

What is Literacy?

Literacy is the ability to develop and communicate understanding in a variety of ways, including speaking, listening, reading, writing and viewing.



Supporting Literacy at Every Age

Families, caregivers, and community members are children's first literacy teachers. Through positive interactions with the important people in their lives, young children learn about communicating through speaking, listening, reading, drawing, and writing. There are a number of simple, but important, things parents and community members can do to support literacy in early childhood.

www.maine.gov/doe/literacy-for-me



What is *Literacy for ME*?

Literacy for ME is a statewide effort led by the Maine Department of Education with involvement by community partners to help all Maine citizens develop strong literacy skills.

How to Get Involved

If you would like to be involved with *Literacy for ME*, here are some things you can do.

- Share this brochure with family and friends. Encourage them to support literacy as well.
- Visit the *Literacy for ME* website for more literacy resources - www.maine.gov/doe/literacy-for-me
- Contact the Maine Department of Education for additional information at 207-624-6600.



Contact Your Local Partner

Insert your local contact information here

Tips for Building Literacy With Children



Early Literacy: Birth to Preschool



An Initiative of the Maine Department of Education
www.maine.gov/doe/literacy-for-me

Early Literacy

Birth–Preschool



Families, caregivers, and communities are important to helping young children increase early literacy skills. At this age, children are learning new words every day, discovering how books work, and experimenting with drawing and writing, even before they actually “read” a word on a page or form letters correctly. Adults are role models children of this age follow to learn how to “be literate.” Here are some ways adults can support early literacy growth.

Talk with young children and encourage them to use language.

- Talk about what children are doing, seeing and learning. Answer their questions and actively listen.
- Talk about what words mean. Play games like “I Spy” to learn more words.
- Use words that teach about conversation, like, “I’m listening to what you’re saying,” or “I like talking with you.”
- Play with letters and words by rhyming and thinking of words that begin with the same letter.

Read aloud to children every day.

- Start with shorter reading sessions and gradually increase reading time as children’s attention grows.
- Use voices, read with expression and have fun.
- Read stories and informational books about topics in which children are interested.
- Talk about the story and pictures as you read.
- Visit your local library to borrow books and participate in story time.

Encourage young children to draw and write.

- Have them make pictures or “write” their own stories, cards and notes.
- Ask them to tell you what they wrote. Point to individual scribbles and ask them to read their words.
- Help children begin to recognize letters and the sounds they make. Point out the names of the letters in their name.
- Play with clay to strengthen hand muscles — this improves fine motor skills.