

# Tip Sheet: Promote Print Awareness Through Storybook Reading

## FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

For additional support on this topic, visit <https://bit.ly/QTPrintAware> to view a short video.

### WHY?

Developing **print awareness** is a crucial first step for children learning to read. Understanding that printed words carry meaning gives children a genuine purpose to read: They want to understand that printed message!

### WHAT?

Children begin to develop print awareness when they understand that letters represent spoken sound. Print awareness is their understanding of what print is and how we use it.

Children with print awareness, understand that:

- Print has different purposes, such as labeling items, giving instructions, alerting to a warning, or telling a story.
- Print always goes in a certain direction. In English, text is written from left to right and top to bottom. This is called the **directionality of print**.
- Letters work together make words.
- Spaces separate printed words.
- There are special signals in print, such as capital letters and punctuation marks, to help readers understand the printed message.

Print awareness helps children understand how books work. This includes knowledge about:

- The parts of a book, such as the front and back cover, spine, title, title page, and page numbers.
- The roles of the author and the illustrator in the creation of a book.

### HOW?

Sharing a read aloud is the perfect opportunity to show children how print works. While reading with children, you can:

- Talk about the parts of the book.
- Talk about the author and illustrator.
- Track your finger under the text as you read to show directionality. Ask the children show you where you should read next.
- Ask children to find a particular letter that they are familiar with on the page, such as "s." Remind them of the sound that letter makes and then read the word that has that letter.
- Ask children to find long or short words on the page. Read those words aloud. Counting the number of letters in the words helps children notice the different lengths.



### TEACHER TIP

Creating a print-rich early learning environment is another great way to support children developing print awareness. Filling your space with labels, signs, charts, and a variety of reading materials help children understand the purpose of written text.