

Literacy Needs for Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities have the same need for literacy as everyone else, whether that person will ever read or not. Emergent literacy activities involve both speaking and listening. There are many websites that can help parents with emergent literacy activities for their children. (Please see the list of websites.) Children with disabilities need to be talked to, read to, and exposed to a variety of print and picture materials. Emergent literacy is a process that begins at birth. The Arc Michigan Education Committee believes that every parent needs to expose his/her child to a literacy-rich environment, interacting with the child as much as possible. Early (emergent) literacy provides the basis for future success in family, community, and work environments.

Parents can do things like:

- Open mail with your child
- Point out street signs while driving
- Read picture/repetitive books to your child
- Make sure your child's teacher provides a literacy-rich environment at school and includes literacy goals in the child's IEP
- Read labels on the child's favorite foods
- Name objects around the house, and the toys your child plays with
- Respond to, and expand upon, anything your child says

Remember that literacy is more than reading. Literacy is interacting with the world around us.

Websites Addressing Literacy for Individuals with Disabilities

www.ala.org – Great websites for kids

www.zerotothree.org

www.jstart.org – jumpstart for children

www.literacy.uconn.edu – special education organizations and websites

www.teachingideas.co.uk/english/contents

www.route66literacy.org – helping people with developmental disabilities learn to read

www.accessmylibrary.com

www.uni.edu/inclusion/index.htm

www.ccids.umaine.edu/resources/fcmaine/litdd.html