

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

St. Louis County Schools

## Build your child's love of reading with some new reading-related activities

The beginning of a new school year is the perfect time for your family to establish new reading-related routines.

Here are three ideas to try:

- 1. Read in new places.** Find at least one new location to read with your child each week. You could read outside, during bath time or while sitting on the kitchen floor. The possibilities are endless!
- 2. Write a story.** Think about types of pets and help your child make up a simple tale about one. Pick a new topic to write about each week. Have your child add illustrations and “read” the story to family.
- 3. Take book breaks** throughout the day. When you and your child are busy doing something, such as picking up the house, stop and say, “Book break!” Then snuggle up and read.



### Reading aloud can boost resilience

Experts agree that reading aloud to children boosts their reading readiness. New research shows that reading aloud can also triple a child's resilience at school. So whether you have an hour or just a few spare minutes, pick up a book and start reading with your child. Make it a point to:

- **Read with expression.** Use everything from funny voices to exaggerated gestures. The more you get into the story, the more your child will, too.
- **Go slowly.** Try not to rush through the books. Give your child a chance to enjoy the pictures and think about the story.
- **Pause often.** Encourage your child to ask questions and make comments during story time. These aren't interruptions, they are proof that your child is engaged in the tale.

**Source:** University of South Australia, “Reading builds resilience among at-risk kids,” *ScienceDaily*.

## Get to know your child's teacher

The beginning of a new school year is the perfect time to get to know your child's preschool teacher and set the stage for a successful year.

It's also a great time to discuss your child's reading and learning goals. Be sure to ask these questions:

- **How will you teach** reading skills?
- **How will you measure** my child's reading readiness?
- **How can I support** my child's reading efforts at home?



### Have talks about summer

Summertime may have passed by too quickly, but take time to discuss the highlights with your child. Back-and-forth conversations boost language skills.

During conversations:

- **Expose** your child to new words.
- **Demonstrate** the sounds letters make.
- **Model** good listening skills.



### Take advantage of your library

Libraries have a lot to offer. To make sure your family is making the most of your local library:

- **Have every family member** get a library card—including your child.
- **Ask the librarian** for book recommendations for preschoolers.
- **Let your child** select which books to check out.
- **Find out** about in-person and virtual story times, as well as free e-books and audiobooks to download.



## Reviewing numbers boosts reading and math readiness skills at the same time

Building a strong foundation for reading involves more than teaching your child words and letters. It's also important to help your preschooler read numbers, too. To review numbers:

- **Find page numbers** while you are reading together. Your child can also look for numbers in materials you read, such as magazines.
- **Look for numbers everywhere you go.** Challenge your child to point out numbers on street signs, at the library or at the grocery store.
- **Count objects.** This helps develop one-to-one correspondence, which links the abstract idea of numbers to specific, visible items. You might write numbers on index cards and have your child count the matching numbers of toys.



### Focus on the ABCs in fun ways

Learning the names of letters and the sounds they make is essential for your child's reading readiness. To make learning the ABCs fun:

- **Have a letter of the day.** On "B" day, you can eat bananas, bounce balls and sing songs like "Baby Shark."
- **Go on letter scavenger hunts.** Look for items that begin with each letter of the alphabet.



### To encourage reading, involve your family

When the whole family reads together, your child knows it's an important activity. To make reading a family affair:

- **Involve other relatives.** Who says Mom and Dad are the only ones qualified to lead story time? Ask Grandpa, Aunt Leslie or an older sibling to pitch in, too.
- **Record a story.** Create your own audiobook by recording yourselves reading a story. Let everyone in the family provide a voice. Encourage sound effects.
- **Start the day with stories.** Set a few books on the kitchen table each morning. Enjoy some reading along with your breakfast.



### Books to delight your early reader

- *Preschool Day Hooray!* by Linda Leopold Strauss. Help your little one get excited about preschool with this fun picture book—filled with colorful illustrations and rhyming text.
- *100 Animals on Parade* by Masayuki Sebe. A band of 100 bears is leading a parade through town. Can you find all 100? What about the 100 pigs that are up next? There are plenty of things to count in this book!
- *A Perfect Day* by Lane Smith. It's a perfect day for Cat, Dog, Chickadee and Squirrel. But what happens when Bear shows up? Find out in this charming book that introduces young children to the concept of point of view.



**Q:** My preschooler always fusses during story time. How can I help my child enjoy it?

**A:** You can't make your child enjoy reading, but you can make reading enjoyable! Start by reading favorite books when your child is in a good mood. Give your child a stuffed animal to hold while you read. If your child gets antsy or distracted, just take a break. Then try reading with a new book a bit later.

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