



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**  
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**  
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**  
Program Topic : **Early literacy (LOVE)**

#### **Guidelines to the presenter**

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

#### **Topic:**

Early literacy development

#### **Objectives:**

- Highlight the responsibility to build children’s vocabulary and literacy skills
- Promote the assistance of children from early to take notice of different sounds, shapes and writing in their environments
- Underline the importance of early literacy skills built in families and its impact on equipping children for reading and school.
- Encourage the use of games for supporting literacy development with children

## Introduction

On this show, we celebrate the fact that you are the most important person in your child's life. You have the power to give your child the best possible start in life and it doesn't have to cost you a cent. All it takes is your love, play and talk.

Literacy skills are built from birth through relationships and communication with others. Talking to your child is essential for building good communication and literacy skills. Early literacy is not about teaching but about playing, having fun and encouraging children to recognize the sounds and shapes of words and symbols in their environments. Parents have an important role to play in developing their child's literacy skills and supporting their later learning, development and school success

Questions	Facts/Information
1. <i>What is literacy?</i>	Literacy is communication and is made up of listening, speaking, signing, reading and writing. Every time you read a book, write a note, sort the laundry, check the TV listings, or recount the day's happenings, you are using skills young children need to have to be ready to learn to read and write.
2. <i>Why do children need communication and literacy skills?</i>	Literacy lays the foundation for all areas of child development and is critical to a child's later success in school and in life.
3. <i>What do we know about early literacy development?</i>	Early language and literacy (reading and writing) development begins in the first three years of life and is closely linked to a child's earliest experiences with books and stories. The interactions that young children have with such literacy materials as books,

<p>4. <i>How does early literacy develop?</i></p>	<p>paper, and crayons, and with the adults in their lives are the building blocks for language, reading and writing development. This relatively new understanding of early literacy development complements the current research supporting the critical role of early experiences in shaping brain development.</p> <p>Early literacy develops in everyday activities, during social interactions and experience and when handling toys and objects. We now know that children gain significant knowledge of language, reading, and writing long before they enter school. Children learn to talk, read, and write through such social literacy experiences as adults or older children interacting with them using books and other literacy materials, including magazines, markers, and paper. Simply put, early literacy research states that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Language, reading, and writing skills develop at the same time and are intimately linked.</li><li>• Early literacy development is a continuous developmental process that begins in the first years of life.</li><li>• Early literacy skills develop in real</li></ul>
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<p>5. <i>Does this mean we should be teaching toddlers and young children to read?</i></p>	<p>life settings through positive interactions with literacy materials and other people.</p> <p>New understanding of early language and literacy development has provided new ways of helping children learn to talk, read, and write. But it does not advocate "the teaching of reading" to younger and younger children. Formal instruction which pushes infants and toddlers to achieve adult models of literacy (i.e., the actual reading and writing of words) is not developmentally appropriate. Instead parents should support the natural unfolding of skills through the enjoyment of books, the importance of positive interactions between young children and adults, and the critical role of literacy-rich experiences.</p>
<p>6. <i>How can parents help babies and young children develop early literacy skills?</i></p>	<p>Parents can help by being available to talk and list to their children and to give them their attention. Long before children start to read and write, parents can give them a strong foundation of skills that will help the later to develop literacy easier. Five literacy practices have been identified that support early literacy. These are:</p>

1. Talking - Talking with children helps them learn oral language, one of the most critical early literacy skills. The experience of self-expression also stimulates brain development, which underlies all learning.
2. Singing - Singing – which also includes rhyming – increases children’s awareness of and sensitivity to the sounds in words. This helps prepare children to decode print (written language).
3. Reading - No matter what your child’s age, reading together with your children is the single most important way to help them get ready to read. Reading together and talking about what you read: increases children’s vocabulary and background knowledge, helps children learn how books work and how written language looks, gives them an understanding of how stories are organized – that they have a beginning, middle & end and encourages imaginative thinking
4. Writing - Writing and reading go together. Writing helps children learn that letters and words stand for sounds and that print has meaning. Before a child is ready to hold a pencil and write, the muscles in their hands need to be strong enough. Practicing and developing fine motor skills

<p>7. <i>What are some of the skills that parents should help develop?</i></p>	<p>will help develop these muscles and the hand eye coordination needed.</p> <p>5. Playing - Play is one of the primary ways young children learn language and literacy skills and learn about the world. Play also helps children think symbolically: a ruler becomes a magic wand, today becomes a time when dinosaurs were alive, a playmate becomes an astronaut exploring space. Through play children realize that one thing can stand for another. This also helps children understand that written words stand for real objects and experiences.</p> <p>There are certain skills a parent/caregiver needs to make sure the child can do before they can start to teach baby and young child literacy (reading and writing) skills. One of the important skills that help with literacy, is the ability to notice the small differences in things. Children need to be able to distinguish between the different letters of the alphabet in order to read well. Think about the small difference between 'b' and 'd' for instance. If the young child cannot distinguish between the two, then they will have difficulty recognising particular words. Consider the simple word 'dog'; the child will read 'bog' instead of 'dog' if she cannot</p>
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<p>8. <i>How can you help children build the skill to notice the small differences?</i></p>	<p>tell the difference between 'b' and 'd'.</p> <p>There are ways of helping babies and young children recognise differences for example, by looking at pictures together. In one picture, there could be two dolls both wearing green dresses and in another picture, two dolls wearing yellow dresses. Or the differences could be in the number of objects in a picture, for example, two people could appear in one picture, and in another picture there could be a crowd. Maybe the young child will not recognise the differences in the beginning, but the more you point these out, the better they will be able to see the differences for themselves. The parent/caregiver can also use objects such as stones or bowls to show the difference between big and small.</p>
<p>9. <i>What else can you do build literacy skills?</i></p>	<p><b>Help children recognise different shapes:</b></p> <p>The parent/caregiver must make babies and young children aware of the different shapes of things around them. For example, show them differently shaped tables; one table can be rectangular and the other one square. The house they live in can be round but their neighbour's can be square. Some roofs are shaped like a triangle and others</p>

<p><i>10. But small children can't read words, so how can they read books?</i></p>	<p>can be flat. Show them a round plate and point to a full moon. The parent/caregiver can also cut out pictures of the different shapes and ask the young child to identify them.</p> <p>Parents can help children start learning to read, by helping them start to read pictures. For example Parents/caregivers can help children read pictures in magazines and also in their surroundings. There are guessing games a parent/ caregiver can play such as asking the child what they think is happening in a picture or asking children to find something in a picture (for example find the apple in this picture).</p>
<p><i>11. When do you need to start teaching them letters?</i></p>	<p>Children should only start formally reading letters at school. Starting too early with formal instruction to require young children to read is counter productive and potentially damaging to children, who may begin to associate reading and books with failure. Although children start formally learning letters at school, parents can assist their preschoolers to start to recognize different sounds in their environment. Point out Ways words begin or end. Compare words that start with the same sound, for</p>

*12. What is phonemic awareness and why is this important?*

example, tomato and taco. Ask: “Tomatoes and taps begin in the same way. Can you hear the t in tomatoes and taps?” Listening is an important part of literacy development and so it is important to help babies and young children use their ears. Words often sound similar, e.g. ‘hat’, ‘had’, ‘sat’ and ‘sad’. When you hear children make mistakes you can help them hear the difference. Importantly your role is to make learning fun and to encourage play – not teaching. So you can also play games with them to help them learn different sounds.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the sounds of the language. It is important because it is the primary predictor of early reading and spelling skills. Phonemic awareness has nothing to do with intelligence, but children without it will have a difficult time learning the sound-spelling correspondences. It is all about hearing sounds and has nothing to do with the printed letters. Reciting rhymes, producing rhyming words, clapping sounds and syllables, and playing word games are all activities that strengthen phonemic awareness.

*13. What games can you play to help them learn different sounds/ letters?*

There are many fun ways you can help children start to identify different sounds in their environments. Remember with all these games with young children you want to stress the sound that the word begins with, NOT the letter. You are helping them to hear different sounds, not teaching them letters.

Some games are

Eye-spy: You can play I spy games using sounds (not letters) I spy something that begins with R (road)

Adventure walk – take a walk around your neighbourhood, pointing out different sounds and finding things with similar sounds

Letter treasure hunt – get children to find something beginning with different sounds around the house. Give prizes or make it a race to add fun. You can also play “letter of the day,” in which you decide on a letter and go on a hunt for it.

Things in a bag – put a few items in a bag of which some start with the same sound. Get children to see if they can identify and match those with the same sounds

Label things - Label a few belongings with your child’s name, for example, a cup or a favorite book. Read the labels together.

<p><i>14. Should I teach them letters?</i></p>          <p><i>15. How would you make family name cards?</i></p>	<p>Alphabet Books: Make a book that has a page for each letter of the alphabet. The child can draw or find a picture for each letter and paste it on the page. Write the letter on the page for the child or let him or her do it. Staple the pages together to make a book. Read the book from time to time.</p> <p>You do not need to start formally teaching your child letters before school but you can help the start to recognize letters in their environment. Pointing out signs and showing what is on them is one fun way to do this. Also you can make family name cards that help children start to recognize letters.</p> <p>Cut out a piece of cardboard. On one side write the name of a family member, and on the other side stick a picture of that person or cut a picture from a magazine of something that begins with the same letter. For example a picture of an apple for Andile, a picture of a tomato for Tata. This way children will start to hear the different sounds and later be able to identify the different letters.</p>
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<p>16. <i>What can I do in my home to encourage literacy development?</i></p>	<p>Having a home where books and magazines are available for children will help, as well as demonstrating love of reading yourself. Another fun activity is to make a family message board and get your child to help draw messages for the board. Making a book together is also a nice thing to do, using pictures from magazines or family photos.</p>

<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>
<p>Remember that literacy isn't just reading and writing and it doesn't simply come about in grade 1 by teaching words and spelling. Literacy is communication learned long before school and is made up of listening, speaking, signing, reading and writing. Talking, playing and singing will lead to reading, writing and spelling.</p>

<p><b>Learning outcomes</b></p>
<p>After listening to this show the audience should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know to build their children's vocabulary and literacy skills</li> <li>• Know to assist children from early to take notice of different sounds, shapes and writing in their environments</li> <li>• Understand that children are prepared by their parents/ caregivers for later school and literacy success</li> <li>• Understand that games are good for supporting literacy development in children</li> <li>• Encourage playful and fun interactions that build early literacy skills, but do not embark on formal teaching or instruction.</li> </ul>

