



# Promoting Oral Literacy in Young Children

Oral language is the foundation for student learning as it is essential for literacy development, learning, and successful social communication. Parents and caregivers can encourage oral language development in a variety of fun and engaging ways such as:

## Verbal Literacy Games

- *How many?* (e.g., How many farm animals can you name? How many red things can you name? How many vehicles can you name?)
- *I'm thinking of...* (e.g., "I'm thinking of a fruit, it is yellow and it has a peel. Can you guess what it is?")
- *What's better?* Have a friendly debate and ask your child what their preferences are! (e.g. What's better, ice cream or chocolate? Why? Who's better, Mario or Sonic? Why?)
- *Odd One Out:* Begin by naming three items – two that are connected in some way and one that is not. Which one doesn't belong? For example, "train, bus, hair"
- *Rhyming toss:* Choose a word to rhyme with such as *hat* and take turns tossing a ball back and forth and saying rhyming words like *hat, cat, bat, sat, rat*
- *What's in the bag?:* Hide an item in a bag and take turns giving clues, asking questions, and guessing what the item is. Use prompts like: What color is it? What shape is it? What group does it belong to? What is it used for? Where do I find it? What does it feel like?

## Conversation is the key!

- Model good conversation skills
- When possible, give your full attention when your child is speaking
- Make sure you have your child's attention before you speak
- Encourage your child to ask questions
- Encourage your child to give directions. Have them explain how to build a snowman, how to make a sandwich etc.
- Expand on your child's sentences
- Teach new vocabulary as it comes up in everyday interactions

## Ask questions when reading books:

- Look at the cover and the title of the book. What do you think the story will be about?
- Who is the main character? How do you think the character is feeling?
- What do you see in this picture?
- What do you think is going to happen next?
- What does this word mean? Let's talk about it!
- What was your favourite part?
- What happened at the beginning, middle and end?