Many things we need can wait. The child cannot. Now is the time his bones are formed; his mind developed. To him we cannot say tomorrow, his name is today. — Gabriela Mistral

Literacy Lava supports your kids’ reading, writing and communicating with creativity

In this fourth edition of Literacy Lava, you’ll find ideas for nurturing creative thinking, ways to use magazines with your kids, ideas for raising book-loving boys, what to do if your child is not into writing, how to encourage your child to love reading, ways to promote inquisitiveness through hands-on learning, how to help kids make connections through story extensions, and all about getting kids to tell stories through movie-making. Don’t forget to check out the Online Extras page, and the Activity page for kids.

Our hope is that with Literacy Lava, you and your kids will have fun, while building the skills they need to read, write and communicate successfully. Please spread the word about the magic of children’s literacy by sharing your copy of Literacy Lava with a friend.

Don’t miss the Literacy Blog Tour from March 8-14! Share a Story-Shape a Future was a huge success last year, and this year’s theme is “It takes a village to raise a reader”. Just think about all the wonderful people who encourage our children towards literacy. There will be fascinating insights from writers, parents, bloggers, teachers - all with a literacy message.

The Book Chook, editor.

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Contributors to Literacy Lava

Catherine Oehlman shares ideas and inspiration for raising kids on her blog at SquiggleMum. She is a mother, teacher, writer, picture book lover and award winning blogger. You can find Cath squigging about literacy and other topics close to her heart in many online and print publications.

Jeanne Grant Webb is an Aussie mum who homeschools her daughter, Jemimah, using the methods developed by English educator, Charlotte Mason. Instead of school at home, Jemimah learns through literature, not textbooks. Her days are filled with music and art appreciation, nature study, poetry, foreign language and Shakespeare, along with many hours each day spent outside.

Jeanne’s blog, A Peaceful Day, allows her to indulge her all-consuming love of children’s literature – particularly Australian literature – as well as writing about all the other things that help children love to learn. Come and join the conversation!

Links to Literacy

Dawn Little is the founder of Links to Literacy, an educational consulting company dedicated to providing interactive learning experiences for children and families. In addition, Dawn runs two blogs: Picture This! Teaching with Picture Books where she provides educators and parents with picture book resources to teach reading comprehension and writing strategies, and Literacy Toolbox where she offers tips and tools for educators and parents to enhance the literacy lives of children.

Chatel Village

Visit Chatel Village, the fuzziest site on the net! Cyber-home to author Kim Chatel and her creations. There’s fun for kids and parents including recipes, crafts, book and movie reviews, contests and more. Check it out at www.kimchatel.com.

Imagination Soup

Imagination Soup is a learning activities blog for inquisitive kids written by Melissa Taylor, mom, teacher and writer. When you need a fun reading, writing, science or math activity, stop by Imagination Soup, read and subscribe. Imagination Soup will give you simple ways to integrate learning with your kids (ages 2 – 12) at home. We promise you and your kids will have lots of FUN! Melissa Taylor created Imagination Soup with you in mind. She’s an educational freelance writer. Read about Melissa and her published work on her website.

The Almost Librarian

The Almost Librarian blog celebrates and promotes early childhood education, early literacy and family by providing on-line resources, book and music recommendations, and activity ideas for parents, caregivers, librarians and teachers.

teach mama

Amy Mascott is the creator of teachmama, where she shares the ways that she sneaks a little bit of learning into her children’s every day. As a Reading Specialist and former high school English teacher, Amy’s focus for teachmama is to empower parents by providing them with the tools and resources they need to be the best teachers they can be for their children.
One of the skills we know kids will need to take their place successfully in the 21st Century is creativity. No matter what they choose to do with their lives, they will need to be able to think both creatively and critically, to solve problems, and innovate in their chosen field.

I believe there is a well of creativity inside all of us. I also believe that as parents and teachers, it is up to us to nurture our kids’ creative side. Too much that happens in society, in school and even in families can stifle creativity and lead to kids who are afraid to think outside the box.

So how do we encourage our kids to be creative? Is it a matter of ensuring they have every afternoon after school filled with extracurricular lessons in ballet, bagpipes, and bassoon? AAAGH! On the contrary, one of the best ways to encourage your child to be creative, is to ensure she gets time to play, and has a break from formal learning. Filling children’s entire lives with lessons is more likely to kill their creativity and lead to exhausted kids.

Instead, stimulate your child’s creative side by encouraging a way of thinking. I have four favourite phrases I use in my interactions with children that help to do this:

• What if...
• Let’s pretend...
• How could we...?
AND
• Yes, let’s!

Let’s look at a typical scene in a family’s life. Your kids are mooching around on a wet day, annoying each other and teasing the cat. Finally one whines, “But there’s nothing to do-oo!” You look around at the video games, the hundreds of dollars worth of Lego, and instead of pointing out the obvious, you use one of the first three phrases, or something similar. “What if we were stranded on a desert island. I wonder what we could find to play with there?” “Let’s pretend we’re pirates and set up the lounge room as our ship.” “How could we make our own board game, and what could it be about?”

At first, the pronoun to use is “we”. Sometimes, kids want us to be involved; sometimes they just think they do. Smart parents help to get the ball rolling with guiding questions, then gradually withdraw so that the kids are in control.

And the fourth phrase? So often, we have reasons not to get involved in our children’s games and plans. Parents who work full time and then come home to dinner preparation, laundry, house and yard work have all my sympathy. How can they be expected to play instead?

I think it’s a matter of playing smarter. Replace “Not now!” with “Yes, let’s!” Here’s how it works. Your four-year-old has his superhero suit on, and he wants you to join him in a game of pretend. Try “Yes, let’s be superheroes. I’ll be WitchyWoman, making potions here in the kitchen, and you have to sneak up on me and capture me.” This gives you a chance to cook the dinner, but still take a role. Just try to keep the eye of newt out of your stew!

With older kids, say they want to build a clubhouse. We can all think of the things that can go wrong with such a plan, but if we say “Yes, let’s!” just think of all the imagining, the planning, the creating, the innovating, the substituting and the risk-taking they will do. Again, you might need to be involved at first, but gradually withdrawing means they have to look inside themselves for resources.

Using those phrases often, when kids are building, painting, constructing, writing, even just hanging around, encourages them in a habit of creative thinking that will never run dry.
Let’s Give Magazines a Little More Love

- by Amy Mascott, teachmama

Magazines are oftentimes an overlooked—but incredibly important—type of text for emerging readers. Parents seem to only consider picking up a magazine or ordering a magazine subscription for their children if their kids are older and strong, avid readers.

However, magazines should be a top priority for little ones, even those who might not be inclined to settle down and relax with a book. Magazines—especially those designed for emerging readers—can be engaging, interactive, packed with a wide range of interesting articles. Magazines are full of new and exciting text features that even emerging readers can understand and will appreciate seeing in each issue.

My 6-year-old, Maddy, has subscribed to High Five for two years, and Owen, 4 years old, has loved reading My Big Back Yard, since his third birthday. Recently, we’ve added Highlights to the mix, since Maddy is able to read more on her own.

But what I realized one day last fall was that I never really talked with my children about the differences—structural or content-wise—between their magazines and the books that they read.

I know you don’t always have to over-analyze or go into great detail explaining things like this in order for kiddos to enjoy them, but I thought if I made the differences a “hunt” it could be fun. And mentioning the terms that Maddy would soon be hearing in Kindergarten might help to prepare her for those lessons. So I made the hunt into a game, and I found that over the past few months, as each new issue has arrived, we’ve pulled out the cards and hunted through new issues.

The first time we used our Magazine Hunt cards, I said, “Who’s up for playing detective with our new magazines?”

I flipped the first card and read, “Stick a note on the story you want to read most.”

Then I said, “I asked if you were up for being detectives today, so we’re going to use these cards (I showed them the pile of Magazine Hunt cards) to tell us what to search for. Everything we need to find is inside these magazines. (Here are the Magazine Hunt Cards to download.)

I went about halfway through the deck, searching for authors, titles, recipes, comics, drawings, table of contents, and things that were funny or interesting. It was way too much for Cora (2 years old), but Maddy and Owen really loved it. They both pretty much refused to move on until I read through the stories they found most interesting, and the reading took a while.

Forced into reading with three captive listeners? I’ll take it any day. And my kids—and many others just like them—will continue checking the mailbox for their new magazines as long as the magazines keep coming.

This simple Magazine Hunt activity can be used again and again with new magazines and older ones since it always seems to give them new "eyes" with which they can read and enjoy magazines.
Book Loving Boys
by Catherine Oehlman

So what exactly should we be doing to ensure our boys value a great read? Here are some tips for raising book-loving young boys.

**Age 0-1:**
- It’s never too early to start! Initially look for cloth books with no more than a sentence on each page.
- Establish a bedtime story routine. Either hold baby on your lap while you read a very short story, or place baby down on his back in the cot and hold the book in the air above him. If possible, have Mum and Dad take turns reading to baby. Research shows the positive impact fathers have on their sons’ reading.
- Allow him to explore “play” books (with chewy corners, rattles etc) and board books in his own way.

**Age 1-2:**
- Continue with the bedtime routine, encouraging your son to sit still on your lap for the duration of the story. It’s important that he learns to sit and concentrate for a few minutes.
- Select sturdy board books with limited text and repetitive phrases.
- Boys like to be physically involved with books, so help him to turn pages. Stories with touch and feel elements are often well received.
- Begin allowing your son to choose which book he would like to hear. Show him two and ask whether he would like “Title X” or “Title Y”. He may point, show excitement about one cover, or use a key word.

**Age 2-3:**
- Begin extending the time you expect your son to be able to sit and listen to a story. Remember that 5 minutes is a long time for a little boy.
- Select board books with great story-lines, and read each one like it’s a great story! Be animated with your face and expressive with your voice. You have to love it for him to love it.
- Allow your son to begin selecting one or two library books.
- Model how to gently turn “real” pages.

**Age 3-4:**
- Continue extending story time up to 10 minutes. This will really help him when he gets to school.
- Keep choosing exciting stories with great plots. Look for opportunities to use character voices and add sound effects to make the story jump off the page.
- Teach your son to treat books carefully and turn pages appropriately.
- Help him to borrow some library books of his own choosing with his own card.

**Age 4-5:**
- Don’t give up on bedtime reading for the pure enjoyment when he hits school!
- Allow your son to make more book choices of his own, but keep the balance in favour of fiction. At this stage he still needs the structure and flow of narrative texts.
- When reading favourites, either leave spaces for your son to jump in with the text, or get a few words wrong as you go. This always gets a giggle and allows for great interaction between readers and text.
- Make sure your son hears and sees men reading. If it can’t be Dad, try a grandfather, uncle or friend. Before your son launches into independent reading it’s imperative that he knows real men read.
If you’re anything like me, you panic when your child hates something important like reading or writing. Kids dislike writing for a variety of reasons – it’s hard to get your hands to make letters, it’s hard to figure out how to spell words, it’s hard to transfer thoughts onto paper, it’s hard to think of something to write about . . .

Take the pain out of writing. Make it fun. Write more. More writing = less hard = less hating = improvement. Practice does not make perfect but it does make better.

**Support, Stock and de-Stress**

**Support**

Model:

- Let your kids see you writing – in a notebook, in a journal or a letter
- Model finding writing ideas. Let wonderful moments inspire you to exclaim, “I must write about this later . . .” or “This is something I MUST write!”

**Play:**

- Have fun with letters and words: hangman, scrabble, magnetic poetry.

**Encourage:**

- Positive, specific compliments like “You are a writer who notices details” or “Your writing sounds like YOU, which means you have good writing ‘voice’!”

**Discover:**

- Find opportunities for writing – you and your child: grocery lists, letters or calendar schedules.

**Stock**

Fill up your home with appealing writing supplies and materials. Leave them out and accessible for writing, discovery and practice. Rotate or add new things throughout the month.

- **Writing Instruments:** colored pencils, pencils, crayons, markers.
- **Writing Supplies:** paper, card stock, stationery, index cards, envelopes, dry erase board, blank books ([www.barebooks.com](http://www.barebooks.com)), diaries, notebooks, notepads, sticky notes, recycled paper.
- **Writing Storage:** file folders, baskets, plastic containers.
- **Writing Extras:** clipboard, dictionary, stickers, stamps, magazines, glue, scissors, stapler, tape, stencils, ruler, old thank you notes, old Christmas cards.

**De-Stress**

Don’t worry if your child hates writing. I fretted for months that my daughter would hate writing forever. As soon as I relaxed and stopped pushing so hard – even though she was behind in class, even though she might always hate writing – her writing blossomed. (Also, a new year with a new teacher helped a lot.) Yes, she was behind her classmates but guess what I learned?

Comparing her with other kids isn’t and wasn’t fair. She’s her own unique self who has her own growth continuum. It’s okay if that’s not the same as anyone else. Really. Progress is progress. So, encourage growth, stock up with writing supplies and don’t stress. (And if you do stress, use it for inspired journal writing.)
As parents we all have great hopes for our children. Some of these look remarkably similar no matter whose window you peek into. We hope our kids will be happy, healthy and well adjusted. We hope they’ll find work that they’ll enjoy, and be financially independent. We hope they’ll find happy loving relationships of their own.

Other hopes differ from family to family. Some parents want their children to follow a particular faith. Others want theirs to love the outdoors - or music - or ballet. Still others dream that their kids will kick the winning goal in their team’s football grand final or make it big in Hollywood.

I want my daughter to love reading. Why? Because a love of reading brings a lifetime of pleasure.

I want Jemimah to feel like I do when I am almost at the end of a really good book, and the house isn’t tidy and the dinner’s not made and I couldn’t care less. I just want to know what happens on the last page.

Books are full of surprise, excitement and imagination. They edify, amaze, instruct, delight, amuse, and improve. Books are places of mystery, enchantment and happiness. They bring solace on a bad day, insight and refreshment. They bring a little bit of delight and contentment to every day. Books allow you to dream.

That’s what I want for my daughter.

Every time Jemimah reads a good book, it shapes her personality. It helps her become a more rounded person. She makes friends with novelists, poets, philosophers, scientists, mathematicians, artists, musicians, historians, and explorers. She is allowed to wonder, to ask why and how. She gains wisdom. She learns lessons in humility, kindness and perseverance. She learns values.

That is why selecting the right children’s books is so important. When Quentin Blake was appointed England’s first Children’s Laureate in 1999, he said, “Children’s … books, at their best are primers in the development of the emotional, the moral, the imaginative life. And they can be a celebration of what it is like to be a human being. That is why they are important.”

If children’s literature reflects the values of society and instils those values into our children, then be sure those values are the ones you want to see in them as they grow. Choosing the right books is really critical because they influence who our children become.

Start building a library of the best of children’s literature. Start surrounding your kids with the best books. Start reading good books aloud – every day. Visit the local library, and help them choose. Talk about books – what you’re reading; what they are. Make books part of your life.

Books are everywhere in my home and in my life. Our life is full of real literature.

And you know what? It is paying off. Yesterday I found seven-year-old Jemimah snuggled on the living room sofa engrossed in Roald Dahl’s Matilda. She didn’t see me enter the room, and she didn’t hear me leave.

I was a very happy mummy indeed.
Here are a few ideas for creating Discovery Baskets to build your child’s background knowledge:

- **Family Trip** – prior to taking a family trip, create a discovery basket about the place you will be visiting. Consider something specific to the area.
- **Museum Trip** – prior to taking your child to a new museum, create a discovery basket about something that your child may see or experience there.
- **School** – prior to your child beginning school, create a discovery basket about school and the types of things that one might do or see there.
- **Art Museum** – prior to taking your child to an art museum, create a discovery basket about a specific artist or time period of art.

Children learn through curiosity. Touching, feeling, and exploring; in essence play is children’s work. We can encourage and promote inquisitiveness in children through hands-on learning.

**Discovery Baskets**

Discovery Baskets provide sensory experiences that help build background knowledge, which is essential to comprehending texts. Consider creating a Discovery Basket to help your child make the most of new experiences.

Discovery Baskets are made up of items related to a topic. Items that can provide a hands-on experience for a child, as well as texts related to that topic (both fiction and nonfiction) are placed in a basket.

**Using Discovery Baskets**

1. Allow your child to immerse himself in the hands-on experience. Feel the item(s), play with the item(s). Talk about the item(s). What is its purpose?
2. Read about the topic. Provide both fiction and nonfiction books. Use the nonfiction books to help answer any questions your child may have.
3. If possible, tie the items to the books chosen for the basket.
4. Discuss the topic. Ask your child to make connections to the books read and to the information learned.

Here is an example from our family:

Prior to making our annual beach trip, I wanted to build my kids’ background knowledge about the beach. Our Discovery Basket included: shells, a bag of sand, several books about shells, and a custom made inflatable beach ball. Our Hands-on Experience included feeling and discussing the different shells, counting the shells, and sorting the shells by size (a sneaky math lesson!). We put our hands in the bag and felt the sand. We discussed how it felt. We also created a craft. We bought an inexpensive wooden frame and I hot glued the shells on to the frame. We then had a frame for a picture from our trip. We moved on to reading about shells. Finally, we discussed how our shells were similar or different from the shells in the books. We used the beach ball to toss back and forth. The ball had comprehension statements to help us connect our background knowledge with our book knowledge. If I had a beach bucket large enough to fit hard cover books, I would have used that as our “basket.”

Discovery Baskets are a fantastic way to combine reading with hands-on learning. Providing Discovery Baskets for your child provides a natural connection to his own curiosities about the world. Having background knowledge about topics helps children comprehend what they read. By building upon the world knowledge of your child now, you are setting a foundation that will only serve to guide them as they become independent readers.
Simple Story Extensions
by Valerie Baartz, The Almost Librarian

Preschool-aged children are learning all the time from experiences at home, at school and out in the world. As they try to make sense of their world, preschool children sort new information in different ways. One way is to mesh new information into existing knowledge to form a deeper understanding. Another way is to change their existing knowledge to accommodate new knowledge, and create new understanding that way. The more connections young children make about their world, the deeper and more meaningful their understanding.

What does this mean in regards to reading stories? When children spend time listening to stories, they are taking in lots of new knowledge, and making connections and changes to what they already know. This all by itself is wonderful. But what if you, as a caregiver, could provide experiences to make this meaning and knowledge even deeper for the children by offering simple story extensions to build on their understanding of the new information?

First of all, what IS a story extension? A story extension occurs when you’ve shared a story or book together and afterwards you naturally infuse related activities into your day-to-day routine. These activities might include songs, fingerplays, poems, additional related books, crafts, storytelling, authoring books, reader’s theater, cooking, pretend play – the sky is the limit!

While it might appear overwhelming, creating story extensions is actually an easy task to accomplish. You need a little creativity, a little time, and a few supplies. Here are some tips to get you started and some sample ideas – remember that you can’t go wrong in being creative. Also, these are opportunities to have fun as well as spend quality time with your children.

Story Extension Samples

Cooking: After you read a gingerbread story like Gingerbread Baby by Jan Brett, plan on baking gingerbread cookies with your little ones on the same day. While you’re in the kitchen working through the recipe together, you can talk about the story. You can make some wondering statements such as “I wonder what would happen if our cookies jumped up off our cookie sheet. Where might they go?” As simple as that, you have made a story extension and created an opportunity for deeper meaning.

Songs: If you’ve read a book about a car such as My Car by Byron Barton, then you might want to follow up by singing some songs about driving cars like Drive My Car by Laurie Berkner or Drivin’ in My Car by Ralph’s World.

More Songs: Of course, you don’t have to have songs on CD to extend a story with song. You can use readily known songs such as Head Shoulders Knees and Toes after reading Head to Toe by Eric Carle.

Even More Songs: You can make up your own song. Take a familiar tune such as Old MacDonald Had a Farm and change it to what you need. For example, “Our Friend, Molly, Had a Snow Day” might be a song you sing after reading The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats. The verses of the song would be anything to do with a snow filled day.
Story Extension Samples (continued)

**Storytelling**: You can retell the story in your own way using props from around the house. For example, in *Ten Red Apples* by Pat Hutchins, a farmer is growing alarmed because apples are being eaten from his tree by the animals. To retell this story, cut out ten red paper circles for the apples and gather up a group of animal toys. Sit down with your child and start retelling the rhythmic story, acting it out with the toy animals. Have your child move the animals to eat the “apples” from the tree. A terrific and simple story extension.

**Arts and Crafts**: Creating art is a natural way to extend a story. For example, you could read a butterfly book such as *Waiting for Wings* by Lois Ehlert. Then you could make caterpillars out of egg cartons and butterflies with construction paper and glitter glue all the while talking about the life cycle of the butterfly.

**Pretend Play**: The story *Below* by Nina Crews shows a boy who loses a toy beneath a staircase and the brave effort he makes to save it. You could act out this story and create your own accidents and rescues with your own toys. Pretend play offers an infinite number of ways to extend stories.

Extending a story provides children with the opportunity to expand their understanding and to construct deeper meaning about their world. Getting started in story extensions is quite simple if you take it one story and one extension at a time. Have fun and get creative – you never know where a story can take you!

Online Movie Makers

There are websites that encourage kids to make little movies. This is a great way to involve kids in story creation. Most have a simple interface with restricted choices.

Try Zimmer Twins, where kids can tell a story about Edgar and Eva, Xtranormal, where they can choose actions and camera angles to customize their movie, Dvolver, probably best for young teens, or Masher, where they can mash up video, photo and music.

Kim Chatel is an author, fiber artist and photographer. She regularly visits schools and libraries, bringing her art and books to students and inspiring them to create their own. Visit Kim at Chatel Village where you’ll find recipes, movies, book reviews, contests, crafts, and her latest picture book “A Talent for Quiet.” It’s the fuzziest website on the Net!

The Multimedia Generation
by Kim Chatel

Children’s ability to absorb knowledge is always astounding, especially with technology. They don’t have to be told more than once how to use a remote or control a video game. They take naturally to the keyboard and computers. And while parents might groan about children being ‘plugged in,’ computer time doesn’t have to be down time. Apart from the many programs for learning, simple paintshop or movie-making programs can bring out a child’s creativity, while eating the need for computers.

As an experiment, my ten year-old daughter, Genna, and I made a simple movie in Mac’s iMovie. I should mention at this point, that I make video trailers for a living, so I have an unfair advantage in movie-making knowledge. However, there are many movie programs that are user-friendly and part of the silly fun can be about learning them together. For me, I enjoyed sharing a big part of my work-life with Genna.

Genna’s movie, Cat Love, took about an hour to make. I wouldn’t suggest a longer project for first-timers. If you’d like to try telling a digital story with your children, choose your software first, and get to know it. PhotoStory is a nice program for Windows and Macs mostly come with iMovie. We collected images from royalty free sites. Here is a list of royalty-free media resources. This can give you an opening to talk about copyrights with your child. Just because something is “free” on the internet, doesn’t mean the copyright is “free” to use.

Next, create a rough storyboard. Genna decided on a story about cats. We created our storyboard after looking at some pictures to give us ideas, then wrote a simple script. Distilling a story down to a few words is a difficult and creative task even for an adult. It’s a talent kids will use many times in their school careers and beyond. Once we had the images and script, putting it together was easy. Genna loved playing with all the special effects, and transitions.

The last element was music and sound effects. She was intrigued (as I am) with how the mood of the movie changed with different clips of music. We spent much time giggling over silly sound effects.

Here are a few tips for parents eager to make movies with their children. Resist the urge to do it all. Let your child stumble over the keyboard, make mistakes and go back. I made sure that all the big decisions were Genna’s, including the text, images and music, but I steered the little decisions, like making the font larger and in an easy-to-read color. She was so proud of her movie when done, she squealed through the first showing!

Afterwards, I asked Genna to answer a few questions about making movies:

Kim: Did you find making a movie fun, hard, easy?
Genna: Fun because I got to do it with my mommy.
Kim: What was your favorite part of making a movie?
Genna: Adding music and sound effects. I thought the sound effects were really silly.
Kim: Was it hard to learn how to make a movie?
Genna: No. The program was easy to understand.
Kim: Would you make movies again in the future?
Genna: Yes. I would like to make them with my friends.
Kim: What other uses can you see for movies like this?
Genna: I could do them for projects in school like science projects or community service messages. I could teach other kids about things that are important to me.

With the abundance of programs available, kids can explore movie-making in new and extraordinary ways. This is the generation that will grow up in a truly multimedia world and I can’t wait to see-hear-feel the art they will create.
# Online Extras

Here are eight great free resources that might be just the thing to help your family’s reading, writing, communicating and creating needs.

## Read

1. Read some pop-up books with an environmental theme online at [The Eco Zoo](#).

2. The Database of Award-Winning Children’s Literature is a searchable database of books for children.

3. Guys Read has great suggestions for young male readers.

## Write

4. Write a photo story at [YouTellYou](#), and upload your own pictures to illustrate it.

5. Spin and Spell is an online spelling game where kids choose a word, and spell it on a wheel.

6. Use these pictures of unusual creatures to spark kids’ writing.

## Create

6. Make your own movies with the [Zimmer Twins](#).

7. Create your own books at [Tar Heel Reader](#).

8. Make some music with [Arthur in Crank It Up](#).

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**Literacy is the Magical Key to a child’s future success!**

~Susan Stephenson, The Book Chook

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**Our Philosophy**

We encourage our children to be involved in activities that support their literacy.

We read to our children every day, because it is one of the very best things we can do for them.

We talk with, read with, sing to, dance with, love and respect our children.

We help our children learn to read so they can read to learn.

We create a rich and varied literacy environment for our children.

We let our children catch us reading, writing and creating in our everyday lives, so they can see it is both natural and fun.

We believe that stories encourage dreams, and reading helps kids make their dreams come true.

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Want more Literacy Lava? Please leave a comment on [The Book Chook blog](#). We’d love to discover what you valued, and want to see more of. If you and your children enjoyed an activity or suggestion from this issue, or you have a question we might be able to help with, let us know!

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Clip Art Acknowledgments

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- **Kaboose**

Photos courtesy Morguefile

PhotoXpress.com
Pt Bck Th Vwls

*If you can read the title of this activity, you probably worked out that someone has taken out the vowels from each word. You need to put them back, in order to read the message.*

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This fourth issue of Literacy Lava was published in March 2010, with information that's timeless!