

The Language and Literacy Connection

(adapted from *Building Literacy and Language Skills* (2001) by Lucy Hart Paulson)



Learning how to read is one of the most important journeys that children experience. Parents and caregivers play a vital role in their success. Emergent literacy isn't just reading – it includes writing, speaking, listening, and all the ways we use language to interact and communicate with each other.

But my child is too young to read. What is Emergent Literacy?

Emergent literacy is what children need to know about reading **and** writing **before** they can learn to read and write. (Sulzby & Teale, 1991)

A child's knowledge of spoken language, the sounds that form words, letters, writing and books form the foundation that a child needs to learn to read and write in school.

My child was referred to Speech Services Niagara for speech and language concerns, why are you talking to me about emergent literacy skills?

Here at SSN, we are interested in learning about how your child communicates with the world. We are interested in learning about your child's knowledge of spoken language, the sounds that form words, and his/her interest in reading books.

Language is not separate from literacy. Literacy development grows out of a child's language development. The more words a child knows, the better he can tell stories, the more he/she understands how to form speech sounds and understand that signs and symbols represent spoken language, the better his/her literacy skills will be.

Reading difficulties often reflect an underlying difficulty or weakness in language skills but difficulties can also be present without language delays. Difficulties in reading can sometimes be predicted before they ever develop into a significant problem. It's our job to find out how these Emergent Literacy Skills are developing along with their language skills and ensure your child is on the right road to healthy reading.