



LET'S READ

reading with children 0 - 5 years

Media information
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Parents urged to read with babies and toddlers

Tasmanian parents will be encouraged to read aloud to their babies and toddlers from as early as four months with the state-wide roll out of a new early literacy program called Let's Read. Let's Read will form a key component of the Tasmanian government's READ FOR LIFE initiative – a \$1 million investment in improving literacy levels in Tasmania announced by the Minister for Education, David Bartlett earlier this week.

An early childhood literacy initiative developed by the Centre for Community Child Health (a key research centre of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute) in partnership with The Smith Family, Let's Read aims to give families the information and tools they need to introduce their pre-school-aged children (0-5 years) to books in a bid to improve Australia's literacy levels.

According to Professor Frank Oberklaid, director of the Centre for Community Child Health, Let's Read seeks to address research that has found that children who have not developed emergent literacy skills by school age are unlikely to catch up with their peers.

The Smith Family's General Manager for Tasmania, Dr Becky Shelley, adds:

"Let's Read stresses the importance of having fun with books and making reading together a special time to bond with children.

"The Let's Read DVD and easy to follow reading tips have been designed to give all parents, regardless of their own reading ability, the confidence to start sharing books with their child from as early as four months," Dr Shelley said.

Let's Read tips include:

- Start young and read aloud to your baby
- Make reading part of your daily routine
- Have fun with silly voices and sounds as you read
- Turn off the TV or radio – your child likes to hear your voice
- Look for books with rhyme and repetition
- Read the same book over again, children like familiarity
- Let your child choose the book

More information is available on the Let's Read web site at www.letsread.com.au.

Let's Read will be gradually rolled-out to families through community-based professionals who will receive emergent literacy training and resources as part of the initiative.

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Notes to editor:

Let's Read is an early childhood literacy initiative of the Centre for Community Child Health (a key research centre of the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute) in partnership with The Smith Family. Let's Read aims to improve and measure literacy outcomes in Australia by encouraging parents to read to pre-school-aged children (0-5 years). Let's Read is designed to be delivered to families by community-based professionals using research-based, emergent literacy techniques and resources.

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