Build Your Child's Literacy Skills While Doing Laundry Together
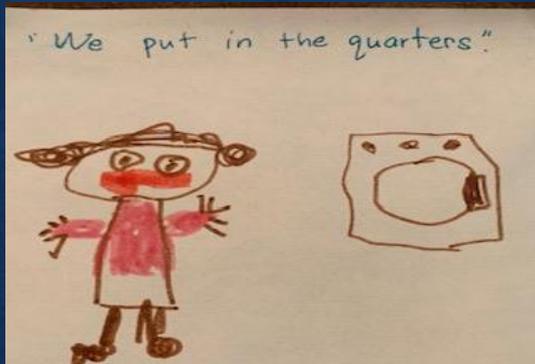
This article from the Teaching Young Children journal is written by Donna C. Celano and Susan B. Neumann

Turn laundry time into learning time! Whether you're washing clothes at home or at the laundromat, there are plenty of things to talk about with your child. These rich conversations help to build your child's language and literacy development. Try the following activities the next time your are doing a load of laundry!

Laundry Literacy

*Sort clothes: Having your child help you with sorting clothes can spark many different conversations. For example, you can sort clothes by colors (whites, blues, reds) or by type (shirts, pants, socks).

*Look for shapes: Encourage your child to find various shapes. For example, circle shapes including knobs, dryer windows, and coins; soap boxes, windows, and books are rectangles.

*Hunt for numbers and letters: Play a game with your child to find numbers and letters of the alphabet on signs, laundry products, clothes, and washing machines.

*Count: Laundry time provides plenty of opportunities to count with your child. Your child can count the number of socks that are folded or the number of quarters that go into the washer.

*Find colors: Many conversations can revolve around colors. Ask your child to bring you the blue shirt, or have your child say the colors of items as you pull them from the dryer. Open the washer before it begins the rinse cycle and ask, "What colors are the soap bubbles?" You can also find colors on soap boxes, signs, and machines.

*Read labels: Talk with your child as you read the labels, such as tags in the clothes ("The tag says to turn this shirt inside out") or words on machines ("Let's turn the knob to delicate") Hearing new words helps expand your child's vocabulary.

*Read books: One of the best ways to enhance your child's literacy skills is to read books together. Cuddle up together with a book while you wait for the washer or dryer to finish a cycle.