

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Brookwood School District 167

Encourage your preschooler to participate when you are reading together

Reading together daily is crucial to your preschooler's development as a reader. And as you read, it's important to involve your child. As an active participant, your child is more likely to stay focused, engaged and excited about reading.

To foster active reading:

- **Ask your child questions** about the story.
- **Ask your child to point out** and name familiar letters, words and pictures.
- **Have your child make** predictions about what will happen next in the story.
- **Repeat rhymes** and refrains with your child.
- **Reread favorites.** After memorizing a story, have your child "read" it along with you.



Picture books promote storytelling

Storytelling boosts your child's oral language skills and nurtures creativity. You can use favorite books as a springboard for telling stories. When you talk about the books, you help your child learn how to express ideas and relate events.

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.
- **Look at a wordless picture book.** Encourage your child to use the pictures to "read" what is happening in the story.
- **Have a stuffed animal** "tell" the story and ask your child questions. Then, let your preschooler hold the animal and retell the story.

Turn reading into a fun tradition

Start a new holiday tradition this year: Family Reading Night! Pick one night during the month to read seasonal books as a family.

Ask your child to help you select a variety of books about winter or December holidays.



Your child will be thrilled, you'll spend time together—and you'll be nurturing those budding language-learning skills.

Don't forget about nonfiction!

Silly stories are wonderful to read, but so is nonfiction. The next time you're at the library, explore the nonfiction section with your child.

Your preschooler may love looking at books with vivid photographs of animals, outer space or faraway countries. See what new things you can learn together!



Reading skills develop over time

Are you worried that your child isn't a "born reader"? Don't be! Technically, there's no such thing.

There is no specific part of the brain devoted to grasping printed words. The fact is that learning to read requires effort, instruction and time.



So rejoice if your child naturally loves books. But don't fret if your preschooler doesn't "naturally" read with ease.

Creative ways to help your child learn letters

Recognizing letters is an important step toward reading and writing readiness. And learning to do it can also be fun!

To teach letters in engaging ways:

- **Start with parts.** Draw a shape or line, such as a circle or diagonal line. Then, ask your child to add to it, eventually making a letter, such as T or N. Offer hints as needed. Then, switch roles.
- **Play letter match.** Write letters in uppercase and lowercase on a sheet of paper. Have your child draw lines from each lowercase letter to its uppercase match.
- **Light them up.** In a dark room, use the light beam from a flashlight to draw letters on a ceiling or wall. Can your child follow the beam and figure out the letters you're writing?



Tell stories with sock puppets

Get creative during story time by turning your child's best-loved tale into a puppet show. Here's how:

- **Make a sock puppet.** Draw a face on the toe end of an old sock.
- **Slide the puppet** onto your child's arm. Demonstrate how to make it "talk" by opening and closing your hand.
- **Sit back and listen** as your child and the puppet act out the story.



Brainstorm rhymes with your preschooler

Preschoolers find learning to read easier when they are familiar with the sounds letters make. To sharpen this skill, read stories and poems that rhyme together and talk about the rhyming sounds with your child.

Then, encourage your child to make up rhymes. Here's how:

Say a word and then offer 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 OK if your child doesn't, though. Just say the word yourself. Play this game often and your preschooler will soon pick up the idea!



Books to delight your early reader

- ***Sneezy the Snowman*** by Maureen Wright. He's made of snow, so of course Sneezy gets chilly sometimes! But is that cup of hot cocoa really the best thing for the shivering snowman to drink?
- ***Winter Wonderland (Picture the Seasons)*** by Jill Esbaum. Wintertime comes to life in this beautiful book. Bold, splashy photographs and vivid colors capture just how gorgeous the frostiest season can be.
- ***Scaredy Squirrel*** by Mélanie Watt. Scaredy Squirrel sticks to a strict schedule every day, and makes sure safety comes first ... until one day, when he bravely ventures outside the nest.



Q: My child suddenly can't stand to reread favorite stories. What should I do?

A: Give your child's bookshelf an overhaul! Head to the library, yard sales or the bookstore and find new titles to spark interest. Let your child do most of the choosing, and don't expect to "pick a winner" every time. Discovering a delightful needle-in-a-haystack story is half the fun.

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