

# Once Upon A Time...

## BOOKS, BOOKS, AND MORE BOOKS:

*They're a vital part of your child's development!*

**B**ooks are fertile soil for exploring the world. Through reading, children learn about people, places and problems. Books help clarify ideas and feelings. They excite the imagination. Young children who are read to become better readers. In fact, reading helps children develop in all areas.

- **Children learn words and how they go together.** Listening to stories over and over helps children learn patterns of speech. They discover how words combine to form sentences, and how we use our voice to show meaning.

- **Symbols begin to make sense.** Through experience with books, young children learn that pictures and letters stand for something. This is a first step in becoming a reader.

- **Reading lays a foundation for building reading skills.** Over time, children learn that we read from left to right, and that stories have a sequence with a beginning, middle and end. They learn to anticipate and predict what will happen, and develop ways to remember. By hearing a story repeatedly, and noticing the words on the page, children gradually recognize how letters go with sounds, and how certain words look. They do this on their own, according to their timing. All we have to do is read to them!

- **Children can explore thoughts and feelings.** Books are a safe way to talk about fears and difficult moments in life. By reading to children, they discover that they're not alone in their feelings, and have a chance to consider solutions and alternatives. They're also a great opener for parents to find out what's on a child's mind.

- **Eye-hand coordination is encouraged.** When babies practice turning the pages of a book, or look at illustrations, they're strengthening the use of their eyes and hands together.

- **Reading to a child relaxes and soothes her.** And, snuggling up with a good book is one of the most intimate ways of connecting with your child.