



## **Building a Library: Stack by Stack**

Tips For Developing A Home Library

From CCLC @ Gainesville, *child care center on the University of Florida campus*

October is National Book Month and what better way to celebrate than by building your child's home library. Even the youngest infants and toddlers need books to promote literacy skills and language development. Home libraries don't have to be expensive in order to provide valuable reading experiences. The quantity of books you have in your library is not important, but rather the quality and variety of books to which your child will have access.

"Having a variety of appropriate books at home in your own library makes sharing books convenient, interesting and enjoyable for children of all ages," said Diane Oakman, Center Director at CCLC @ Gainesville. "Literacy is a component of the curriculum in all of our classrooms including infants. We believe that instilling a passion for reading with a young child opens the door to a lifetime of learning."

### **Factors to consider when starting a home library**

- Choose books with words that are rhythmic to draw your child's interest to the sounds of the story.
- Include books with interesting illustrations or photos.
- Look for sturdy books, such as board books, that can withstand a young child's handling and mouthing.
- Select some books that stimulate all the senses such as touch and feel books, or books that make sounds.
- Avoid books that mimic popular television shows.
- Research reputable authors and illustrators. Many of their classic stories are available in board book form.
- Add a poetry anthology with simple poems and colorful illustrations.

### **As your child becomes a preschooler or enters kindergarten, continue adding to your library**

- Choose a variety of genres such as fiction, non-fiction, biography, poetry, etc. to give your child early experiences with many kinds of stories.
- Include a couple of wordless books to stimulate creativity and story-telling skills.
- Provide more than one story by the same author and/or illustrator. Children can learn to recognize the writer's style or become familiar with a particular form of writing or illustrating.
- Look for classic stories in their original editions.
- When your child is ready to choose his or her own books, or needs just a little assistance from you, keep adding these books to your library. It might be time to weed out some of the younger-oriented books and replace them with picture and chapter books.

### **For your elementary-age child and older, consider the following**

- Choose books about topics that interest your child. It is in our nature to choose books for our children that we enjoyed as children or to select subjects that we enjoy as adults. Try to choose books that reflect your child's interests, even at the stage where you are still reading to your child. In this manner, you will help your child see that reading is an adventure into his or her own imagination.
- Look for books with characters that your child can identify such as books containing characters with similar interests as your child or similar social situations.
- Add non-fiction titles. Biographies can inspire young readers to learn more about the person or about the circumstances surrounding a person's life. Real life adventures, nature studies and historical stories are often favorites.
- Consider books in a series to keep your child's attention.
- Include reference materials such as an atlas and a children's dictionary.
- Choose books that are above your child's reading level for read-aloud experiences. (Children are never too old to be read to. Reading aloud develops vocabulary and comprehension skills and encourages a greater love for reading.)
- Expose your child to a variety of genres to understand what interests him or her most – mystery, poetry, adventure, humor, historical fiction, biography, etc.
- A fun alternative – subscribe to a child's magazine.

Your home library will evolve and change as your child grows. You'll always have some favorites that your child keeps in the library forever, and there will be other books that you can donate or sell to a used book store to make room for new ones. Most book stores and libraries have lots of information on classic stories, authors, and illustrators, as well as the best books for particular age ranges. Use those resources to start your home library today.