Reading aloud, singing, doing fingerplays and engaging young children in conversation are all ways that parents and caregivers lay the foundation for young children to become successful readers and writers. The following activities were created to promote literacy with young children through hands-on, real-life experiences that will stimulate learning.

Have fun and “Grow a Reader!”

Using Your Body to Make Holes

Introduce holes to children by helping the children form holes using parts of their bodies.

See if children can make a hole by putting their pointer finger and thumb together. Can they put their nose through that hole? Children can make a bigger hole by touching the tips of their pointer fingers while touching their thumbs to each other. Can children put their knee inside that hole? Children can put one of their hands on their hip to make a hole. Can a friend put his/her head through that hole? How many other ways can children make holes with their bodies?

Hole Detectives

Using homemade binoculars, lead the children on a hole search both inside and outside. Note that not all holes are round. Talk about the other shapes of holes that the children find. Keep a list of all the “holey” things the children discover. The children can add new things to the list each day (including things that they see at home).

Variation: Take photographs of holes discovered by the children. Children can use the pictures to make a book. A great title might be “The Hole Story”!

Make your own binoculars

1. Staple two toilet paper tubes together at each end.

2. Children can decorate the tubes (coloring with markers or crayons, adding stickers, etc.)

3. Punch holes at the end of each tube. Lace a string or yarn to make a strap for the children to use to wear the binoculars around their necks.
The Hole Picture

Printing - There are many objects around the house with holes that can be used for printing - sponges, empty thread spools, strawberry baskets, the ends of cardboard tubes, ribbon spools, etc. Put a layer of tempera paint in a washed styrofoam meat tray (you may want to provide several different colors). Children can dip the object in the paint and then press it on the paper to make a print.

Holey paper - Cut any shape hole in a piece of paper. Lay that paper over another sheet. Children can paint or color inside or outside the hole.

Beads*

Make beads using the following recipe for Kitchen Clay:

2 cups baking soda
1 cup cornstarch
1 1/3 cup water
Pinch of salt

1. Combine all ingredients in a medium size saucepan and cook over medium heat until bubbly and thick.
2. Carefully remove hot clay from pan. Let it cool enough to handle, then knead until smooth. (makes softball size lump of clay)
3. Wrap in damp towel and refrigerate for 10-15 minutes.
4. The children can form beads by rolling small pieces of dough into balls and then poking a straw through the ball to make a hole for the bead.
5. Beads will dry hard overnight and can be painted the next day.

*All cooking projects require adult supervision.

Bubbles

Besides using the traditional bubble wands, children can use anything with holes to blow bubbles. Berry baskets, hoops, sieves, rings, plastic six-pack rings, tubes, even making a circle with their fingers work well.

Mix together one of the following bubble recipes:

Solution 1: 1 cup water, 2 tablespoons liquid detergent, 1 tablespoon glycerin*, ½ teaspoon sugar

Solution 2: 1 gallon water, 2/3 cup liquid detergent, 1 tablespoon glycerin* (optional). Allow solution to sit for at least a day before using.

Solution 3: 3 cups water, 2 cups liquid detergent, ½ cup corn syrup

*Glycerin can be found in the pharmacy section of your local supermarket by the anti-itch remedies.
**Holey Snacks**

Serve foods with holes for a snack: bagels, Swiss cheese, macaroni, Cheerios, English muffins or pretzels.

**MAKE YOUR OWN PRETZELS**

1. ½ cup lukewarm water
2. 1 tablespoon sugar
3. 1 envelope yeast
4. 1 egg
5. 4 cup flour
6. coarse salt (optional)
7. 1 teaspoon salt

1. Help children measure and mix water, yeast and sugar.
2. Let mixture stand for 5 minutes.
3. Help children measure salt and flour into a bowl; add yeast mixture and stir.
4. Let the children shape the dough - making some holes!
5. Put pretzels on greased baking sheet.
6. Children will enjoy beating the egg to make an egg glaze.
7. Have children apply the egg glaze with a pastry brush.
8. Sprinkle with coarse salt if desired.
9. Bake at 425° for about 12 minutes until golden brown.

*Not a whole lot of time? Buy frozen bread dough!*

*All cooking projects require adult supervision.

**Volcanoes**

Children will enjoy making the lava flow out of the hole of a volcano again and again:

You will need:

Small cups - baby food jars or paper cups work well
1. ¼ cup baking soda
2. ¼ cup vinegar
3. Red food coloring

1. Place the cup on a tray, plate or cookie sheet with sides.
2. Have the children scoop the baking soda into the bottom of the cup. (Amounts are approximate - more or less won’t matter.)
3. The children then squeeze several drops of red food coloring onto the baking soda. Next have the children pour the vinegar into the cup.
Finger Play Fun

Here is a Bunny
Here is a bunny with ears so funny
(make bunny ears by holding up 2 fingers on one hand)
And here is a hole in the ground
(with other hand make a hole with fingers)
When a noise he hears
(make any kind of noise you like)
He perks up his ears
(make two fingers straighten)
And he hops to his hole in the ground.
(hop the bunny fingers and let them jump into the hole made by the other hand)

Where are the Baby Mice?
(Make a fist with your thumb tucked inside)
Where are the baby mice?
Squeak, squeak, squeak.
I cannot see them
(looking at fist)
Peek, peek, peek,
Here they come out of their hole in the wall
(open fist up slowly)
1, 2, 3, 4, 5
(show fingers)
And that’s all!!
“I Stuck My Head in a Little Skunk’s Hole”

Have children make a large hole with their arms. Children can put their head inside these holes and pull them back out according to the song. A fun addition to this song is to use a squirt bottle and spray the children lightly with water when the skunk goes “Sssssssss.” Have children pinch their nose while they sing along to the last line “too late”. (This song can be found on the CD: Wee Sing Silly Songs)

I stuck my head in a little skunks hole
And the little skunk said “Well bless my soul!
Take it out, take it out, take it out, take it out,
Remove it.”
Well I didn’t take it out and the little skunk said
“You’d better take it out or you’ll wish you had.
Take it out, take it out, take it out.
Sssssssssssssss!”
I removed it too late!

Button, Button, Who’s Got the Button

Here’s how to play:
1. Children sit in a circle.
2. Select one child to be the guesser.
3. This guesser closes his/her eyes - no peeking!!
4. Give one of the other children a button to hide in his/her fist. Ask all children to hide their hands behind their backs, pretending that they have the button in their fists.
5. Remind children to keep the location of the button a secret.
7. The guesser opens up his/her eyes and asks one of the other children if he or she has the button. That child shows their hands to reveal the answer.
8. If the button is not found after three guesses, all children hold out their hands showing who does have the button.
9. Repeat the game. Whoever had the button is now the next guesser.
Bring books to life with these simple ideas that highlight early literacy skills.

**The Button Box** by Margarette Reid

**Presentation Notes:** A boy sorts through a whole box full of buttons and finds many similarities and differences among them. Show children the cover or title page of the book and point out the letter B. As you read, ask children to use their own words to describe the buttons. After sharing the book, whirl a button on a string like they did in the story so that children can hear it “hum!”

**Skills Featured:** Vocabulary, Letter Recognition

**Look Book** by Tana Hoban

**Presentation Notes:** This wordless book uses holes in the pages to reveal photographs of animals, food and flowers. Like many other books by this author, the unique perspective of the photos engages children and sparks conversation. Use this book to introduce new vocabulary or inspire storytelling. Explore the textures and patterns by asking questions and giving plenty of time for the children to just look.

**Skills Featured:** Print Motivation, Narrative, Vocabulary

**Oh No!** by Bronwen Scarffe

**Presentation Notes:** Rhyming text describes all the things a little girl finds which have holes in them. Have children name the “holey” objects and join in with the refrain of “oh no!” Ask children if they’ve ever discovered a hole in their clothes or toys.

**Skills Featured:** Narrative, Print Motivation, Phonological Awareness

**Two of Everything** By Lily Toy Hong

**Presentation Notes:** While digging in the garden, poor old Mr. Haktak discovers a magic pot which doubles everything he puts inside. Read this Chinese folktale straight through to help children understand the plot. Afterwards, go back and talk about the pictures, asking open-ended questions. Let children decide what they would do with a magic pot like this one.

**Skills Featured:** Narrative, Vocabulary
More Great Books!

**A Hole is to Dig** by Ruth Krauss

**There’s a Hole in the Bucket** by Ingrid Schubert

**Grandma’s Button Box** by Linda Williams Aber

**Go Away Big Green Monster** by Ed Emberley

**Color Zoo** by Lois Ehlert

**The Tale of Peter Rabbit** by Beatrix Potter