

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

ECLC, A Title I School
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Keep literacy skills sharp this summer by engaging in reading-related activities

Summer may be around the corner, but that doesn't mean it's time to take a break from learning. To keep your child's literacy skills strong during the summer months:

- **Stock a summer bookshelf.** Find interesting books at yard sales, thrift shops or by swapping with friends. Put the books on a shelf marked Special Summer Stories and start reading them with your child.
- **Play Show and Tell** with books. Once a week, have your preschooler pick out a favorite book and tell you what is so special about it.
- **Visit the library** regularly to explore and find books. Help your child check out a new type of book (biography, poetry, etc.) each time you go. Ask the librarian for suggestions.



Listening builds a foundation for reading

Listening skills are crucial for reading readiness because they are the basis for learning language. To help your preschooler become an attentive listener:

- **Speak to your child** in a clear, simple manner with correct grammar. Avoid using baby talk.
- **Engage in frequent conversations** with your child. Encourage back-and-forth dialogue to strengthen both communication and listening skills.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Pose questions that require more than a simple *yes* or *no* answer.
- **Play fun games** that involve listening and following directions, such as Simon Says.

'Rainbow write' to practice letters

To help your preschooler review the letters of the alphabet, pick a word, such as your child's name. Then:

1. **Print the word** lightly on a piece of paper.
2. **Have your child** trace the letters several times, each time using a different color crayon.
3. **Read each letter aloud** as your child traces it. Make sure your child says the letter with you.



A 'picture walk' helps you explore books with your child

Open a colorful book and spend time enjoying the artwork with your child. Chat about what you see. Then, ask your preschooler to guess what the story might be about based on the illustrations.



Enhance language learning with the five senses

Find word-filled ways to engage your preschooler's senses. Here are some ideas to try:

- **Find books** with bright, bold pictures to look at.
- **Take story time outdoors.** Talk about what you smell in nature.
- **Help your child make** a tasty treat that a favorite book character might enjoy.
- **Listen to audiobooks** together.
- **Offer books with different textures** to touch or chunky pages to turn.



Strengthen reading skills with storytelling

Storytelling is a powerful tool for fostering a love of reading and supporting language development in preschoolers. When you take turns sharing stories, your child:

- **Strengthens vocabulary.** Storytelling exposes your preschooler to a wide range of words and language patterns.
- **Gains inspiration for stories.** Children who enjoy the stories they hear are more likely to develop their own storytelling abilities.
- **Learns about story structure.** Each storytelling session shows that tales have beginnings, middles and endings.
- **Develops imagination.** Children with strong imaginations often have an easier time mastering language.



Source: M.Yabe and others, “Effects of storytelling on the childhood brain: near-infrared spectroscopic comparison with the effects of picture-book reading,” *Fukushima Journal of Medical Science*.

Encourage summer reading with books on the go

It’s important to maintain your preschooler’s interest in books and reading throughout the summer months.

One effective way to keep the reading adventure going is to pack books to help pass the time on trips and errands. Bring books along for car rides, doctor’s appointments and other outings!



Three strategies can make read-alouds more engaging for your preschooler

Whether you have unlimited hours or just a few spare minutes, get the most out of the time you spend reading to your child. Here’s how:

1. **Read with expression.** Use everything from funny voices to exaggerated gestures. And use different voices for different characters.
2. **Go slowly.** Don’t rush through books. Give your child a chance to enjoy the illustrations and think about the story.
3. **Pause often.** Encourage your child to ask questions and make comments during story time. Remember, these aren’t interruptions. They are proof that your child is engaged in the tale!



Books to delight your early reader

- ***Last Stop on Market Street*** by Matt de la Peña. CJ and his grandmother ride the bus across town every Sunday. Throughout the journey, his grandmother helps CJ see the beauty in everything.
- ***Extra Yarn*** by Mac Barnett. Annabelle has a magic box of yarn, which she uses to knit hats, scarves and more for everyone around her. What happens when someone who isn’t as generous gets his hands on the magic box?
- ***Jack’s House*** by Karen Magnuson Beil. Jack says he built a house, but Max the dog knows the true story. Hear Max’s take on the construction in this adaptation of the nursery rhyme, “The House that Jack Built.”



Q: My child adores books, but can be rough with them. How can I teach my preschooler to be more gentle?

A: By being patient. As you read books together, remind your child of the right way to treat them. “We pick up the book with both hands. We turn each page carefully. We put it away gently when we’re finished.”

Do this each time you read together, and your child will eventually get the message.

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