

# Celebrate NATIONAL FAMILY LITERACY DAY 2013 - NOVEMBER 1

Addressing the literacy needs of young children involves families. Newspapers provide news and information, relevant to children and adults who live in the communities served by newspapers. Try these activities with your family:

## Three Easy Ways to Build Literacy With the Newspaper

Parents can capitalize on teaching moments that happen spontaneously, using newspapers to build children's literacy and support classroom learning without having their parent-child discussions seem like homework.

**Talk, talk, talk.** Whether your child is a preschooler or a teenager, talking—having conversations—is the best way to build oral language skills that enhance reading and writing. With very young children, describing what they see in the newspaper exposes them to new words and increases print awareness. Take a picture walk through the newspaper, pointing out people, places and things, shapes and colors and anything else that engages your child. Expand on what your child describes by adding details. "Yes, that fire truck is red. Do you also see that it has a ladder attached to one side? What do you think that's for?" With elementary school students, try reading stories aloud. When they come to a new word, take some time rereading the passage to discover clues to the word's meaning. Young readers can look for beginnings and endings to the words for clues and offer any words they know that look or sound like a new word. They can also look up the word in print or online dictionaries.

With your adolescents, **look for stories** they might find interesting and ask what they think about the information. Then encourage them to tell you what they learned and what they think about the information and how it might affect them and others. Encourage students of any age to talk about what they read.

**Write, write, write.** Newspapers offer examples of writing for a purpose, primarily to inform. Point out reasons for writing, using newspapers as guides. Work together to read and prepare recipes. Discuss the steps involved and any questions that come to mind as you follow the directions. Read a news story or editorial, column or letter on the opinion pages and ask your child to help you compose a response. When you watch a TV show or movie, or attend a local performance, write a review, then compare your writing with any review in the newspaper. Help your child recognize that writing is a powerful way to communicate.

## Boost Health and Literacy with the Newspaper

Children of all ages (and adults, too) learn better when they're healthy. The newspaper is filled with the latest scientific discoveries that help us live our lives in a healthier way. But the newspaper also offers opportunities for parents to interact with their children around the subject of health while building literacy skills.

Here are a few activities to try:

**Eat to live and learn.** Today's healthy plate ([www.choosemyplate.gov/](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/)) includes vegetables, fruits, grains and proteins. Ask your child to help clip foods that appear in grocery ads, coupons and recipes and organize them in different categories on a "healthy plate." With your child's help, write your grocery list. This lets your child see writing for a purpose. Conduct more research so your children learn about the number of servings they should aim for in each category.

**Keep your mind and body active.** Look for opportunities to take part in physical fitness with your child, whether a charity walk-a-thon or other event that promotes active participation. Talk about any cause served by the event and ask what it means to participate. How long is the event? How do you sign up? How would you train for it? What clothing would you wear?

The opening of a park, museum exhibit or art gallery and fun events, such as hay rides and festivals, inspire walking and talking about what you're doing and seeing and build health and literacy. And such activities build a sense of community.

For more information contact your local newspaper:

## EXPANDING the Words You Know with the Newspaper

Word study helps children understand what they read and recognize the writer's purpose. Parents can use the newspaper to introduce children to new words and the meaning of familiar words. Use the words you discuss at every opportunity and draw attention to them when you hear others use them or when you see them in print.

**Fun with words.** Play with words. Work together on word puzzles and games in the newspaper. Pick a word in the newspaper and have your children use the letters to make as many words as they can or have them think of rhyming words. Understanding rhyme is an early step toward learning the sounds (or speech) that children will need to understand words in print.

**How is the word used?** Find a picture in the newspaper (advertisements provide good ones) and ask your child to name items and people shown. Deepen and extend your child's knowledge by asking her to tell you how the item is used or what the person does. When your child says, "a fireman puts out fires and saves people from burning houses," she demonstrates a deeper understanding of the word "fireman" than by simply naming that person's occupation.

**Choose words.** Read a story of interest with your child. Circle a few words in the headline or story (particularly verbs) and ask your child to substitute words with the same meaning. Do the synonyms make a difference in the meaning of the story or its impact? Talk about whether the new words have the same meaning as the original words and why the writer chose the ones he used. Carry the activity further by asking your child to think of words with opposite meanings (antonyms) for the circled words.

**Specialized words** (Tier 2 words). Specific sections of the newspaper provide academic vocabulary that increase your child's learning about school subjects. Share a story about the president or governor vetoing a bill. Talk about what veto means and use it in conversations—if necessary, use a dictionary or look up the word online. Extend the conversation by helping your child describe how a bill becomes a law. A story about electing a candidate can lead to a discussion about voting and the election process.

## Newspapers Build Numeracy

**Literacy and numeracy**—the ability to understand and work with numbers—go hand in hand. Applying math to our everyday lives often involves reading and related skills, such as comparing and contrasting, sequencing, vocabulary and comprehension. Newspapers show children that math helps people solve problems and that our world is filled with numbers.

**Read it. Make it. Eat it.** Have fun with recipes published in your newspapers and practice math concepts. With younger children, read the list of ingredients out loud and let your preschooler help you measure. Use terms such as "bigger," "smaller," "more" and "less" as you work. With older children, "double" or "halve" the recipe and measure ingredients, naming what you use, such as teaspoon, tablespoon, cup, pint and quart. Serve the dish to the whole family.

**Graph it.** Chart it. Master it. Charts and graphs are visual ways to organize information found in print and online newspapers. Follow a favorite sports team or player on scoreboards or box scores. Read TV and movie charts and ads. Plot the weather. Track the way council members vote on an issue, such as opening a park. Have your children create a chart or survey to get responses about something in the news. Ask your child to explain what the chart shows or says.

## NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION

## GO DIGITAL: Literacy, News and the Internet

Many newspapers offer electronic or replica editions, and stories or parts of stories appear on websites. Use key words to SEARCH back issues and use ARCHIVES on e-editions to dig into past editions of the newspapers.

Research conducted through your area newspaper's archives supports parents' and children's efforts to find words used by writers and explore topics of concern in the community.

Newspapers' websites expand the news cycle, updating news 24/7, often include videos and photo galleries, podcasts and blogs that require 21st century skills.

Here are some ways to connect the newspaper, your child and technology to build stronger reading and literacy skills.

**Compare and contrast.** Find a story of interest to your child in your local newspaper. What sources does the newspaper cite? Check the sources. Go online to look for stories on the same topic. Do the online resources offer the same or similar information? How many sources does the child need to verify the news reported in your newspaper?

**Expand your knowledge.** What are some topics that really interest your child? Can you find a story in the newspaper that addresses those interests? When you come across a topic, such as weather, local politics, school news, music or food, encourage your child to investigate further using the Internet. Talk about any new information he discovers.

**Build your digital vocabulary.** Search stories about new media for terms, such as social media, blog, podcast, slideshow and tablet. Keep a list of what you read and understand. Post the list on your refrigerator or on a word list kept in a notebook or on the wall in your house. Talk about how the words apply to your lives at home, school and the workplace.

## Learning about Social Studies from the News

Newspapers cover geography, government, economics, sociology and politics, all areas of study integrated into school subjects. Reading news helps children build knowledge critical to understanding the world.

**Tell me more.** Invite your child to look at weather pages and name sections of your community, state, nation and world featured on those pages. Ask: What can you tell about seasons from what you see and read throughout the paper, in weather, ads, photos and other sections?

**A look back.** What can you learn about the past from reading the newspaper? Look for stories that tell about an historic event or provide background about history to explain better why something current is taking place. Historic events, explored in newspapers, present "teachable moments." Suggest that your child look back and conduct additional research to learn more about the past when an historic event makes the news.

**How does that work?** The newspaper includes information about Congress and the president, the governor and legislature and the school board, city council and county commissioners that can provide insights to how decisions are made. Have your child follow news about an issue that affects her and/ or the actions of a government official to better understand his or her role. Websites can help track the progress of bills. Don't hesitate to ask a media specialist or teacher for help.



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