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!”

TEDDY BEAR DAY

Gather a number of Teddy Bears or ask each child to bring a Teddy Bear from home to play these Teddy Bear Games.

**Compare and Contrast**: Talk about the differences and similarities between the teddy bears. Record the answers on a large sheet of paper.

**Count and Sort**: Count the total number of teddy bears. Sort the teddy bears by categories such as color, size, and bears with clothes. Ask children for their ideas for categories. Count the number of bears in each category.

**Graph**: Make a graph showing the number of bears by categories such as color, size, and what the bears are wearing.

**Weigh**: Have children hold different teddy bears in each hand. Which bear feels heavier? Which feels lighter. Use the balance scale to compare the weights of different bears.

**Dress Up**: Provide baby clothes or doll clothes for the teddy bears and let the children dress up their bears.
TEDDY BEAR PARADE

Materials:
- A box for each child (shoe boxes work fine as do larger cardboard boxes)
- Rope or yarn to pull the boxes
- Crepe paper, stickers, cotton balls, tissue paper, bows, any art materials you have on hand to decorate the boxes
- Tape or glue

Directions:
- Give each child a box with a rope attached (tie the rope at the end to make a handle).
- Let the children decorate their boxes with crepe paper streamers and other art materials.
- When the boxes are decorated, have the children place the teddy bears in the boxes.
- Sing *The Teddy Bears’ Picnic* and have a Teddy Bear Parade.

HEALTHY BEAR CHECK UPS

Children can have fun pretending to be bear doctors by setting up a veterinarian’s office. Use a play doctor’s kit. Help the children make “Open” and “Closed” and other signs for the office. If it is in your budget, add a box of real bandages and some gauze for even more fun. Facial tissues and tape, toilet paper, or scraps of fabric and bandanas are other ways children can bandage injured bears.

Talk about how you can tell if your teddy bear is sick or well and how you can make your teddy bear feel better. Provide paper and pencils or markers along with clipboards for bear doctors to make notes and write prescriptions; including bear hugs and lots of bed rest with the owner.

This is also a great time to learn about healthy bear snacks, fresh air, and exercise. Try doing some exercises with the bears such as jogging, jumping jacks and sit-ups.
TEDDY BEAR CHANT

Say the rhyme and act out the motions according to the words.

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn around.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, touch the ground.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, show your shoe.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, that will do!
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, go upstairs.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, brush your hair.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn off the light.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear say goodnight.

Variation:
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn around,
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, touch the ground,
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, reach up high,
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, wink one eye,
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, slap your knees,
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, sit down please.

CORDUROY ACTIVITIES

ART:

Fabric collages: After reading the book Corduroy by Don Freeman, make collages. Provide cardboard or paper plates, white glue, craft sticks, and corduroy fabric scraps in a variety of colors and abstract shapes.

Button collages: Make collages using heavy paper, cardboard, or paper plates, along with white glue, craft sticks, and a variety of flat buttons. Make collages.

Sewing: Provide string or yarn and large buttons. Children can string buttons or use large plastic tapestry needles to sew the buttons on burlap or on paper plates or cardboard that you have punched with holes ahead of time.

MATH:
Use buttons for math activities. Ice cube trays or egg cartons work well to contain buttons for counting them, sorting them by attributes such as color, size, and type (plastic, wood, metal or 2-holes, 4-holes, etc.), and for creating patterns. Estimate the number of buttons in a small jar. Or, ask children to grab a small handful of buttons and then guess how many buttons are in their hand. Help children count their buttons and compare their estimated number with the actual number of buttons they are holding.
BEARY DELICIOUS BERRY SNACKS*

Blueberry Kabobs  With children’s help, thread blueberries onto skewers.

Frozen Berries  Freeze berries and serve ice cold for a healthy, refreshing snack.

Triple Berry Smoothie

*Ingredients:*
- 1/2 cup strawberries
- 1/2 cup blueberries
- 1/2 cup raspberries
- 1 banana
- 1/2 cup yogurt
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup ice cubes

*Directions:*
Blend the banana, ice, yogurt, milk, and other berries together until a smooth drink is formed.
Pour into a cup and enjoy a very fruity, healthy smoothie.

*(Makes 6 small servings)*

* all cooking activities require adult supervision
Bring books to life with these simple ideas that highlight early literacy skills.

**Corduroy**  
By Don Freeman

**Presentation Notes:**  
Introduce new vocabulary words such as “overalls” and “escalator” and talk about some examples of department stores that they have visited. What did they see there? To emphasize narrative skills, point out the different parts of the story and talk about what happened at the beginning (girl is shopping with Mom and notices a teddy bear); middle (bear goes to look for his missing button); end (girl returns to store, buys bear and brings him home).

**Skills Featured:** Vocabulary, Narrative

**Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear**  
Illustrated by Michael Hague

**Presentation Notes:**  
Invite children to do the actions in the book with you. Do the actions with a teddy bear friend. Actions are described at the back of the book.

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

**Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear?**  
By Nancy White Carlstrom

**Presentation Notes:**  
As Jesse Bear goes through his day, he wears much more than clothes, like the sun on his legs and the kisses on his cheek before bed. The natural rhythm and rhyme in this story makes it a wonderful book to read aloud. After reading, encourage the children to talk about what they wear throughout the day.

**Skills Featured:** Phonological Awareness, Narrative

**Teddy Bear Tears**  
by Jim Aylesworth

**Presentation Notes:**  
A young boy must comfort his teddy bears before they can all go to sleep in this gentle story about fears. Use as a springboard for discussion about feelings by asking open-ended questions as you read aloud such as “Why do you think the teddy bear was scared?” “Do you think the boy made him feel better?” “What do you do to feel better when you get scared?”

**Skill Featured:** Narrative
Presentation Notes:
In this retelling of a classic story, invite children to slap their thighs to the rhythm of the text and to make the sounds with you. Point to the text boxes that feature the action words and encourage the children to think of movements to go along with the text.

Skills Featured: Print Awareness, Phonological Awareness

MORE GREAT BOOKS

Pocket for Corduroy by Don Freeman

Dog and Bear: Two’s Company by Laura Vaccaro Seeger

Ten in the Den by John Butler

Everybody has a Teddy by Virginia Kroll

This is the Bear by Sarah Hayes and Helen Craig

Where’s My Teddy by Jez Alborough