words are everywhere in your child's world! But what do all those letters and numbers mean to him? For a young child, figuring out printed language is like following a map to a secret treasure. Every discovery builds understanding....and every step brings him closer to

the priceless rewards of reading!

Connect the dots with reading

The first mystery that your child will unravel is that printed words have meaning - the symbols on the paper correspond to the words he hears. Reading out loud with your child is a great way to help him make this connection. It also unlocks the door to countless other discoveries, including:

- **Print is different from pictures.** Explain how pictures can help to show what the story tells with letters and words. Point to the picture of the dog, and then point to the word "dog" as you say "dog."
- **Stories start at the beginning.** Point out and read the different parts of the book, including the front cover, title, page numbers, and back cover.
- **Words on the page are words you say.** By pointing to the words as you read them, and emphasizing the individual sounds of letters, you show that printed words correspond to spoken words and sounds.



All signs point to success

Books are just one way to keep your child on the trail of word awareness and meaning. Even if you don't have a book on hand, there are lots of ways to help your child begin to notice print all around:

- **Make it a game.** Point out and read printed language wherever it appears - from magazines and posters to websites and outdoor signs like billboards and storefronts.
- **See, say, and explain.** As you point out words and letters around you, use them. "I see a "B" on that sign. Your name, Bob, starts with B too!"



So, be your child's guide! The more you read and play around with words, the quicker he'll discover that words have meaning. And from there, it's only time before he reaps the rewards of reading, writing and communicating.

BOOKS

*In our minds we can play,
As we read a book, any time of the day.*

*With words on a page,
We can dream at any age*

*To another world you can go.
A boy or girl who's reading will know.*

*Then with this knowledge you can find,
People, places, ideas! In any old book, with just
your mind.*

Thanks to Michelle Clemens for creating this poem especially for our newsletter. Michelle and her family appreciate receiving the wonderful books from the Imagination Library sponsored in this area by United Way of Southwest Minnesota.

Ways to Make Reading Fun - Continued from Page 1 -
With Toddlers and Preschoolers:

- Ask your child to point to pictures or to name things on the pages.
- Have him tell the story (or leave out words to well known stories so he can fill them in).
- Share new words (use the pictures to help explain a new word. Ask a question to make sure she understands).
- Talk about the story (ask questions about what happened before, what is happening now and what might happen on the next page. Pause frequently to let your child talk.)

BITS OF UNDERSTANDING



Fun-etics The Art of Teaching Your Child to Write

In the schoolhouse, learning to write goes hand in hand with blackboards, pencils, and erasers. But in your own house, things like pudding, puzzles, and play are the essential teaching tools.

Learning to write starts long before your child ever sets foot in school. Before your child can pick up a pencil, she needs physical skills (fine motor development, hand-eye coordination, and muscle strength). She also needs to understand that words and letters have meaning.

The Fun-damentals

Smear and Play

For babies, it's about learning to hold and play with books and objects, and feeling good.

- **Hold her on your lap while you write.** Tell her what you are doing. As she gets older, show her how to use thick, nontoxic markers and crayons.
- **Let her hold it.** Give your baby safe things to grasp (fingers), bang (spoons), pick up (rattles), and yes, smear (yogurt).



Scribble and Pretend

For toddlers, it's time to connect writing to real life.

- **Pretend write.** Play "grocery store" or "restaurant." Have your child "write" lists or food orders.
- **Move those muscles.** Use different materials and tools. Squeeze (sponges), pour (water), spread (nontoxic finger paint), grasp (silverware).

Write Away

Your preschooler probably understands the purpose of writing. Help her form and recognize letters and spell through everyday activities.

- **Write for real.** Have her draw a picture and "sign her name" on thank-you notes or birthday cards.
- **Build strong hands.** Let her practice cutting (using safety scissors), tracing, or working on simple mazes and puzzles.

Remember, instead of critiquing your child's work, be playful and enjoy her effort. Be sure to point out the importance of printed words and give your child lots of opportunities to use her hands and be creative. You will see that the results are, well, **fun-tastic!**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/142> has information on how writing leads to reading.

Learn ways to help your child develop writing skills with confidence at <http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=629>

<http://www.rif.org/parents/articles/encouragingyoungwriters.msp> offers some great ways to encourage young writers.

Learn more about the skills along the path of writing at <http://www.meddybemps.com/7.22.html>

Write in Front of Your Child, from Born Learning http://bits.civitas.org/content/sept_07/notepads_bits.pdf

Recipes for Learning, from Born Learning http://bits.civitas.org/content/sept_07/recipes_bits_single.pdf



Born Learning (www.bornlearning.org) is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child's first teacher, Born Learning education materials are made available through the efforts of United Way, United Way Success by 6 and Civitas.



United Way of Southwest Minnesota

109 South Fifth Street Suite 300
P.O. Box 41
Marshall, MN 56258

Phone: 507-929-2273
Fax: 507-929-2274, please call first
Email: unitedway@unitedwayswmn.org

This is a special newsletter for families who are enrolled in Imagination Library.



Writing Leads to Reading

This article from the National PTA features easy ways to make writing a part of your child's daily routine, even before entering school.

Children often can read and write in their own ways before entering school. Writing activities can be a good way to begin reading because children often scribble and write before they read. Many can explain their scribbles as if it were writing.

SCRIBBLING

Encourage scribbling. Ask your child to read it aloud, or have your child tell you a story and draw pictures to go with it. You can write the words under the pictures. Children who "write" their own

stories want to learn to read so they can tell what they've written. This is good for their self-esteem.

SKYWRITING

"Write" a letter in the air with your hand or a stick. Ask your child to name it and "write" it after you.

BACKTRACING

Let your child trace a letter on your back. Guess what it is. Then trace one for your child to feel and name. Young children can learn that reading and writing are useful as well as fun. Let your child see you read and write.



OTHER WRITING ACTIVITIES:

- Write down a recipe
- Flip through magazines
- Put dates on the family calendar
- Look up phone numbers in the phone book
- Write down a message
- Make shopping lists
- Read street signs out loud
- Have your children sign their names on greeting cards
- Look through the TV listings
- Read menus



United Way of Southwest Minnesota is an independent, local organization working to create lasting changes in people's lives and the communities in Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Yellow Medicine and western Redwood Counties of Minnesota.

Learn more about United Way of Southwest Minnesota at www.unitedwayswmn.org
While you're there, sign up for our free e-newsletter

**NEW: Register for Imagination Library online at www.unitedwayswmn.org!
Also on our web page is the Parent Tool Kit - check it out!**