

Read with Steve & Lauren: Spilling the Secrets to Early Literacy

Webinar Takeaways from Steve Metzger & Dr. Lauren Loquasto

Key Takeaways

- It's never too early to start reading to your children. In fact, babies respond to being read to prenatally!
- There's no fast track to reading. Some of the best ways to encourage early literacy are to model reading yourself, have a print-rich environment (magnetic words on the fridge, hand-written lists, books in different rooms) and have conversations with your children to help build their vocabulary.
- Literacy is more than reading and writing. It's listening and speaking. Your child is actively listening as you read with them. Studies have shown children understand a lot more words before they articulate them.
- If your child sits with a book, flips pages and makes up stories they are on the literacy track!
- Think about books in a different way for reluctant readers. Keep books around as you do other things like build blocks. Use books for reference to help build a castle together!
- Choose books that are printed with text that goes left to right and from top to bottom.
- Young children may develop the ability to "word call" or memorize words in the correct order of a story. That does not mean that they can read.
- Introduce your readers to both fiction and non-fiction books.
- Looking at pictures in books is an important part of literacy. It helps children develop their comprehension skills.
- Choose books that interest your child. If they have only one favorite book, that's okay! It's familiar and comforting. Try to figure out what they love about that book and slowly introduce similar books.
- If you have a bilingual household, encourage reading in both languages! When you speak multiple languages and iterations of sounds, you're accelerating their literacy by building phonological awareness. •

How Goddard Teaches Literacy

Goddard's education program is built on the most current research on how children learn. Early literacy begins with rich vocabulary and communication with the child. Starting in our Infant classrooms and progressing all the way through our Schools, children are exposed to fiction and non-fiction books on a regular basis as well as books that focus on different social-emotional concepts. The pairing of fiction and non-fiction is unique to Goddard and unique in an early childhood approach. This allows children to read a fictional storybook but then also build authentic background knowledge on what the story is based upon.

For example, a child may be reading *Stella Luna*, a fiction book, but also *Bat Loves the Night*. This way they can make realistic comparisons to what they're reading in the fiction book to what's occurring in the lifecycle of a bat. Eventually, Goddard students will learn code breaking: determining that a squiggle represents a sound that they hear, that the sound is represented by a letter, that letters representing different sounds make words, and that words are represented, usually, by a corresponding picture in a children's book. This pattern of behavior leads to reading. •