

Helpful Hints for Reading with your Pre-school Child

By: Peg Chauncey Cramer M.A.

*Have your child help you pick out the book. If it is the same book as last night, that's just a hint that your child loves it! Read that one and another one too.

*Turn off the television and radio, and eliminate other distractions. This will help focus the child's attention on the book and on you. Cuddle up!

*Start with the cover of the book. Read the title and the names of the author and illustrator. Talk about the picture on the cover. Ask your child what he thinks the story is about. After the guess, say, "Let's see!"

*Read slowly. It's important that children have time to look at each illustration and understand each word.

*Read with expression. Use different voices for different characters. Read exciting parts a little faster. Slow down at suspenseful sections. Let your child be one of the characters too. Be creative! Make it fun!

*Point to the text as you read. This will help young children learn that there's a difference between words and pictures. Follow the words with your fingers as you read to teach the concept that words read from left to right.

*Encourage children to participate. When you have read the same story over and over, your child might want to "read" it to you. This is wonderful. It means that your child is viewing himself as a reader. Have your child tell the story in his/her special way.

* Ask them to point out certain things in the illustrations. Ask questions as you read and talk about the story when you are done.

* Retell the story with just the pictures helping you. Have your child help you retell. Say, "What happened here?" or "What happened next?" Think of another ending to the story.

* Begin a collection of "Favorite Books" for your child to "read" during a quiet time or when she wants too.

What is most important? Read, Read, Read and Have Fun!

Peg Cramer has been an Early Childhood educator since 1978, earning her Master in the Art of Teaching. Peg also currently serves on the Governor's Mentor Michigan Providers Council. She is a consultant for Children In Full Bloom, LLC and has published numerous educational materials. Peg also facilitates workshops, and writes articles for educators and parents.