

EVERY WORD COUNTS is a series of six books that offers practical ideas for supporting young children’s language development and early learning. The books cover the age range from birth to five years. We have used pictures, speech bubbles, written explanations, questions and suggestions to stimulate discussion and offer practical ideas for supporting learning in families. We trust that families and caregivers will add this knowledge to what they already know and be able to adapt these ideas to their context to benefit the children in their care.

**Book 1** tells how babies and very young children learn to communicate and play. It describes how families and caregivers can easily interact with and respond to babies in a loving and trusting way as they go about their daily activities. Loving and nurturing relationships are the foundation of early learning.

**Book 2** focuses on communication with children from three to five years. By three years children really enjoy interacting with caregivers, as they understand more about their world and are ready to think more critically. Through responding to children, including them in conversations and sharing stories about everyday events, caregivers can play a powerful role in building young children’s language.

**Book 3** introduces the many aspects of play for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years. . Children naturally learn through play and need caregivers who sometimes follow their lead, and sometimes participate more actively in supporting their play. There are many simple ways of creating opportunities for play and having fun with young children.

**Book 4** shows howfamilies and caregivers canshare books with babies and children up to five years. Book sharing from an early age is one of the most enjoyable activities families can do together. Interactive story reading with young children builds important foundations for later learning. Children are never too young or too old for stories!

**Book 5** describes how young children begin to draw, make marks and write using a mixture of scribbles and letters. By praising young children’s attempts and helping them to notice things around them, children become confident at drawing their world. When children are encouraged and given opportunities they soon realise that writing is enjoyable and has a purpose, and they are on their way to becoming writers!

**Book 6** explains how parents and caregivers can use everyday activities to enjoy and build maths concepts with young children. Using numbers, shapes and measurement in fun or purposeful ways from an early age helps children develop the underlying knowledge and skills they will need for maths at school.

