

57 - The First 2000 Days

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Purpose: The purpose of the transcripts is to provide readers and listeners with a written version of each episode of the UAGC Center for Early Childhood Education's Early Childhood Chatter Podcast so they can follow along with the audio content. www.uagc.edu/ece-center/chatter-podcast

Audience: Current Active & Enrolled Students

Episode Transcript

Host Dr. Shipley: Hello everyone and welcome to Early Childhood Chatter with Dr. Shipley and Dr. Heald. We will upload a new episode every other week on Wednesdays.

Host Dr. Heald: Twice a month, we will come to you with a 10-minute professional development that you can quickly listen to for new ideas to try.

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Today, we are so excited to have with us William Christmas. William currently serves as a reading intervention teacher for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

He serves students in preschool to grade three. And in addition, he is a doctoral student with the University of Dayton. Welcome, William.

William Christmas Speaker: Welcome. Thank you for the warm introduction. Hopefully, you all are well.

And let's jump right on in. Go ahead.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: No, I'm just excited for you to be here.

And we've chatted a couple of times. And I just wanted to tell everybody what your session title is. And it's the first 2,000 days.

And when you sent this to me, it really grabbed my attention. So, tell me a little bit about your title.

William Christmas Speaker: It's referring to ages birth to five years old.

So basically, from birth up until the child turns five. The first 2,000 days are really, really critical in the brain development of the child. What makes it so critical? They're like a sponge.

So, think of a wet sponge, or if it's a spot on your skin, you need that sponge to clean it up. That is going to soak all of that water up. So, children's minds are like sponges.

They're going to soak their environment. That's why it's very, very important, especially with literacy, that you read and talk to your child, you know, that active and receptive.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: Yeah, conversation is so important in building dialogue and communication.

So, it is so critical, like you said, to just really get started at an early age. Do you have any strategies, like conversation, of ways that we can, you know, bring in our earliest learners into these literacy experiences?

William Christmas Speaker: When my niece was born, what I would do with her is I would sit down, and I would read to her. And you know, when it's born, you know, they do the oohs, the aahs, the babble, and things like that.

While we think that that's oohs and babbles and things like that, that is their way of communicating with you. If your child hears you talking, they may be doing that very, very loudly in order to communicate with you. The purpose of it is so that they can hear your voice.

The words that you say develop in their brain. Now, you know, the first maybe, you know, a few weeks of life, they may not understand the oohs and aahs. But after that, they're going to start doing them to either get your attention or to engage in conversations.

What makes this so important is just that you need to use high words. So, what I mean by high words, don't water something down. Don't say, oh, there is the.....Say, there is toilet paper.

There is napkins.

So, bring that out in them so they're able to put that together. Use books to help them as well.

Books was my goal. And I will tell you this, between books and between preschool, my niece, I kid you not, made no less than straight A's in school. But what I did was I started her off with talking to her.

I started her off with books, showing her how books are. They do. I also talked to her about what I was doing.

So again, scribble, scrap, buy that book at Walmart or Target, whatever store you go to. It's worth the change benefit in the long run. It's greater than, you know, change in your pocketbook.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: So, William, because you're an interventionist in reading, which is really cool, and so you see different teachers in different classrooms, what kind of information, or strategies or tips, can you give our listeners, that might be a teacher or administrator to start doing things in their classroom? Or how to set their classroom up that's literacy-based or developmentally appropriate practice with instructions that are differentiated? How would you give them those ideas?

William Christmas Speaker: I, excuse me, with print rich environment, print, use those anchor charts, use those word walls. Buzzwords right now is science and reading. So basically, I know that we have to wear masks because of COVID mandates, but being able to enunciate those words so they can see your mouth as a teacher and use those cards to show those cards that we use.

I cannot think of the name, this second. I can shoot you an email with them if listeners would like a copy of them, but the, and on the cards, like they have lips on how to enunciate the words. So that way you are not struggling, or the reader is not struggling. Books, books, books, and books, I cannot say it enough.

We need to have our children reading books. Key component, especially when they get, that third grade guarantee is so difficult right now. Us being in this pandemic, they, you know, in our country, they're not easing the rules of standardized testing.

So, in order to get your child on track, again, that first 2000 days of school corresponds to how the child is going to be throughout their schooling. So, once they hit that third grade, they're able to read and comprehend what it is that they're reading.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: You mentioned so many things that got me thinking.

Our earliest learners are, you know, getting prepared for school. We are really giving them the vocabulary and the early learning tools to not only learn to read, but also develop a love for learning, and a love for reading more importantly. The vocabulary of our children, both the expressive and the receptive are growing just so fast during this time.

And you left us with just so many things that we can do. Do you have, there's three quick takeaways that we are able to give our readers that they can try to implement as they go back into their settings?

William Christmas Speaker: Yes. So, what I would do is when the baby is born, talk to your child, even if they babble, gabble, yabble, just like in the story, *Nuffle Bunny*.

I don't know if you guys are familiar with that.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: Yes.

William Christmas Speaker: How the baby was doing the babble at the beginning, but the baby was trying to communicate with their parents.

That's the same thing that I want my listeners to take. It's just that don't look at it as a babble. Look at it as the way I was trying to communicate with you.

That's the first. The second thing is I highly suggest putting them in an early Head Start preschool or as we call it Head Start. I was a former preschool teacher myself, and I worked on both sides of early and Head Start.

It does wonders. It does wonders. They have so many programs that can come in and help them.

If the child is basically zero, they have programs that would help you, carry you through the way until that child turns five, such as like if your child, especially needs an individual family service plan, have it to where the children have to brush their teeth.

So, hygiene is a big part of it to make sure that they keep their teeth intact. They offer literacy-based stuff and it's like a school setting.

So, it's preparing them for school. The last thing I would like for them to take away is just that COVID is real, and I get it. It is so real.

Your child in a preschool or early head start setting, make sure you are following the precautions. The worst thing to do is not. However you choose to, you know, that is totally up to you.

But just ensure that your child is the most important and valuable thing in this pandemic.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: 100% William, that's spot on. So, as we wrap up, what is the challenge that you have for our listeners?

William Christmas Speaker: So, I challenge you all to if you have not had children or you in the process of having children, I want you all to play music with them and start reading books to them.

Yes, they're in utero, but guess it starts as soon as it starts, as soon as you are pregnant, talk to the baby, talk to them, talk to them. That is so important for the first conception of life. It's so, even before that, if you're in the bathtub, take the Eric Carle books, take the, when *Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Really Angry,* which is one of my favorite books.

Talk to them, talk to them. You can't hold them yet, but best believe they are listening to you.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: William, that's awesome.

And that is so true. And that's what I used to do. I would send different make and take books home with my families and bathtub books so that they could read to their children in the bath.

And yes, it starts even before they are born, and they can hear you.

So, we appreciate you for being here. Thank you for your time.

And we hope to talk to you again soon.

William Christmas Speaker: Thanks, have a great day.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: Thank you, William.

William Christmas Speaker: You're welcome.