Why is Book Appreciation important?

Developing young children's appreciation for books and their motivation to read are fundamental goals during the early years.

- For nearly every child, the process of learning to read becomes difficult at some point along the way.
- Young children who are motivated to learn to read are more likely to persist when they encounter challenges.
- The more a child reads the better reader he/she becomes.
- Children who LIKE reading are almost always better readers.

Interactive book reading is one of the most effective strategies for promoting book knowledge.

- The adult/parent can clarify a child’s misunderstanding.
- The adult/parent can extend a child’s idea or ask a probing question.
- The adult/parent can support vocabulary development
- The adult/parent can make the experience fun.
- The adult/parent helps build self confidence.
- The adult/parent engages in conversation and communication.
- The adult/parent can engage in an activity the promotes physical closeness to the child.

Books are important tools for learning that require special knowledge and handling.

- Children need to learn how to hold the book and turn the pages from front to back.
- Children also learn the elements of the book and where to look for them.
  - Where is the cover?
  - How do we know the name of the book and who wrote it (the author)? Who drew the pictures (the illustrator)?
  - Where do I start reading?
  - What are letters?
  - What are words?
  - Where do I go next (left to right and top to bottom)?
- To gain the most benefit from books, children need hands-on experience with them and adult guidance.
- The books must be accessible and in children's hands
- Young children, especially those who have had little experience with books, will need adults to demonstrate careful handling of books.
**Child Book Knowledge & Appreciation Learning Stages**

1. Shows growing interest and involvement in listening to and discussing a variety of fiction and non-fiction books and poetry.
2. Shows growing interest in reading-related activities, such as asking to have a favorite book read; choosing to look at books; drawing pictures based on stories; asking to take books home; going to the library; and engaging in pretend-reading with other children.
3. Demonstrates progress in abilities to retell and dictate stories from books and experiences; to act out stories in dramatic play; and to predict what will happen next in a story.
4. Progresses in learning how to handle and care for books; knowing to view one page at a time in sequence from front to back; and understanding that a book has a title, author, and illustrator.

**Book Knowledge & Appreciation Strategies**

- Read one-on-one to children on laps or snuggled close by.
- Read the same book over and over if children request it.
- Actively engage children in reading time—asking questions about the book before reading it (such as where is the cover or title), posing questions that call on them to predict what will happen, noticing cause-effect relationships, chanting with rhyme and patterns.
- Assist children in seeking information in books or using books as resources to help solve problems ("What does the space shuttle really look like so we can build it with blocks?").
- Make sure literacy experiences are fun, meaningful, and interesting.
- Teach children how to properly care for and handle books, protect the spine, turn pages slowly so they do not tear, and when necessary participate in repairing books as needed. Model respect and careful handling of books.
- Have children make their own books, either individually or as a collaborative group project.
- Provide an inviting, cozy, comfortable book area in the home.
- Plan times during the day when children select their own books to look at alone or with a friend.
- Read to children several times a day, every day, expressively and enthusiastically. Read favorite books repeatedly when requested.
- Use books as resources to support children's play (how to build a dog house or draw a dinosaur).
- Talk with children about their favorite books and authors.
- Provide ways for children to receive books to keep.
- Support parents in telling stories, reading to children, and talking about books at home.
- Provide opportunities to get library cards. Encourage them to take their child to the library to check out books and to attend "story hours."
- Suggest opportunities to borrow or exchange books from other family members.