










# Golden Nuggets: The Value of Early Literacy



**From Reading Is Fundamental website (<http://www.rif.org/>)**  
*America's largest non-profit children's and family literacy organization*

-  Research has shown that by talking, singing, and reading to children, parents are turning on brain cells that are essential for a healthy child. Parents can build reading skills by interacting with their children. By encouraging babies and young children to communicate, parents are laying the foundation for later reading success.
-  Reading to children, even for a few minutes each day, prepares them to read and encourages a positive attitude toward reading. Children who are read to at home learn to read more easily, have a higher vocabulary, and are more likely to develop a love for reading than those who are not read to on a regular basis. Simply put, this cannot be done too early or too often.
-  There is a strong correlation between parental involvement and increased academic achievement. In fact, a home environment that encourages learning is more important to student achievement than the family's income, education level, or cultural background. (Henderson & Berla, 1994).
-  Of all academic subjects, reading has been found to be the most sensitive to family influence. In 1994, the College Board established a correlation between reading and family support for their children's efforts. Reading achievement is felt to be more dependent on learning activities in the home than is either math or science. Moreover, success in reading appears to be the gateway to success in other academic areas as well.
-  The availability of reading material in the home, whether owned or borrowed from the library, is directly associated with children's achievement in reading comprehension (Lee & Croninger, 1994).

## **From "Take 20" Bookmark (Al Greenfield research)**

-  Five-year-olds starting school come in knowing 4,000 – 12,000 words. Children need to know 10,000 – 12,000 words to be successful readers. Children who are read to, talked to, and played with 1 hour a day from birth learn about 10,000 words by age 5. Children who are read to, talked to, and played with 2 minutes a day from birth learn about 4,000 words by age 5.
-  Homes where parents read to their children, model reading, talk to and with their children, and play games with the children develop more language for children.

## **From Other Sources**

-  One of the best predictors of whether a child will function competently in school and go on to contribute actively in our increasingly literate society is the level to which the child progresses in reading and writing. (Int'l. Reading Assn. & Nat'l. Assn. for the Education of Young Children)
-  Early stimulation of infants and toddlers results in profound and permanent changes in brain structure, increasing depth of the cerebral cortex and developing dendrites and synapses. Such stimulation is nothing fancy, but merely talking and reading to the baby and active play that frequently introduces unfamiliar toys. The most dramatic improvement occurs if the stimulation comes before the age of 1 year, but it is substantial to age 3. (From 4/1996 article by Jane Resh Thomas re: papers presented at meeting of the American Assn. for the Advancement of Science)

- ✎ We were awestruck at how well our measures of accomplishments at age 3 predicted measures of language skill at age 9 – 10. ... Vocabulary use at age 3 was equally predictive of measures of language skill at age 9 – 10. (Betty Hart & Todd R. Risley in the *American Educator*, Spring 2003)
- ✎ One million children ages 12 to 17 cannot read above a third grade level. Some 27 million adult Americans are functionally illiterate. ... The nation spends up to \$6 billion annually on welfare and jobless aid for the illiterate, who account for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of unemployed. (*U.S. News & World Report*)
- ✎ Why read to your child?
  - You build positive attitudes toward books and learning.
  - You show your child how important she is.
  - You bond with your child.
  - You often use formal English rather than “everyday spoken language” when reading literature. This helps your child develop an ear for written language and increases his vocabulary.
  - Your child learns to listen, focus, and concentrate.
  - You share an experience with your child.
  - You bring marks on the paper to life, thus illustrating the connection between writing and reading.
  - Reading certain sorties can be a valuable tool in addressing concerns and provoking further conversation on the matter.
  - It's fun!