

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

RTTT-ELCG Early Literacy
Pittsfield Public Schools & Head Start

Encourage your child to participate when you read aloud

Reading with your child every day is crucial to her development as a reader. And as you read, be sure to involve your child! When she participates in reading time, your child is likely to become even more excited about reading.

When reading with your child:

- **Ask her questions** about the story as you read.
- **Encourage her to point out** and name things that she sees in the book.
- **Have her make predictions** about what will happen next in the story.
- **Repeat rhymes** and refrains together.
- **Reread favorite stories.** As your child memorizes a story, have her “read” it along with you.



“There is no friend as loyal as a book.”

—Ernest Hemingway

Brainstorm rhymes with your child

Your child will have an easier time learning to read if he is familiar with the sounds letters make. You can explore rhymes and rhyming with your child to sharpen this skill.

Reading stories that rhyme, including poetry, is a great way to introduce him to this concept. Encourage your child to make up his own rhymes. To get started, say a word and then give him a clue about a word that rhymes:

“I know a word that rhymes with *hat*. It’s an animal that says *meow*. It is a” Your child may be able to supply the missing word, *cat*, right away. It’s okay if he can’t, though. Just say the word yourself. Play this game often and your child will soon pick up the idea.

Source: S. and R. Bennett, *365 TV-Free Activities You Can Do With Your Child*, Adams Media Corporation.

Feed your child’s passion for reading

Even though your child isn’t reading by herself yet, she needs to know about reading—and a love of reading is the first step! To nurture your child’s passion for reading:

- **Read to her** every day.
- **Let her pick** the books you read together.
- **Make regular trips** to the library.
- **Talk about how much** you enjoy reading.
- **Encourage her** to look at books instead of watching TV.



Have fun with funny names

Helping your child discover different sounds is an important part of getting him ready to read. Entertain and engage him by reading a book with nonsense words or silly names.

Try *Rumpelstiltskin*, for example. Then, take turns making up funny new names for friends and family.



Build your child’s vocabulary by talking through everyday tasks

A child who has a strong vocabulary is well on his way to becoming a good reader. You can provide opportunities for your child to learn and use new words when you:

- **Explain what** unfamiliar words mean when you use them in conversation.
- **Ask questions** about errands and tasks.
- **Think aloud** and talk to your child as you do everyday activities.



Book-based storytelling contributes to your child's oral language skills

By encouraging her to talk about the books you're reading together, you're helping your child learn to express ideas and relate events. You can use your favorite books as a springboard for telling stories. Not only will this boost your child's oral language skills, she'll also enjoy being creative!



Engage your child in storytelling using the picture books you're reading together. To introduce storytelling:

- **Reread favorite books.** Have your child retell the plot and turn the page when it's time to move on to the next page.
- **Read a wordless picture book.** Encourage your child to use the pictures to explain what is happening in the story.
- **Use a hand puppet** to tell the story and to ask her questions. Then let your child hold the puppet and retell the story.

Source: M. Segal, Ph.D., *Your Child at Play, Three to Five Years: Conversation, Creativity, and Learning Letters, Words, and Numbers*, Newmarket Press.

Your child can practice writing skills at home

Your child will learn to form letters and write in school—but it helps to boost his interest in writing at home! You can:

- **Encourage your child to draw** every day. Have him show you a picture he has drawn and say, "Tell me about your drawing." You can write captions under the drawings using your child's own words.
- **Post a chart of the alphabet** where he can see it. Review the letters together often. Explain that people use these to write.
- **Have your child practice** writing his first name. Point out the individual letters in books or on signs. Encourage him to put his name on all the pictures he draws.



Q: I correct my child's grammar whenever he says something incorrectly, but it seems to frustrate him. What should I do?

A: No one likes having mistakes pointed out constantly, and your child is no different. Instead, subtly show him the proper way to speak. If he says, "We *rided* bikes at school today," reply, "You *rode* bikes? That's terrific!"

Do you have a question about reading? Email readingadvisor@parent-institute.com.

Point out sight words to your child

Sight words—common words that readers learn to recognize without needing to decode them—are important to reading fluency. Try these fun, easy ways to expose your child to common sight words:



- **Don't skip *The End*.** When reading with your child, point to these words that conclude many books.
- **Point out common words.** Show your child the word *Love* at the close of greeting cards. Read the names of colors on her crayons.

Source: R. Campbell, Ed., *Facilitating Preschool Literacy*, International Reading Association.

Books to delight your early reader

- ***Push Button*** by Aliko (Greenwillow Books). The push-button boy loves to push buttons—wherever he finds them! Your child will enjoy seeing what happens as the boy goes around pushing different buttons.
- ***Bark, George*** by Jules Feiffer (HarperCollins). When George the dog tries to bark, he meows, quacks and speaks! What does the vet have to do to get George back to normal?
- ***Scaredy Squirrel*** by Mélanie Watt (Kids Can Press). Scaredy Squirrel adheres to a strict schedule every day, and he makes sure safety comes first ... until one day, when he bravely ventures outside his nest.



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Publisher: John Wherry, Ed.D.
Editor: Stacey Marin.

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P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474
1-800-756-5525, ISSN: 1533-3299
www.parent-institute.com