



where great stories begin™

LEYENDO JUNTOS READING TOGETHER

SCHOOL READINESS

HOW CAN I HELP LATINO PATIENTS GET THEIR CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL?

Latino children (even from English-speaking homes) enter kindergarten significantly behind in school readiness skills.¹

They are not just behind in knowing letters, counting, and knowing colors. They are often behind in the language skills that they need for future academic success in school. These skills include knowing:

- Uncommon words and complex concepts (e.g. autumn, center, participate, author, illustrator, experiment, or upon, as in, “Once upon a time”)
- Words’ relationship to other words and metaphorical uses
- Various meanings of words or different uses for common words
- Norms of written language (e.g., when you write you should not use slang, you should not repeat the same word in a sentence, etc.)
- Social conventions (e.g., in school the teacher asks students questions to which she already knows the answers!)²

These skills are learned and reinforced when parents read aloud with their children. Therefore, it is important that we be more explicit in the way that we provide anticipatory guidance about literacy development in Latino families.³

What to say to parents to help them promote language and literacy development at home:

- Talk about traditions
- Tell family stories
- Sing traditional songs
- Tell poems. Make them up!

“ WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT HOW TO ENHANCE LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENT AND HOW TO MAKE JOINT READING: A TIME TO LEARN WORDS AND CONCEPTS A TIME TO MAKE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN BOOKS AND THE WORLD A TIME TO HAVE A CONVERSATION A TIME TO LINK READING, LEARNING, AND ENJOYMENT. ”

—Nonie Lesaux, Ph.D.

Continued on reverse

www.reachoutandread.org

reachoutandread

- Recite sayings and riddles
- Ask your older child to tell *you* a story!
- Play with language. Point out:
 - ◊ Different ways to say the same thing, like “icy” and “freezing”.
 - ◊ Words with different meanings, like “mouse”—computer and the animal
 - ◊ Beginning sounds and end sounds: “shower”
 - ◊ Words that sound similar: “hear” and “here”, words that rhyme: “car” and “star”
 - ◊ Words that are the same in English and Spanish
 - ◊ Make it a game you play in the car, in the store, while you wait in line, anywhere!
- Encourage development of writing (scribbling)
- Praise emergent literacy behaviors
 - ◊ You can model this in the clinic: For example, when you see kids scribbling on the exam table paper to help pass the time you can say something like, “are you writing your name? Tell me about your picture.” Another way is when a baby/toddler is holding a book and looking at it intently—as they often do! You can say something like, “He’s reading his book! What he’s doing is a first step to learning to read!”
- Make reading together a habit!

Show parents HOW to make reading interactive and fun by modeling book sharing

- Give the book at the BEGINNING of the visit!
- Ask the child lots of questions (Where is the...? What’s that? What’s happening on this page? How is the... feeling? What do you think is going to happen next?)
- Talk about the pictures
- Relate book/pictures to child’s life (e.g. The mouse made a mess! Do you ever make a mess at home?)
- Emphasize the rhymes and alliterations
- Count objects
- Point out letters
- Name the colors and shapes
- Use different voices for different characters



This really only takes a minute.

Plus, it helps with your developmental surveillance! And it’s fun!

(1) Para nuestros niños Expanding and Improving Early Education for Hispanics Main Report. National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics. March 2007 P.15

(2) Nonnie Lessaux Reach Out and Read Leadership Meeting Boston September, 2009

(3) For more information see also “El gusto” of Language and Literacy Development by Jeanette Betancourt, Ed.D., in Latino Early Literacy Development: Strategies for Lifelong Learning and Success Edited By Antonia Lopez. National Council of La Raza 2005. P 17-28.