

LESSON 1 » TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD, PART 1



I can help my child be a reader!

LESSONS FOR PARENTS IN SUPPORTING EARLY LITERACY





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*Whatever you do, wherever you are,
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TRAINER'S NOTES

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?

1. Parents will learn:
 - why it is important to talk with children
 - when to talk with children
 - what to talk about with children
 - why it is important to read with children
 - when to read with children
2. Parents will increase the number of times they talk with their children each day.
3. Parents will increase the number of times they read with their children each day.

THIS LESSON LINKS TO THESE IOWA EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

Infant and Toddler Early Learning Standards

Area 4 – Communication, Language, and Literacy

4.1: Language Understanding and Use

4.2: Early Literacy

Preschool Early Learning Standards

Area 10 – Communication, Language, and Literacy

10.1: Language Understanding and Use

10.2: Early Literacy



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THIS LESSON LINKS TO EVERY CHILD READS MODULES FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROVIDERS:

Every Child Reads: Birth to Three

Module III (Engaging in conversation with infants and toddlers)

Module IV (Reading with infants and toddlers using interactive strategies)

Every Child Reads: Three to Five Years

Language Module, Principle 1

(Children need to have many experiences and interactions to develop background knowledge and language skills.)

Reading Module, Principle 1

(Children need opportunities to interact with books.)

MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT

MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT YOU WILL NEED TO TEACH THIS LESSON

- Chart paper, tape and marking pens
- TV and DVD player (#10, #26)
- Video clip showing a parent and young child talking (#26, #10 if teaching families with infants)
- 3x5 index cards (#31)
- Handout (#39)
- Materials for the parent-child activity (#56)
- Children's books to distribute to families (#59)

Numbers in parentheses refer to steps in the Trainer's Script



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PREPARATION

BEFORE TEACHING THIS LESSON

- If you are teaching families with infants, consider showing the clip “Book of Jenny” from *Every Moments Counts* (#10, optional). Make sure the video example includes children that match the approximate ages of the children of the parents you are training. Consider using a clip from *Talking and Play: Language is the Key*. The clip should show:
 - › Parents making comments to a child or asking questions
 - › Turn taking (parent says something, child responds, parents responds, etc.)
- Gather pictures of children playing outside, eating, bathing, etc. (For #25 if you decide to use the alternative activity.)
- For #26 in the script, select a video clip of a parent and child talking.
- Duplicate one copy of “Tips for Reading with My Baby or Toddler” for each participant. See handout L1-H1. Use colored paper, if possible. (#39)
- Select appropriate books to distribute to families. You may distribute a different book to each family or the same one. (#49)
- Prepare a reading demonstration using the book you will give parents at the end of the lesson. (#49)
- Prepare an activity for the parents and children to do together that will allow the parents to practice the strategies taught in this lesson. See examples in Trainer’s Script. (#55)



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OUTLINE

TRAINER'S OUTLINE

I. Standard Introduction

- A. Participant Introduction
 - 1. Name
 - 2. Child's name and age
 - 3. One time during the day they talk with their child

II. Lesson Outcomes

- A. Parents will learn:
 - 1. why it is important to talk with children
 - 2. when to talk with children
 - 3. what to talk about with children
 - 4. why it is important to read with children
 - 5. when to read with children
- B. Parents will increase the number of times they talk with their children each day
- C. Parents will increase the number of times they read with their children each day

III. Present Key Points

- A. Talking with your children
 - 1. What is the difference between talking WITH children rather than TO/AT them?
 - a. What is a conversation?
 - 2. Why is it important to talk with your child? They learn:
 - a. new words
 - b. information about their world (background information)
 - c. how to talk with others in different settings



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3. Language and literacy development in young children
 - a. Why talk with babies?
 - b. How do you know babies are listening?
(Do only if you are training parents of babies.)
 - c. At what age do children typically say:
 - 1) one word (12-18 months)
 - 2) two words, etc. (18-24 months)

4. In what situations can you talk with your child?
(bath time, meal time, etc.)

5. What can you talk about?
 - a. Follow your child's lead

6. Show a short video from a DVD or other source of a parent and child having a discussion and discuss.

B. Reading to your children

1. Why is it important?
2. When can you read to your children?
3. Reading tips
 - a. Distribute "Tips for Reading with My Baby or Toddler" and discuss.

IV. Assign Parent Follow-up Activity

- A. Select one of the reading tips to practice with your child when you read to him or her.
- B. Set a personal goal to increase the number of times you talk with your child each day.



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V. Summary of Key Points

- A. Talk WITH (not just AT or TO) your child frequently throughout the day.
- B. Plan specific (preferably new or different) times to talk with your child each day, increasing the amount of time you engage in conversations.
- C. Talk with your child while reading a book, asking questions and making comments about the story and the pictures.
- D. Plan to read to your child each day.

VI. Conduct Parent-Child Activity

- A. See Trainer's script

VII. Closing Remarks



TRAINER'S SCRIPT



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CONDUCT A FOCUS ACTIVITY

Introduce yourself. (See introduction suggestions in the Manual Overview, “How do I begin each session?”)

Review “housekeeping” details, if necessary.

1. Today, we are going to discuss talking with our children. Talking with them helps them learn new words and information about their world. Children who start school knowing lots of words do better in school.
2. Please tell us:
 - your name
 - your child’s name and age
 - one time during the day when you talk WITH your child.

Divide a page of chart paper into two columns. Record the times during the day when the participants talk with their children in the left column.

INTRODUCE THE TOPIC

3. Every time you talk with your child, sing with him and respond to the sounds he makes, you are helping your child understand and learn about language. With you to guide him, he is well on his way to becoming a reader because learning how to use language is the first step in learning to read.
4. There is a difference between talking TO or AT children and talking WITH children. We often talk TO or AT children. An example is when we tell them what to do and not do. For example, “Time for bed.” “Please pick up your toys.”



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5. We also want to talk WITH our children—have conversations with them. For example, we might ask them a question or make a comment about something and they respond in some way.
6. We might say, “Look at the dog.” That is a comment. Then we wait and our child may respond in some way:
 - says a word/sentence
 - points
 - nods her head
 - looks at you.
7. Then we make another comment or ask a second question and our child may again say or do something that indicates she or he has heard us. A baby won’t say words. He or she might coo, kick or look at us.
8. The adult and the child take turns talking, listening and responding to what each other says. That is what a conversation is.
9. We can start talking WITH children when they are babies. We don’t need to wait until they can say words or sentences. We don’t need to wait until they can pronounce words correctly to talk with them. Even if they don’t talk back, they are learning words from hearing you speak.
10. You will be surprised at how babies and young children show they are listening to you. They may not respond to what you are saying with words but by looking at you, waving a hand at you, cooing, kicking, etc, you know they are hearing you.



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Show the DVD clip “Book of Jenny” from *Everyday Moments Count* and discuss it if you are teaching families who have infants.

11. It is important to TALK, TALK, TALK with your child. Children need many chances to talk with you, other adults and children. The more talking they do and the more conversations they hear, the more they learn:
 - a. new words
 - b. information about their world (background information)
 - c. how to talk with others in different settings—their home, at a store, in preschool, etc.
12. Talking is our main form of communicating with others in our families, with people we go to school with, work with, etc. It is an important skill that your children will use throughout their lives.
13. Children who know more words when they start school become better readers. When the time comes to start learning to read, it is harder for a child to read words she has never heard before. One of our jobs as parents is to teach children new words.
14. Children start learning words when they are infants. At about one year, they start saying a word or two.
15. Who can remember the first word their child said?

Ask a few participants to respond.

16. It is usually a big day in the life of a parent and child when a child says his first word!



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17. By the time they are two years old, children can combine words into short sentences like, “me go.” By age 3, most children can say about 900 words. By age 7, they can say thousands of words. Notice I said that children can “say” about 900 words at age 3 and thousands of words by age 7. They can understand many more words than they can “say.”
18. It is important to keep in mind that children learn to talk at different times. Some start talking earlier than others just as some start smiling or walking earlier than others.
19. It is so important that parents and other family members talk WITH children. It is easy! It is free! And it is fun! You will hear lots of interesting and sometimes funny things when you talk with your children.

ACTIVITY

CONDUCT AN ACTIVITY WITH THE ADULTS TO REINFORCE KEY POINTS

20. We brainstormed a list of times when we talk with our children a few minutes ago. Can you think of *other* times during the day when you could talk WITH your child? Think about some of the things that you and your child do together.



Record responses in the left column of the chart paper. If the participants don't mention it, write in the left column “reading books.” Tell them that you can also talk with children when reading a book to them. You can ask them questions and talk about the pictures as well as read the words.



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21. Things you do every day with your children are ideal times to have conversations with them. You are your children's first teacher and you can teach them new words and ideas when you are together. Your children may not understand everything you say, but this is how they learn. They need to hear words over and over again so they can learn what they mean and how to say them. As the days and weeks pass, they will understand more and more.
22. What can you talk about during these times? We want to follow our child's lead and talk about what he is interested in. Everyone, children and adults, are more willing to talk when he or she can talk about what he or she is interested in.
23. How can you find out what your child is interested in?

Mention the following if the participants don't:

- **Listen to the questions your children ask or the comments they make to tell you what they are interested in.**
 - **Watch them. Do they pick up a toy or point to something? Do they look at an object or person often? Do they bring something to you? Children's actions may give you clues about what they are curious about.**
24. Think about your child. What are some things you think she is interested in and might want to talk about? What do you see your child doing or looking at? What kinds of questions does she ask you?
 25. Talk with your neighbor and come up with a few ideas.



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After a few minutes, call the participants back together and ask each group to state two or three of their ideas. As they state their ideas, write them in the right column of the chart paper across from the activity that best matches what they said.

For example, if the parent says, “My child would like to talk about trucks because he is always pointing at them and asking questions about them,” ask the parent when she could have this conversation with her child and write “trucks” in the right column of the chart paper next to the event that she mentions.

If parents have trouble coming up with ideas, an alternative might be to give the participants pictures of children playing outside, eating, bathing, etc. Ask them to look at the picture and think about what the child in the picture might be interested in talking about.

If there is time, you might want to divide the participants into small groups and have them brainstorm ideas for what they could talk about when doing some of the other events listed on the chart paper that you did not discuss as a large group.

MODEL THE KEY POINTS

If available, show a video clip of a parent and child talking. Select one that models a parent making comments to the child and/or asking questions, as well as modeling turn-taking (parent says something, children responds, parent says something, etc. The DVD *Talking and Play: Language is the Key* has some good examples in the “Talking and Play” segment.





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You may want to show the clip two times. Then ask the following questions:

26. What did the parent and child talk about?
27. What did the adult do that encouraged the child to talk?

Possible answers: Parent asked questions, made comments, looked at child, listened patiently.

28. Did they take turns?
29. If you had been the adult in this situation, what would you have done differently? The same?
30. What else did you notice or have questions about?

ASSIGNMENT



ASSIGN PARENT FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

Distribute a 3x5 index card to each person.

31. Think of the difference between talking **WITH** and **TO/AT** your child. How many times a day do you think you now talk **WITH** your child one-on-one, that is, have a conversation with them? Think of an average day.
32. Please write your answer on your card. You won't have to tell anyone.
33. Between now and the next time we meet, talk more **WITH** your child. Increase the number of times you talk **WITH** each other.



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34. Talking more with your child will help him learn new words, learn about his world and give him a chance to practice having a conversation.
35. I know many of you already talk often with your child but let's see if we can increase the number of times we do so. More is better! Our slogan is "Whatever you do, wherever you are, talk and read with your child!"
36. Try to do more of what you saw on the video (if you used one).
37. Let's say I now talk with my child three times a day. By our next meeting, I want to increase it to five times. Write your personal goal—what you think you can do by our next meeting. How many more times each day do you want to talk with your child? What is possible? Write that number on your card and put a circle around it.



Give participants a minute to write down the number on the card and put a circle around it.

PRESENT KEY POINTS

38. One time you can talk with children is when reading to them. You can ask them questions and talk about the pictures in the book as well as read the words.
39. Why is it important to read to your child?

Mention the following if the participants don't:

- **Books use words we don't usually use when we talk with children.**
- **Books teach children about things that are not in their home or neighborhood such as animals that live only in the jungle.**



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Distribute the handout, “Tips for Reading with My Baby or Toddler.” Review with the parents the section on why it is important to read with their children.

40. When are some times you can read with your child?



Record responses on chart paper. Encourage the group to come up with new and different places. (For example, when taking a bath or playing in the sandbox.)

41. Please find your handout and read the section titled, “When You Read, It’s OK To....”



After four minutes, call the group back together. If some of the parents don’t read well, read this section to them.

42. Are any of these tips for reading to your child new to you?

43. Do you have any to add?

44. Any questions about the tips?

45. Many of the tips are really about following your child’s lead. You want the time you spend reading with your child to be fun for both your child and you. If your child doesn’t want to read, wait until another time when she might be more interested. Don’t force her to read with you.



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ASSIGNMENT

ASSIGN PARENT FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

46. Talk with your neighbor. Which of the things in the tips section do you already do? What is one that you will try to do with your child before we meet again?

47. Write what you will try to do before we meet again on the index card.



After four minutes, call the group back together.

48. Please put your card on your refrigerator or some place where you will see it so you will be reminded of what you want to do before our next meeting.



Read the book you are planning on distributing to the participants and ask them to pretend they are their children. As you read, model these reading practices:

- **reading the title (“name” of the book)**
- **using an expressive voice**
- **pointing to the pictures, naming them and/or asking one of the children to name them**
- **making comments about the characters/story, and/or the pictures**
- **asking questions**

49. What did you see or hear me do when I read this book?



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SUMMARY

50. Please read this book to your child between now and when we next meet. Read it as many times as you can, if your child wants you to. It is okay to read a book many times to a child. If your child doesn't like this book, find another one that he does and read it.
51. When you read it, talk to your child about the pictures, the characters (people/animals the story is about) and what is happening (story/plot). Point to the pictures as you talk about them.

REVIEWING KEY POINTS

52. Today, we talked about how important it is to talk often WITH your children. You are your child's first teacher and talking with her will help your child learn things that will help him do well in school.
53. We also talked about all the different times and places you can talk with your children and what you can talk about. Our slogan is "Whatever you do, wherever you are, talk about it."
54. One time you can talk with children is when reading with them. You can ask them questions and talk about the pictures in the book as well as read the words.
55. We talked about why it is important to read books to your children, when you could do so and some things to remember to do when you read to them.



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ACTIVITY

CONDUCT A PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITY TO REINFORCE KEY POINTS

In this lesson, the focus was on talking with children. Plan a simple activity for children and parents to do together that will give them an opportunity to practice talking with (not to/at) their children. Don't make the activity reading a book because that will be an activity they do in future lessons.

Examples of activities

The parents and their children together:

- do a craft/art project.
- play a board game.
- take a walk outside.
- sort blocks, rocks, shells, etc.
- play at the sand or water table.
- play in the housekeeping or block center.
- play with toys.

56. We have talked about why is it important to talk with children and how talking while engaged in an activity can be an opportunity to do so. Practice having a conversation with your child during this activity. A conversation is the back-and-forth exchange of talking between you and your child. Think about what questions you can ask, and what things you can comment on. Listen to your child's response and use that to ask additional questions or make additional comments.
57. What do you think your child will be interested in talking about during the activity?
58. Focus on talking with your child and not the other parents.



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As the activity is occurring, walk around the group. If you notice a parent not practicing the strategies correctly, try to find an opportunity when you can talk with the child, while his or her parent is watching you, and demonstrate how to use the strategies correctly. Do not call attention to the “mistake.” Instead, demonstrate another example of the correct way to use the strategies with a child.

Use your observations as a way to assess how well the parents understood and could actually begin and sustain conversations. If the parents are struggling, then plan to model the strategy again at the next session.

END



CLOSING REMARKS

Distribute a copy of the book you read to each family, if possible you can also help families check out books from library.

59. Thanks for coming! See you at the next session on ____.
Please bring your handout and the card with your conversation goal on it. Remember to practice what you learned today.



Handouts

LESSON ONE

TIPS FOR READING WITH MY BABY OR TODDLER

An “Every Child Reads” collaborative initiative among:
Iowa Department of Education • Iowa Department of Public Health
State Library of Iowa • IPTV

WHY SHOULD I READ TO MY CHILD?

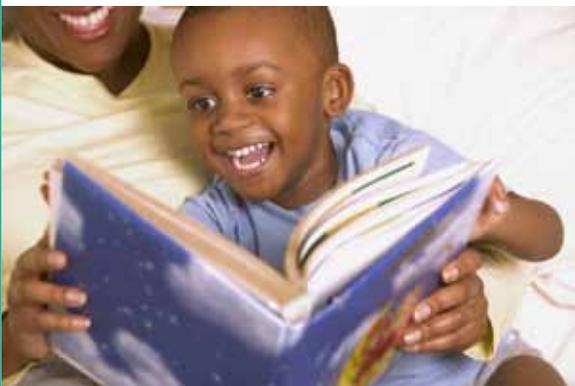
Children who have been read to have an easier time learning to read when they start school. When you read to them, you teach them:

- New words, such as the names of people, animals, and things
- Words they will use when they learn to talk
- About the world they live in
- To watch and listen
- That reading and sharing stories is a fun way to be with others

Reading and sharing stories can also be a way to calm children.

GENERAL TIPS:

- Use funny, different voices when you read and share stories. It will keep your baby interested. You can also sing the words!
- Point to pictures.
- Have fun reading with your baby.



WHEN YOU READ, IT'S OK TO:

- Read and share stories for only a few minutes at a time. Don't worry if you don't read the whole book. Sprinkle reading times throughout the day — when waiting in line, before bedtime, and at the grocery store.
- Read to your child when he/she is sitting next to you and also when he/she is on the floor, walking around the room, or in the bathtub!
- Talk about the story and pictures in the book instead of reading all the words. Sometimes, your child may want you to point to the pictures and name them instead of reading the words. Try to do what your child wants to do.
- Start in the middle of the book or at the back. Do what your child wants to do. There are great pictures to talk about on all of the pages.
- Let your child choose the books to read. You might show your child two books and ask him/her to pick one.
- Read the same book again and again. That's one way children learn.
- Turn off the TV, computer, and cell phone when you are reading and sharing stories with your child. Then, you can give your child your full attention and make him/her feel special!
- Let your child feel the books, turn the pages, and chew on them if he/she wishes.
- Use different, funny voices when you read and share stories. It will keep your child interested. Make your time together fun for both you and your child!

The Iowa Department of Education, along with federal partners, offers many services for children birth to 3 years old and their families. Some of these include:

EARLY ACCESS is Iowa's system of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with or at risk for developmental delays. For help in getting connected call toll-free at 1-888-IAKIDS1 or e-mail earlyaccessia@vnsdm.org.

EARLY HEAD START is a locally operated, federally funded program that provides a comprehensive child development program serving pregnant women and children birth to three with guidance, information, and direct services to foster healthy development of children and their families.

The program is available to families of low income.
For more information go to www.iowaheadstart.com

**For more information, contact the
Iowa Department of Education, 515/281-3924.**

References

1. Read With Me: Birth to 3 Years.
<http://www.iptv.org/kids/grownups/resources/downloads.cfm>
2. Everyday Ways to Support Your Baby's and Toddler's Early Learning.
www.zerotothree.org/schoolreadiness
3. Center for Early Literacy Learning.
<http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/pgparents.php#toddlers>
4. Talaris "Spotlights".
 - a. Mommy, I Know A Word!
 - b. Take A Break With Books!
 - c. Snuggle Up For Reading!<http://www.talaris.org/synopsis.htm>
5. Washington Learning Systems. Free Parent Materials.
<http://www.wlearning.com/Guide.html>