

READING TO CHILDREN

A wise New Year's resolution for parents is to talk more to their young children by reading aloud to them.

Researchers have found that the more parents talk during a child's first three years of life, the more the child's vocabulary and IQ improve. The children also become more prepared for school. Additionally, the more parents speak encouraging words, the better the children become.

Books can be a means of talk. Committing to and developing the habit of reading every day can go a long way in helping your child be more successful in life.

Children benefit when parents take them in their arms, cuddle them and talk to them through the magic of books. Reading aloud strengthens parent-child bonds. Books are a natural way to expose children to new words and positive conversation. They guide children to more complex thinking, and they help children discover new thoughts and ideas.

Children who have lots of books read to them are more likely to develop an enhanced vocabulary and IQ by the time they enter school. Most children's books are usually encouraging and positive.

When parents use a greater proportion of words that are affirming, approving and encouraging, it makes a vast difference for their child's future.

Reading is a purposeful way parents can increase their child's exposure to words. Daily reading is recommended. A simple way to incorporate daily reading is by reading a book each night at the youngster's bedtime.

Reading a short book also is a great way to help a child "wind down" and prepare to sleep. Let this become a daily routine for you and your baby. Over time, this will become a favorite time for you and your child.

Parents make the big difference in the success of their children – more than school teachers do, more than early child caregivers do. Daily reading is one way parents can really help their children have a great future.

For information on related family and consumer topics, visit the FCS Web site at <http://www.lsuagcenter.com/Inst/Extension/Departments/fcs/> For local information and educational programs, contact Kim Evans, extension agent in your parish LSU AgCenter office. This office is located in Room 22 of the LaSalle Parish Courthouse and the telephone number is 992-2205.