

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

AND LITERACY

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All the world's a stage, and kids love to dance, sing, act and paint their experiences on the world stage (or at least in the living room). Encouraging your child's artistic expression not only provides an outlet for all that creative energy, but it also supplies many opportunities to practice important literacy skills.

What better way to tap your child's creativity than with the entertainment or weekend sections of your local newspaper? These sections often contain information that your child is already interested in: the latest reviews of movies, music and books; interviews with performers and artists; advertisements for new restaurants; and movie show times. From glass blowing to fiddle playing, there's probably something in the newspaper that will spark your child's creative curiosity.

The entertainment section offers lots of opportunities to practice open-ended questioning with your child. Open-ended questions are questions that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer. One of the easiest ways to try out open-ended questions is to start with the "W" questions – who, what, where, when and why. The next time your child expresses interest in a particular movie, book or TV program, ask

some of the "W" questions. Who is in the movie? Who is the main character in the TV show? Who wrote the book? What is it about? Where and when does it take place? And why does your child want to see the movie or read the book?

Listen for opportunities to expand on your child's answers. If she tells you who is in the movie or who wrote the book, ask if she's seen other programs with that actor or read other books by that writer. If she tells you the book takes place in England, ask her what she knows

about England. Can she find it on a map? Questions lead to conversations, and conversations are one of the best ways to build oral language, vocabulary and comprehension skills.

The entertainment section of your newspaper often is full of unusual photographs – dancers caught in flight, actors in extraordinary costumes and makeup, and exhibits of clay figurines or ceramic pottery. Take a visual tour of the entertainment section with your child. Point out interesting pictures and ask your child what he thinks is happening in the photo. Or, ask him to describe what he sees in as much detail as possible.

If your child is already a reader, cover up the headline so that he can't tell what the article is about. Then, read the headline aloud, and talk about how the photograph helped your child predict the details of the story. Making predictions is a good pre-reading strategy to help kids think about what they are about to read so that it's more meaningful for them. Looking at and talking about photographs and illustrations in the context of a story help children build important print awareness skills.

"Magical!" "Best ever!" "Enchanting!" "Fantastic!" Have you ever noticed how many exclamation points appear in the movie and

