



## **Introduction to 1-2-3 READ! An Early Literacy Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers**



***"It is never too early to begin reading to children!"***

(Kupetz & Green, 1997, p. 22).

Literature states that storybook reading can be a powerful tool for promoting emergent literacy development in young children, (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Honig & Shin, 2001; Kaderavek & Sulzby, 1998; Lamme, 2002; Whitehurst, Epstein, Angell, Payne, Crone, & Fischel, 1994). The storybook approach is easily integrated within general early childhood experiential curricula that are used to address not only language and cognition but also other developmental domains. Through children's intense and sustained interactions with books and materials in a literacy-rich environment, children develop "important concepts about print, an increasing ability to retell stories from illustrations, and a love of books" (Barclay, Benelli, & Curtis, 1995, p. 28), all of which are important precursors to children's ability to read (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999). The simple experiences of turning the pages of a book with a caring and nurturing adult, playing with puppets, or singing a song with rhyming words lay the foundation for reading.

**1-2-3 READ!** storybook curriculum is designed to build emergent literacy in children aged birth to 3 through a carefully planned set of experiences that lay the foundation for reading and writing success. The model includes curriculum modules, staff development, and family involvement.

Each curriculum module is introduced to the children through the reading of a quality children's book appropriate for infants and toddlers. Sharing of the book takes place throughout the day in a variety of ways such as retelling of the story and playing the recorded story on tape. Planned activities such as artwork and dramatic play expand children's literacy skills and interest in the book. Adults integrate the project's storybook approach within the daily routines of center and home-based settings expanding children's vocabulary and cognitive development beyond their immediate experiences, often limited by poverty or opportunity.

The 1-2-3 READ! curriculum is designed to be family centered. The curriculum promotes intergenerational literacy through the use of at-home activities and take-home bags and events such as "Read to Me Nights" for children and families. 1-2-3 READ! includes strategies for involving families in literacy activities, encouraging them to read to their children regularly and to make use of community resources like the library.

