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!”

**HAIR TODAY**

**Take a Field Trip.** Make arrangements to visit a nearby barber shop or beauty salon. Talk to the owner ahead of time to see if the children can try on a smock and sit in a chair that raises and lowers. Ask to be shown the different types of tools barbers and stylists use. Point out the things you might have in your pretend barber shop or salon such as the telephone, mirrors, smocks, and magazines. Draw attention to the waiting area, the place where people get their hair washed, the cash register, sales tickets and price lists, supply storage and the employee’s lunchroom.

**Crazy Hair Day.** Invite children to come from home with their hair in a crazy or unusual style for a day. With parents’ permission, you could also do this activity as a group. Children might spike or mess up their hair with gel or spray, wear unusual ponytails, or even spray their hair with a bright, temporary hair color. Be sure to join in the fun with your own creative idea of a crazy hairdo. Each child might like to show off his or her unusual hair by parading in front of the other children, fashion-show style. Take souvenir pictures for a fun book.
THERE WAS AN OLD MAN WITH A BEARD
By Edward Lear

There was an old man with a beard
Who said, “It is just as I feared!
Two Owls and a Hen, four Larks and a Wren
Have built their nests in my beard!”

FUZZY WUZZY WAS A BEAR
A Traditional Poem

Fuzzy Wuzzy was a bear.
Fuzzy Wuzzy had no hair.
Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn’t fuzzy,
Was he?

A HAIRY RIDDLE
By Kurt Metzler

I’m over your head and under your hat.
I can be curly, wavy or flat.
What am I?

THIS IS THE WAY WE WASH OUR HAIR
Act out the motions while singing the following words to the tune of *Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush*.

This is the way we wash our hair, wash our hair, wash our hair.
This is the way we wash our hair, wash, wash, wash.
This is the way we dry our hair, dry our hair, dry our hair.
This is the way we dry our hair, dry, dry, dry.
This is the way we brush our hair, brush our hair, brush our hair.
This is the way we brush our hair, brush, brush, brush.
This is the way we curl our hair, curl our hair, curl our hair.
This is the way we curl our hair, curl, curl, curl.
This is the way we cut our hair, cut our hair, cut our hair.
This is the way we cut our hair, cut, cut, cut.
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HAIR?

Use the following questions to begin talking with children about hair. You may want to write down their responses to display or make into a book.

- Have you ever done something special with your hair when getting your picture taken or going to a party? What did you do to your hair and why? Did someone help you? Did you like your special hairdo? Why or why not?
- What does your hair look like?
- How would you like your hair to look?
- What does your hair feel like?
- Do babies have as much hair as you do?
- Have you ever gotten your hair cut?
- Why did you get it cut?
- Where does hair grow besides on our heads?

PLAYDOUGH HAIR

Start by making playdough. The following recipe makes enough for 3 children and can be doubled or even quadrupled.

*all cooking projects require adult supervision.

**Playdough Recipe**

**Ingredients:**
- 2 cups flour
- 2 T cooking oil
- 2 cups water
- ¼ cup salt
- 4 t cream of tartar
- Food coloring

**Directions:**
1. Put food coloring in water.
2. Combine all ingredients and cook over medium heat.
3. Stir constantly until ball forms.
4. Remove from heat.
5. Knead ball of dough until smooth.

Children put playdough in the clay extruders (included in the kit). They can then make “hair” by squeezing the handles of the extruder to push the playdough through the holes. Playdough hair may be cut off with a plastic knife or children’s scissors. Show the children how they can pick up the cut hair and push it back into the extruder to be able to grow and cut more hair.
MICHAEL FINNEGAN

Sing or chant this fun “long-song” or traditional rhyme with no end.

There was an old man named Michael Finnegan
He grew whiskers on his chin-negan
Shaved them off and they grew in again,
Poor old Michael Finnegan
Begin again.

HAIR! HAIR!

Braid: Tie three strands of thick yarn to the back of a chair and teach children how to braid.

Make hair collages: Use materials such as straw, different colors of yarn, and curly craft hair. Children may glue “hair” onto paper plates, cardboard or sturdy paper.

Paint with ribbons: Pour tempera paint into a pie tin or meat tray. Dip ribbon into the paint. Drag or wiggle the ribbon onto the paper. Experiment with other “hair-like” materials such as yarn, string or chains of beads. Variation: Dip yarn or string into paint as above. Lay the yarn (or string) on a piece of paper with the end sticking out beyond the paper. Fold the paper over on itself and pull out the yarn. Open the paper to see the print.

Cut yarn: Put out scissors. Place long pieces of yarn or string on the table for children to cut into shorter pieces. To make it easier to cut, you may want to tape the yarn/string across a baking pan, tie it around a paper towel tube or hold the yarn between your hands. The tautness will make cutting easier. Any leftover yarn scraps may be used in a collage or other art project.
MORE HAIR

Stand-up Hair: Blow up a balloon and rub it on your hair. Notice how your hair sticks up when you first move the balloon away. Then put the balloon on the wall. The static electricity generated by rubbing on your hair causes the balloon to temporarily stick to the wall.

GROW GREEN HAIR!

To grow grass hair heads you will need:

- Containers such as a Styrofoam cups, scooped out potatoes, ceramic cup or socks
- Grass seed, ask for a fast-germinating type such as rye grass
- Potting soil
- Spoons
- Spray bottles (included in the kit)
- Water
- A warm, well-lit place

What children do:

- Moisten the potting soil with water so that the soil feels thoroughly damp, but not so much that it becomes mud.
- Fill the cups with the moist potting soil leaving about 1 inch between the soil and the tops of the cups.
- Sprinkle about 1 tsp. grass seed on top of the damp soil. Then sprinkle about 1 tsp. of soil over the grass seed.
- If desired, turn the cups into faces by drawing on features with markers or by gluing on construction paper or felt for eyes, nose and mouth.
- Place the cups in a sunny spot.
- Keep the soil moist using the spray bottles provided. Check frequently. The soil may need to be watered twice each day.
- Allow a week or so for the grass to sprout.
- When the grass grows long enough, let the children give haircuts with their scissors.
Here is another option for growing green hair:

- Cut the foot off an old pantyhose or nylon stocking.
- Tie one end.
- Place grass seed inside the bottom where it is tied off and then put the soil over the seeds.
- Tie the other end in a knot.
- Hold the stocking under a faucet with running water until the soil gets thoroughly wet. Squeeze out the excess and reshape the “head.”
- Put the stocking on a tray, making sure the end with the grass seed is on top.
- Keep the soil moist using the spray bottles provided. Check frequently. The soil may need to be watered twice each day.
- Allow a week or so for the grass to begin to sprout.
- When the grass grows long enough, the children can give it a haircut with scissors.

*Important! For both projects it is essential to start with moist soil, keep the soil damp and place the project in a warm spot where the soil will get some sunlight.*

**MAKE A HAIR SANDWICH***

Use rice cakes, toasted bagels or English muffins. Spread with a nut butter or cream cheese.

Invite children to add shredded cheese, sprouts, or coconut to make hair.

Use cut up vegetables, fruits or dried fruits for facial features.

*All cooking projects require adult supervision.*
The Unexpectedly Bad Hair of Barcelona Smith by Keith Graves

Presentation Notes: With rich vocabulary and alliteration, this is a whimsical tale of a boy who always plays it safe until one day his hair goes wild and he must follow. Let the illustrations and context define new vocabulary during the first reading. Use the story to start a discussion about missing out on things because of fear and what it means to take risks. Ask open-ended questions to encourage children to verbalize their ideas.

Cowlick by Christin Ditchfield

Presentation Notes: Two boys wake up to find their hair sticking straight up! Ask children about the word “cowlick” before reading. Afterwards, ask if they think this is what really happens to hair at night. Run your finger under the sound words and have the children make the “slurp” noise with you. Enjoy the rhythm of the rhyming text and let it naturally build the tension towards the humorous conclusion.

Hair By Lola Schaefer

Presentation Notes: Hair is an important part of your body. Use this book, with simple, clear text and real photographs as an introduction to define this topic. Ask the children to respond to the chapter heading questions. Point out words in text boxes and ask children to point to their own eyebrows and eyelashes as appropriate.

Falling for Rapunzel by Leah Wilcox

Presentation Notes: The classic tale of Rapunzel is given a new twist in this silly, rhyming, colorful version. Emphasize the unpredictable and misheard rhymes and define unknown words. Talk about the ending. Is it what the children expected?

Skills Featured:

Print Motivation, Phonological Awareness

Dad’s Bald Head by Paul Many

Presentation Notes: Instead of just shaving his whiskers, one day Pete’s dad decides to shave his whole head. Pete isn’t sure if he likes his dad’s new look. Use this concept to spark a conversation about changes. Point out the before and after pictures of Pete’s dad. Ask children to bring in photos of themselves when they have looked different (perhaps when they were a babies) or share photos of yourself with different hairdos!
MORE GREAT BOOKS!

This is My Hair by Todd Parr

I Love My Hair by Natasha Tarpley

Hats Off to Hair by Virginia Kroll

Where Did Daddy’s Hair Go? by Joe O’Connor

Stephanie’s Ponytail by Robert Munsch

Does Yak Get a Haircut? by Fred Ehrlich

Ella Kazoo Will Not Brush Her Hair by Lee Fox