

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Abbeville County Schools

January is the perfect month to reassess and reestablish reading routines

Reinvigorate your family's reading routines and practices as the calendar turns to 2022. To foster your child's reading development over the next 12 months:

- **Set aside** at least 15 minutes to read together every day.
- **Evaluate** your family's current reading routines. Which ones does your child enjoy? What others could you add? You could have weekly reading dinners or turn bath time into book time!
- **Refresh your supply** of reading material. If your child loves his book on dinosaurs, head to the library to find more materials on dinosaurs and other related topics.
- **Set an example.** Show your child how much you love reading and how useful it is in your life. Have plenty of reading material around and include reading in your family activities whenever you can.



"Reading should not be presented to children as a chore, a duty. It should be offered as a gift."

—Kate DiCamillo

Expose early readers to plenty of poetry

Poetry (rhymed or not) encourages creative thinking. It also helps children learn that words are made of sounds. To add some poetry to your child's life:

- **Create a poetry basket.** Look for poems your child might like. Copy them down and put them in a basket. Each day, choose one of the poems and read it together.
- **Place a poem on your child's pillow.** Read it together as a relaxing part of your child's bedtime routine.
- **Make an audio recording.** Record yourself and your child reciting favorite poems together. On your next trip, she'll have something fun to listen to.

Demonstrate the connection between the text and spoken words

When you read to your child, it's important to show him that you're reading the words on the page. To do so, follow the words with your finger as you read. Occasionally stop and point out words he may recognize.



This helps your child understand that there's a connection between the text he sees on the page and what you're saying—and that you're not simply making up a story from the pictures.

Turn off those screens!

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends parents set limits on their preschoolers' recreational screen time.

That includes videos, TV, online games and apps. So, instead of turning on a screen, hand your child a book—better yet, read it together!



Let your child 'read' to you

Help your child build her language skills by having her "read" a story to you. Even if she can't read the text, she can still be a great storyteller.

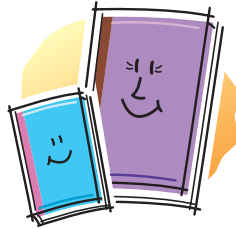
Tell your child to flip through the pages of her favorite book and use the pictures as a guide. Don't worry if she goes a little off topic. She's building creativity skills and pre-reading skills at the same time.



Play sound and sight games to prepare your preschooler for reading

The more practice your child gets at observing and listening, the more ready he will be to read. Try some of these fun games together:

- **Letter search.** Let your child pick a “letter of the day.” Ask him to point out his special letter each time he sees it.
- **Compound word search.** Look for compound words that name familiar objects, such as *football*. Ask your child, “If you take away the *foot* from *football*, what word is left?”
- **Rhyme time.** Rhymes teach your child that some words use the same sounds as other words. Whenever you can, ask your child questions, such as, “What word rhymes with *cat*?” When he learns a new word, ask him if it sounds like any words he already knows.



Introduce a few big words in conversations with your child

Children are captivated by the sounds of long and complex words—even if they don’t understand them. So add some “grown-up words” into your conversations.

Don’t just say the weather is *cold*. Say it’s *frigid*. Tell your child she’s *delightful*. Your child’s vocabulary will grow. And she’ll take great pride in blurting out, “That’s *scrumptious!*”



Build reading excitement with the mail

Young children love receiving mail. It makes them feel important—and reinforces reading readiness skills.

Ask relatives and family friends to mail your child notes and cards. Read each one with her and then ask her to dictate a response. She can also draw a picture on her note before it goes into the envelope. Show her how you write the address on the envelope so it will get to the right person.

You can also give your child junk mail. Catalogs can be especially fun to look at together. Ask your child about what she sees in the pictures before reading the printed descriptions aloud to her.



Books to delight your early reader

- ***Zero is the Leaves on the Tree*** by Betsy Franco. What is zero? Zero is the number of kites in the sky when the wind stops blowing. It’s the number of balls in the bin at recess. This unique counting book explores an often-overlooked number.
- ***Digger, Dozer, Dumper*** by Hope Vestergaard. There are all kinds of trucks, and they all have important jobs to do! Enjoy reading these fun poems about a dozen different kinds of trucks.
- ***Peck, Peck, Peck*** by Lucy Cousins. A little woodpecker learns to peck—and she loves it! Join her as she flies all around, looking for new things to peck.



Q: My preschooler only seems happy when he’s covered in paint or play dough. I want him to become a good reader, but he can barely sit through a story. What should I do?

A: Be creative! There’s more than one way to get an energetic preschooler interested in reading. Since your child has a flair for the arts, use them to strengthen his reading readiness skills. He can finger-paint the alphabet, sing nursery rhymes or act out scenes from stories.

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