

Dear Parents Letter About Reading

The Million Word Gap!

WHAT? This is one of a series of tips, providing information that you (as a teacher or therapist) can share with parents. This tip refers to the 'million-word gap' for children who aren't read to at home. The tip summarizes the information for professionals, then follows up with a short letter that you can use directly (using your own letterhead, and signing it at the bottom), or re-word as desired. The hope is that this will be a time-saver for the busy professional who wants to share important information with families.



Figure 1 Image from Ohio State News

WHY? The research linked below from the Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Education at Ohio State University is compelling information. They summarize results from a recent study suggesting that 'young children whose parents read them five books a day enter kindergarten having heard about 1.4 million more words than kids who were never read to.' Read a [review of the article here](#): This is important information to share with families because reading to young children at home can be one key to explaining later differences in vocabulary and reading development.

WHO IS THIS FOR? This tip is for busy professionals (teachers, therapists, reading specialists, literacy coaches, assistive technology facilitators) who want to share information with parents in an easy-to-digest format.

HOW TO FOLLOW UP.

Just Copy and Paste. If the text on the next page makes sense to you, just use it 'as is', pasting it onto your own document with your letterhead and signature.



REVISE!

Re-Write to Fit Your Personality. Many people will want to 'put their own stamp on it' and revise my draft to fit their own style. Hopefully, the basic information in the letter on the next page will still make the process faster.

Dear Parents,

I found some important information on the internet, and I wanted to share it with you!

Researchers at Ohio State University did an interesting study. Here's what they found:



Young children whose parents read them five books a day enter kindergarten having heard about 1.4 million more words than kids who were never read to.

Wow – that's a huge number of words! It matters because this helps children grow their vocabulary and supports their later reading development.

Question: What if I only have time to read one book a day to my child?

Here's what they found: "Even kids who are read only one book a day will hear about **290,000 more words by age 5** than those who don't regularly read books with a parent or caregiver."

Question: My child is already in school (or middle school . . . or high school). Will reading with my child still help?

YES! Reading aloud at any age can help your child to learn new words, learn more about the world, and learn 'how books work.' Plus, reading with your child (or teen!) is a great activity for building relationships.

Question: Where can I read about this study for myself?

Read a [review of the article here](#).

Thanks, and happy reading.

Cordially,