

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Mt. Olive Primary School

Embrace the new school year with some new family reading activities

This month is the perfect time to step up your family's reading habits. Here are two enriching ways your family can enjoy books together:

- 1. Combine mealtime and storytime.** Once a week, choose a book to share during dinner. Read the story aloud and then talk about it while you eat. Or, dig in first before reading. Let family members take turns choosing books and reading aloud.
- 2. Take book breaks** while doing chores. When you are busy with a boring task like doing laundry or vacuuming, stop and say, "Book break!" Then snuggle up with your child and share a story. Encourage your child to call a "book break" occasionally, too.



Build your child's love of reading

When children appreciate books, they become lifelong readers. To nurture a love of reading:

- **Make it a habit.** Spend 15-20 cozy minutes a day reading with your child. Choose a time that works best for you.
- **Invite your child** to "read" to you by telling you a story based on the pictures and words. Show lots of interest.



Read and write on the go

Demonstrate that reading and writing are portable activities. Take books and writing supplies with you whenever you and your child leave home. Whether you're running an errand or visiting a friend, your child will have the supplies to practice some reading and writing.



Reading can ease back-to-school nerves

New-school-year jitters are normal, especially for young children. You can calm your child's nerves—and show that others feel the same way—by sharing books about it. Read the following books with your preschooler:

- **First Day Critter Jitters** by Jory John. The animals are nervous about their first day of school. When they get to their classroom, they discover their teacher is nervous, too!
- **A Letter From Your Teacher: On the First Day of School** by Shannon Olsen. This heartfelt letter a teacher writes to students on the first day of school lays the foundation for a fantastic school year.
- **A Kiss for When You Miss Me** by Poppy Bishop. Calm fears of separation with this sweet story about the strength of love between a parent and child.

Don't let your child fall into the 'million word gap'

Want to build your child's vocabulary and reading readiness? Set a goal of reading five books a day together. Why? A recent study found that when parents read their young children five books a day, their children enter kindergarten having heard about 1.4 million more words than kids who are never read to!



Source: J.A.R. Logan and others, "When Children Are Not Read to at Home," *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Everyone can tell compelling tales!

Listening to stories boosts your child's early literacy skills. But terrific tales don't always come from books. Some of the most memorable ones are those you create yourself. And you don't need to be a professional storyteller. Just be engaged and energetic.

If you're not sure what kind of story to tell, consider:

- **An event from your life.** Did you ever do anything silly or unusual as a kid? Your child will love hearing about it and what happened as a result.
- **Something from a movie.** Do you recall a kid-friendly scene from a favorite film? Put it into your own words and share it with your child. Don't forget to describe the characters and setting as well as the action of the scene!



Singing boosts language learning

Songs are terrific for sharpening your child's language skills. To take advantage of their benefits:

- **Listen to favorite songs.** Together, invent hand motions to go with the lyrics.
- **Create a songbook.** Compile a booklet of your child's favorite tunes and their lyrics. Read it together whenever you and your child are looking for something to sing.



Take an artistic approach to the alphabet

Help your child learn the ABCs in an engaging and hands-on way. Together, make different letters with:

- **Play dough.** Demonstrate how to shape a dough "snake" into the letters O, S and C. If your child makes a mistake, squish it up and start over.
- **Finger paints.** Draw several letters on a sheet of paper, and have your child trace over them with finger paints.
- **Sandpaper.** Cut letters out of sandpaper. Have your child put a sheet of paper on top of the sandpaper letters and scribble over them with a crayon. Etched letters will magically appear.



Books to delight your early reader

- **100 Animals on Parade** by Masayuki Sebe. A band of 100 bears is leading a parade. Can your child find all 100? What about the 100 pigs that are up next? There are plenty of fun things to search for and count in this book.
- **Rex Wrecks It!** by Ben Clanton. Rex is a dinosaur who loves to knock down his friends' block towers. Can his friends come up with a plan to make him stop?
- **Hot Dog** by Doug Salati. A dachshund is being walked all around New York city as his owner runs errands. Find out what happens when the dog refuses to move one more step.



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

A: You can't "make" your child enjoy reading, but you can make reading enjoyable! Start by sharing stories when your child is in a good mood. Ask your child to pick out a few books and read them. If your child gets distracted, simply take a break and try again later. Remember: If you want your child to learn to love reading, don't approach it as a serious, must-do-now activity. Relax and have fun with it.

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