READING TO YOUR CHILD

As parents you have undoubtedly all heard time and time again, that reading is a very good and important thing to do with your children. Many strive to help their child read at a younger and younger age. The importance of reading however goes far beyond learning how to read our ABCs...

STORIES HELP A CHILD TO MAKE SENSE OF THEIR WORLD

To a child, the world is a big place, with lots to learn. Stories help children make sense of their world by turning abstract ideas into concrete pictures and stories. Stories about city life can help the city-dwelling child synthesize the hustle and bustle they see around them on a daily basis, and can help the rural-living child see other ways people live (and vise-versa). Non-fiction books give children ‘a close-up’ look at things they may otherwise not be able to experience – everything from GIANT trains to small insects.

LISTENING TO AN ADULT READ IMPROVES COGNITIVE AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Observing an adult both read and turn pages from left to right provides important information about the act of reading. Listening to the rise and fall of the reader’s voice teaches cadence of the child’s language. And the number of words read from a book add to the quantity of expressive language a child experiences in a day, a key factor in developing their own vocabulary. Books bring new words and a context to put them in – little minds act as sponges pulling it all in.

STORIES OFFER CONCRETE MODELS AND A SAFE PLACE TO LEARN ABOUT AND PRACTICE DIFFERENT EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIORS

The range of human emotions is astounding – for little people, it can also be quite overwhelming. Try
as we might, our emotions simply cannot be boiled down to mad, sad, glad. Stories about a fictional child (human or animal!) experiencing various emotions and behaviours both model how feelings can be handled (for better or for worse) and labels for these different emotions.

**STORIES ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION**

Stories open whole new worlds and characters that children are able to tap into and engage with creatively. Story lines, poems, and rhymes are recreated through art. And not all stories need to have words to be beneficial - some of the most imaginative stories are wordless.

**THE ACT OF READING TOGETHER OFFERS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CHILD AND OTHERS (PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, OTHER CHILDREN, ETC.)**

Perhaps the most important reason to read with your child is the connections it fosters. It’s those moments between the words – the questions and conversations that arise from the story – sitting close and quiet (or not so quiet depending on the book!) Stories stitch together those sweet, fleeting moments in time...

**SO PLEASE, OH PLEASE, WE BEG, WE PRAY, GO THROW YOUR TV SET AWAY, AND IN ITS PLACE YOU CAN INSTALL, A LOVELY BOOKSHELF ON THE WALL**

(ROALD DAHL, CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY)