The greatest gift is a passion for reading. It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites, it gives you knowledge of the world and experience of a wide kind. It is a moral illumination. ~Elizabeth Hardwick

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

In this ninth edition of Literacy Lava, you’ll find ideas to help kids choose language and point of view in Writing Tips for Kids, look at Scrabble as a spelling method, read about unplugging young kids to develop a real love of reading, discover activities for incorporating rhyme into family life, read how technology can support literature, find out why adults should read children’s books, explore online resources that support reading, and learn about maps as a literacy tool. As usual, there are nine great free online resources I recommend for reading, writing and creating, and the Activity page for kids is a pencil and paper game called Word Chains.

I hope you’ll have fun with the ideas in Literacy Lava 9, while helping your kids build the skills they need to read, write and communicate successfully. Why not spread the word about the magic of children’s literacy by sharing your copy of Literacy Lava with a friend?

Do follow the links to contributors’ blogs and websites. Our writers are a diverse group, but all have this in common: a passion for children’s literacy and a genuine desire to share their own love of learning. If there’s something special you’d like to see in the next issue of Literacy Lava, something you want information about, or to give some feedback, you can always contact me via The Book Chook blog.

The Book Chook, editor.
In Literacy Lava 8, we talked about story houses and how a story is like a house because it needs foundations to build on. It needs a setting, characters and a plot.

In this and future issues of Literacy Lava, we're going to develop the framework or foundations of your story. We're going to add the cladding. These are the bits that show your unique writing style.

The cladding of your story includes the language you use and whose point of view you tell the story from. Which of your characters is going to tell your story and how are they going to tell it?

POINT OF VIEW

Is your main character going to tell the story (first person) or is someone going to tell the story about them? (third person)

First person Point of View (POV)

This point of view is used in stories with a lot of emotions and outcomes for the main character. I used this POV in Hope for Hanna and Letters to Leonardo because I wanted the reader to get close to my main characters.

First person POV helps you see inside a character’s head, but it only lets you see, hear, think and feel what the main character sees, hears, thinks and feels.

For example "The dog laid its head on my lap and looked at me with hungry eyes." From the use of the word, "my', you can tell that this is first person point of view. But in this version of the piece, the reader can’t tell what's going on in the dog’s head or why the dog has laid its head on the main character’s lap. The character is guessing from the dog’s eyes that it’s hungry but he or she can't know for sure.

Third person Point of View (POV)

This is where someone who is not part of the story describes what's happening as if they’re watching it. They can also know what each character is thinking.

For example, "The dog laid its head on his lap. It hadn’t eaten for days and if it didn't find food soon, its pups would starve too."  

Whoever is telling this story can see inside the dog’s head and know that it wants food. In the first version, the main character is guessing from the dog’s eyes that it’s hungry, but doesn’t know this for sure.

If you’re writing from one character’s POV then they can’t know what is going on inside another character’s head unless that character tells them. Just like you can’t know what’s happening in someone else’s head unless they tell you.

Third person POV is great for stories where there are lots of characters and action, but if you want to focus on one or two characters and show their thoughts and feelings, then first person POV might work better for your story.

In the next issue of Literacy Lava, we’re going to look at language and style and how to find the best words to use in your story.

Dee White is the author of four books for children and young adults. You can find out more about her at www.deescribe.com.au. More writing tips are available at her blog.
There's a plethora of programmes out there to help us teach our kids to spell. We have great computer programmes like Spelling City, wonderful board games like Alphabatics from Fitzroy Readers, and whole spelling programmes like Spelling Wisdom and Simply Spelling. All of them are helpful, and if your child struggles with spelling, then you’ve probably tried quite a few of them. Or all of them. At the same time. Whilst pulling your hair out with frustration.

We’ve tried lots, and despite all my efforts, my daughter still struggled with spelling even the simplest words. The more I pushed her, the more she hated trying, and the more she hated it, the more I despaired.

Sometimes in our enthusiasm we miss the simplest methods of all. In our case the breakthrough came with a product that you probably have tucked away in your cupboard at home – Scrabble. Sixty years after its introduction, Scrabble became Britain’s best-selling board game in 2008, and the reasons for its enduring popularity are clear. It exercises your brain. It is quick. Unlike Monopoly which can often consume hours, a game of Scrabble takes as little as half an hour or so. Its rules are simple and easy to master. It improves your vocabulary. It encourages family time.

Most importantly for our family, it helps you to spell.

What made Scrabble work for my increasingly spelling-phobic daughter is that it's not designed to teach spelling. Jemimah has had enough of that to last a lifetime. With Scrabble, improved spelling is a coincidental advantage. As you play you think about letters and words. You exercise your vocabulary. You discuss proper nouns (not allowed) as compared to common nouns (allowed). You look first at word roots and then you explore prefixes like PRE and RE and UN, and suffixes like ED, ING, ER and EST, and pluralising by adding an S. And as you learn more about the vagaries of the English language, you learn to be a better speller.

When we play Scrabble, we play to win. We look for ways to get a great score. It’s amazing how many points you get with a single S added to a word. But can you just add a single S, or is it a word like potato that needs an ES instead? Or is it a word like deer, which can’t be pluralized with an S at all? With Scrabble, we’ve been learning all of this while we play and have fun. We’re learning to look words up in a dictionary while we’re at it. Can we spell chi as qi? (Yes), and what about qat? (Yes again). Can these words be derived from English? No, because there’s no U after the Q. What exactly does the word mean? (Well, we’ve been in Yemen, so we know what qat is, but what exactly is qi?)

And that’s the beauty of Scrabble. Jemimah is learning to spell while she has fun. And she’s spending valuable time with family while she’s at it.

What's not to like?
My children are teenagers now, and I still read picture books! Even though they moved past them long ago, I still get the warm fuzzies every time I pick one up. Well, if it’s a good one, anyway. I’m pretty picky.

Before my children started school, there were strict television limits in our home, and computer time was very rare. My young children were more than happy to be playing with simple, unplugged toys, running around in the backyard or at the playground, and of course, reading one of the many picture books that were all over our house.

Reading together was a treasured activity. I can still remember doing so for hours at a time, and it was a perfect alternative to television.

I didn’t even see the point of having access to the internet back then! And it was a good thing, because it would have been a huge distraction for me. I treasure every minute of the unplugged time we spent together, and wouldn’t trade it for the world.

Times have certainly changed. We still read a lot, but not necessarily together or at the same time. And sometimes, our reading is done on the computer, of course.

There’s a lot to do on the computer, whether it’s research, communication, or playing games. Some activities are more educational than others, but what I like about the computer, in general, is that you can turn it on and turn it off. It doesn’t follow you everywhere you go.

These days, we look around and see people of all ages glued to their cell phones, off in another world. Children are not only watching their parents get lost in technology, but they are as well, at younger and younger ages.

Where will it all lead? No one can say for sure. All I know is that advanced technology is here to stay, and children will have all their lives to immerse themselves in it.

So, when I see toddlers playing around with fancy gadgets, I think, what’s the rush? I really hope such activities are not completely replacing other important real world activities and interactions.

I guess what I’m trying to say to young parents is: please don’t let information overload and advanced technology prevent you from missing all those unplugged moments and opportunities to connect with your child. They’re too precious to let pass you by.

When it comes to developing a true love of reading and learning, there are no shortcuts anyway. I know this in my heart, because the proof is in my own children. They’ve both been extremely advanced learners and readers for quite a while now, and have not been exposed to nearly as much advanced technology as young children today are.

What they did have, and still do, is a personal librarian-at-heart. Doesn’t every child need one these days?

Could we all use a little help in sorting through it all? Aren’t libraries and librarians more relevant and essential than ever?

I see children’s books-in-print as the calm amidst the storm of progress, and can only hope they don’t get washed away.

In turning the page, may we never forget what got us here in the first place.

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* “Book lovers will understand me, and they will know too that part of the pleasure of a library lies in its very existence.” — Jan Morris

* “You may have tangible wealth untold; Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold. Richer than I you can never be - I had a mother who read to me.” — Strickland Gillilan

* “We shouldn’t teach great books; we should teach a love of reading.” — B.F. Skinner

* “Books were my pass to personal freedom. I learned to read at age three, and soon discovered there was a whole world to conquer that went beyond our farm in Mississippi.” — Oprah Winfrey
Chanting stories or poems and singing silly songs or nursery rhymes in early childhood helps prepare your child for reading success. Hearing rhymes from birth prepares a child to later recognize rhymes. By preschool age, many children can create rhymes by playing simple rhyming games.

Playing rhyming games in early childhood also builds brain power. Rhyming activities stimulate Area A of the brain. This area (located near your left temple) has a neural system for articulating spoken words. Playing with rhyming words will strengthen that neural system (Gentry).

Rhyming activities also help children recognize phonograms, or word families. Experts agree that when a child learns 37 phonograms (like –at, -ick, -ill, etc.), he can make 500 different words out of those phonograms (Johns). Rhyming games help children notice that phonograms can represent the same sound in different words (Johns).

Research shows that rhyming is important in early childhood, but when is a child ready to rhyme? While it may vary from child to child, a child’s progression of skills may look something like this:

The child has a concept of a word. 
The child has a concept for rhyme. 
The child has the ability to rhyme. 
The child has the ability to separate sounds.

**Strategies for Improving Rhyming Abilities**

**Play with Rhymes:**
- Begin introducing rhymes with your newborn baby. Hold the baby close, engage eye contact, let the baby see your lips and face. When you say a rhyming word, engage in some sort of movement such as lightly tickling the baby’s toes.
- Use movement to help your toddler notice rhymes. When reading poems and rhymes to toddlers, give your toddler a high five for every rhyming word!

- Allow your preschooler to shout out the word as you pause in a rhyme. Before your child can say a whole rhyme, he can fill in the rhyming word in a rhyme.
- Read nursery rhymes with emergent and early readers. Play riddle games after you read such as, “I’m thinking of a word that begins with b and rhymes with cat.”

**Share Books with Rhymes:**
When choosing books with rhyme, look for a strong story line. Here are some suggestions of the types of books you might use:
- Green Eggs and Ham by Dr. Seuss
- The Foot Book by Dr. Seuss
- The Magic Hat by Mem Fox
- Zoo-Looking by Mem Fox

**Sing Rhyming Songs:**
Songs are repetitive and the repetition builds rhyming abilities. Songs are easy to remember which makes them useful for teaching rhyme. Songs are fun. Even if you can’t sing, your child will enjoy sharing a song with you. Since many songs rhyme, any song and any style will do. Introduce your child to a wide variety of music and songs!

If you are interested in songs that are appropriate for children, here are a few free websites:
- Sing Along Songs
- Smick and Smudew
- Kids Public Radio
- Starfall Sing Along

Don’t feel that you need formal lessons on rhyming. Playing with words informally through games, books, and songs will build brain power.

**Resources:**
I love nothing more than reading aloud to my two girls, one warm body snuggled on each side of me. I can't stop smiling when my older daughter, Caroline, begs to stay up for just five more minutes so she can tell me about all the adventures in her newest book. I become almost giddy when my younger daughter, Katherine, asks me to listen to her read just one more page as she sounds out each new word, sound by sound.

While these are favorite moments, as a working mother, they can't be every moment. While I create plans for the next day, cook dinner or read my own favorite book, I still love for the girls to interact with literature. While I often can be heard cursing the prevalence of technology in our lives, there are times when technology can be a close ally to good quality literature.

Many of the benefits of reading aloud come from the bond formed with our children and the positive associations formed with books when children are read aloud to on the lap of a loving adult. During read alouds, however, children also learn book language, story structure and vocabulary that is unique only to the printed word. These benefits can be gained even if the story is heard on a computer or a mobile device.

Below are some fun and innovative ways that we now incorporate technology into our reading lives:

**Taped reading:** Remember the days when you taped yourself reading onto a cassette tape to hear how your voice sounded? I now tape myself reading a book onto my iPhone or iTouch and suddenly you have a book on tape. No need to buy books on CD or even check them out of the library. With a little bit of time, it is possible to create an entire audio library with your own books and voice.

**Tales2Go:** If time is the one thing you just don't have enough of, then Tales2Go is the way to go. This app provides thousands of children's book titles read aloud on your computer, iPhone, iTouch, iPod or iPad. There are popular children's series as well as tales told by lesser known storytellers.

**Storyline Online:** There are many websites that provide read alouds for children. Our favorite by far, however, is Storyline Online. Stories are read by actors from the Screen Actors Guild and the pictures that accompany the reading are the true pictures from beautifully illustrated books. If I can't be snuggled on the couch, this is the next best thing.

More to come in Literacy Lava 10 as I explore the ways that apps can be used to enhance early literacy skills.
Why Adults Should Read Children’s Books

by Joyce Grant, of Getting Kids Reading and Jen Robinson, of Jen Robinson’s Book Page

When kids see adults reading they’re more likely to read themselves. It isn’t just a theory, there’s been research done on this. Plus, it also makes sense—kids do what their parents do.

When a kid sees an adult reading a children’s book, he’s even more likely to read. Try picking up a children’s book for yourself the next time you’re at the library; the effect on your child will be very interesting. He’ll want to know what it is that you’re getting, and you’ll probably find that he’ll grab it and start reading it before you can even get it home.

Here are a slew of other great reasons why adults should read children’s literature:

* Re-reading the books you loved as a child will transport you, like a time machine, back to your childhood.

* Many of the new children’s books are fantastic. If you don’t read them, you’ll have missed out on some great reading.

* Bonding. If your child loves books already, you’ll be able to talk to her about what you’re both reading.

* You’ll better understand what your child is interested in (or concerned about) if you read what she’s reading.

* If you didn’t read much as a child, now’s your time to catch up on what you missed.

* Since good tends to triumph in kidslit, children’s books may uplift you and inspire you. It also tends to charge those imagination muscles that may have become slightly dormant in adulthood.

* If you read what your child is reading, you’ll be aware of the kind of content he’s being exposed to—especially if you’re wondering whether a particular book is appropriate for your child. It also gives you a chance to explain, or put into context, any content you think might be confusing for him.

“Children’s books are faster reads than adult literature. Even if you “don’t have time to read,” you do have time to read a children’s book.

“It’s fun. Pick up Percy Jackson—I guarantee you won’t be able to put it down until you’ve finished it.

How to get started
Ask your child to recommend a good book. (He’ll be proud that you asked him, and it will be a chance for him to show off his knowledge a bit.) If he can’t decide on one, just pick up whatever he’s reading now—you can read it after he’s gone to bed.

Joyce and Jen’s top-five picks for getting adults started with children’s books:

Joyce:

* The Mysterious Benedict Society, book one by Trenton Lee Stewart;

* The Percy Jackson series by Rick Riordan;

* The MacDonald Hall series by Gordon Korman;

* The Encyclopedia Brown series by Donald J. Sobol;

* The Twilight series by Stephenie Meyer.

Jen:

* The Penderwicks by Jeanne Birdsall

* The Gregor the Overlander series by Suzanne Collins

* The Giver by Lois Lowry

* Holes by Louis Sachar

* The Dreamdark books by Laini Taylor

This article was inspired by Jen Robinson’s original blog post
The very best way to ensure our kids succeed at school is to read to them every day. Talking with them from the time they’re babies, playing games with them, involving them in every aspect of family life—all those things and more have a positive impact too.

Nowadays though, kids live in a world where screen-based entertainment is everywhere. Many parents worry about the amount of time their kids spend involved with TV shows and video games. The general consensus of parenting experts is that balance is the key. That’s why I like the great websites that involve kids in reading-related activities. I believe there are lots of creative and educational sites suitable for children, and playing on them will benefit kids far more than passively watching a movie or “shooting” monsters in a video game. Of course, parents always need to check websites carefully themselves, but here are some of my favourites:

**Starfall** has lots to read online. There are plays, myths, folktales, fables, fiction and nonfiction. Clicking on the ear icon will allow kids to listen while they read the pages. It really helps a young reader to hear the words spoken at the same time as he is looking at the words. That’s one of many reasons read-alouds are so important. There are lots of alphabet/phonics activities too.

**Boowa and Kwala** If you think your youngsters would like to read along with the adventures of a beret-wearing yellow Kwala, and a blue, doggy Boowa, if you think they will enjoy minimal animation, cute songs and gentle humour, if you think they might like silly games, learning activities, musical games, creative games and more, then this is the site for you. Part of Up to Ten.

**BBC CBeebies** There are all sorts of interactive games at CBeebies but my favourite page is Story Time where kids can listen to and read along with a range of fun stories.

**National Geographic Kids** If your children love nonfiction, let them explore at National Geographic Kids. It’s not about reading so much as full of reading! There’s heaps of interesting information to read, watch and marvel over.

**PBS Kids Between the Lions** website is excellent. If you don’t know it, take some time to explore it with your kids. In Stories, I like the fact the little videos are engaging AND help with reading by highlighting words as they are read aloud. Use the left side menu to scroll through all the choices, both fiction and nonfiction.

**Reading is Fundamental** RIF caters to both parents AND kids. There are many useful articles for parents, and kids can watch and listen to stories and songs, play games and create.

**Reading Rockets** is an incredibly comprehensive resource for parents and teachers about children’s literacy. Use the top search box to filter for articles about reading, or browse under reading in the left side bar.

In Literacy Lava 10, I’ll bring you some great online resources to support writing.
My seven-year-old has always been interested in maps. When he was five, he would sometimes sleep with a street directory under his pillow and then study the maps when he woke up.

Maps are a great literacy tool. Looking at a map with younger children, you can talk about going over and under, in front of, next to, before and after and of course, left and right. Pre-readers can find the symbols for bridges, toilets or hospitals. Early readers might recognise the names of familiar streets near their home or school. Older children can plot the route and help with navigation.

There are advantages to being able to read a map—you can plan a route to an unknown destination and if you’re lost you can use a map to find your way home. (It’s more reliable than dropping breadcrumbs.) Maps are also a great communication tool. How is a pirate to remember where he hid the treasure chest without his trusty map?

HAVING FUN WITH MAPS

Plan your walk to the park (or other nearby destination)
Before you walk to the local park, study the street directory with your child. When you set off, talk about the streets you are walking along and other streets you need to look for.

Creating simple maps
After you return from a walk to the park (or a simple driving trip), ask your child to use a line to draw the route travelled and indicate landmarks they passed, like an oak tree, petrol station, and Mrs Smith’s rose garden. Provide a large sheet of paper and a thick crayon. It can also be satisfying to record a longer journey on a long roll of paper.

Plot a journey
If you’re travelling (with or without your child), put a map on the wall so your child can plot the journey as it unfolds. If your child receives postcards from travelling friends or relatives, mark the location on a map of the world/country.

Make a treasure map
Hide some ‘treasure’ in your garden and create a simple treasure map (don’t forget the X to mark where the treasure is). Draw or glue on pictures of recognisable features—the apple tree, the letterbox, the trampoline. Use arrows to show your child the path to be taken to find the treasure. For emerging readers, you can label each feature, too.

Embrace your inner pirate
Ask your child to hide something in the garden and create a treasure map for YOU to follow!

Mapping in Children’s Books

Talk about the maps in books you are reading with your children. Many fantasy books have maps. Here’s a selection of books for younger readers that also contain maps of some sort.

Tiny: A little dog on a big adventure by Jennifer Castles and Steve Otton. A dog’s view of a trip around Australia
Riley and the Dancing Lion: A Journey Around Hong Kong by Tania McCartney, ill. Kieron Pratt. Riley travels to Hong Kong in search of the traditional dancing lion for Chinese New Year.
Puff the Magic Dragon by Peter Yarrow and Penny Lipton, ill. Eric Puybaret. Book and CD of the famous song. The endpapers include a map of the island.
To the Top End: Our Trip Across Australia by Roland Harvey. A family travels from Tasmania to the Top End of Australia. The illustrations are like picture-maps telling the story. Children could create similar pictures for a trip they’ve been on.
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<td><strong>1</strong> Story Time For Me: read along with digital stories</td>
<td><strong>4</strong> Try this Newspaper Blackout activity with kids. Newspaper + Pen = Poetry.</td>
<td><strong>7</strong> Create your own city at City Creator by arranging elements on your chosen space.</td>
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<td><strong>2</strong> Cyberbullying Tips at Common Sense Media</td>
<td><strong>5</strong> Have kids write their own monologues then record themselves via Blabberize.</td>
<td><strong>8</strong> Make your own domino patterns at Drawminos.</td>
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<td><strong>3</strong> Read wonderful children’s poetry at Father Goose</td>
<td><strong>6</strong> Create a story online at A Dog’s Life by Scholastic.</td>
<td><strong>9</strong> Create your own Picasso-style head at Mr. Picassohead.</td>
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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's 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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As attributed individually.
Have you heard of Word Chains? It's a game you can play with your friends. Each word is supposed to start with the finishing letter of the last word. So if you write ‘sun’ on a paper, and hand it to your friend, she thinks of a word starting with the last letter of sun which is ‘n’. She might write the word ‘nine’ on the paper and now it’s your turn to think of a word that starts with ‘e’.

You can play Word Chain like that, or you can make it harder this way. Start with the given first word, and then change ANY one letter in each following word until you arrive at the given end word. Here’s a really good explanation.

In column one, there’s an example of a finished word chain that starts with rat and ends with the given word, fig. Columns two, three, four and five give you a start word and end word to see if you can make your own chain to join them.

Have fun! Why not make up an even longer word chain for someone at home to solve?

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The ninth issue of Literacy Lava was published in June 2011, with information that's timeless!
Contributors to Literacy Lava

Dee White
Dee White is the award-winning author of Letters to Leonardo, Hope for Hanna, A Duel of Words and Harry’s Goldfield Adventure. She’s passionate about encouraging reading and writing, and her blog and website have career and writing tips for aspiring young authors. Dee runs writing workshops for children of all ages and mentors young writers through the PLIESE program. She lives in regional Australia and gains her writing inspiration from her husband, her two boys and enough animals to almost fill an ark.

Moms Inspire Learning
As someone who’s walked in many shoes, including those of a Certified Public Accountant, teacher, musician, avid reader, writer, and parent, Dawn Riccardi Morris has developed a unique vision of learning and literacy over the years. She loves to connect the dots of life and children’s literature through her blog, Moms Inspire Learning. By sharing her extensive knowledge and experience, Dawn hopes to inspire a love of learning and reading in people of all ages.

Jen Robinson’s Book Page
As a child, Jen Robinson pretty much always had a book in her hand. Yes, even when she was swimming out to a raft in the middle of a lake (holding the book up high with one hand). Yes, even when she was climbing trees (with three younger brothers and sisters, she had to take quiet spots where she could find them). As she grew older, she found herself compelled to put books into other children’s hands, so that they could share her own joyful experience. Because walking around the streets handing out children’s books to strangers turned out to be impractical, she was fortunate to discover blogging. Now she tries to put books into kids’ hands indirectly, by making book recommendations to parents and teachers and spreading the word about the Cybils. These days she mostly puts the books themselves into the hands of her one-year-old daughter, nicknamed Baby Bookworm.

Getting Kids Reading
Joyce Grant is a freelance journalist and editor. She blogs about children’s literacy at Getting Kids Reading, which offers fun games and activities to get kids reading. She is also the editor and co-founder of Teaching Kids the News which offers daily kid-friendly news articles, with curriculum points for teachers and parents. Joyce is also the mother of a nine-year-old boy who is a voracious reader and she strongly believes that every child can become a great reader, too.

Stacey Loscalzo
An experienced reading specialist and speech language pathologist, Stacey Loscalzo is today’s go-to authority for parents who wish to instill a lifelong love of reading in children. The mother of two young daughters, Stacey knows that reading aloud with children puts them on the path to long-term educational success.

Rebecca Newman
Rebecca Newman is the publisher and editor of Alphabet Soup—an Australian magazine for children aged 6 to 12 who love books and creative writing. Rebecca lives in Perth with her husband, three young children and a teetering ‘to read’ pile.
The Book Chook

The Book Chook blog shares snippets from the wonderful world and words of kids' learning, literacy and literature. You'll find tips for parents, book and software reviews, ideas for developing reading, writing and communicating skills with children, and the occasional rant!

The Book Chook's real name is Susan Stephenson. I’m a writer, teacher, reviewer, and editor of Literacy Lava. Find more information about me at my website.

Have you grabbed these free pdfs from the editor's website?

Literacy in the Playground

A compilation of skipping games and chants, great for family fun and fitness!

The Book Chook Cook Book

Tried and true recipes from writers and bloggers across the world. Cooking alongside your kids is a wonderful way to include literacy in everyday life.

Literacy Lava 1 to Literacy Lava 8

Each issue of Literacy Lava is available from the archive at www.susanstephenson.com.au

Ready.Set.Read

Jackie Higgins is a reading specialist turned stay at home mom to 2 boys. She blogs at Ready.Set.Read!, an early literacy blog designed to help grow babies into readers. Ready.Set.Read shares tips for early readers, book reviews, and activities for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers.

A Peaceful Day

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!