

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

This Newsletter Provided By
Berea Early Childhood RTC

Play sound and sight games to strengthen your preschooler's reading readiness

The more practice preschoolers get looking for letters and listening to the sounds they make, the more ready they will be to learn to read. Try some of these fun games with your child:

- **Letter search.** With your child, pick a “letter of the day.” Then, ask your child to point the letter out every time you both see it—in the grocery store, on street signs, in a book, etc.
- **Compound word search.** Look for compound words in stories 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 sounds like *cat*?” After learning a new word, ask if it sounds like any words your child already knows.



Talk and interact during reading time

The next time you read your preschooler a story, notice how much time you spend reading and how much time you spend talking about what you're reading. Don't worry if there's more talking than reading—that's actually great!

Discussing a book and asking questions during reading time increases your child's engagement. Talk about:

- **What your child thinks.** Say it's OK for your preschooler to speak up with questions and comments. Then, take time to discuss them.
- **Your thoughts and questions.** Point out things about the text and the pictures: “Oh! Look at that big brown bear!” Or, ask thought-provoking questions: “What do you think will happen next?”

Start the new year with new rituals

The new calendar year is the perfect time to adopt some new reading habits. You can:

1. **Combine bath time** and reading time. The sudsy change of scenery may boost your preschooler's enthusiasm about reading.
2. **Have a character day.** Let your child dress up—and act—like a favorite book character. For example, your child could wear green clothes with a red hat to be the Very Hungry Caterpillar. Throughout the day your child can snack on fresh fruit—just like the caterpillar does.



Take reading offline

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends families place limits on the amount of time preschoolers spend in front of screens. That includes videos, TV, online games and apps. So, instead of turning on a screen, encourage your child to pick up a book!



Let your child 'read' to you

Even children who can't read can still be great storytellers! Have your child flip through the pages of a favorite book and tell the story. Your child likely knows the plot, and can also use the pictures as a guide. If the story goes a little off topic, that's OK. Your child is building reading and creativity skills at the same time.



Practice fine motor skills for writing

Reading and writing are interconnected—and both are essential for literacy development. Here are a few enjoyable ways to develop the small hand and finger muscle control your child will use when gripping a pencil or crayon:

- **Break out the play dough.** Give your child plenty of opportunities to squish, mold and roll it.
- **Tear paper.** Have your child rip construction paper into pieces and glue them onto another piece of paper to create a unique collage.
- **Stack and build.** Encourage your child to play with blocks.
- **Get out the paint.** Have your child experiment by painting with fingers, big and small brushes, or cotton swabs.



Play a game of roll and rhyme

Here's a creative way to help your child practice rhyming words:

1. **Cover two square boxes** with paper.
2. **Draw or glue one picture** onto each surface of the boxes. Use pictures of objects that are easy to recognize and easy to rhyme with.
3. **Have your child** roll one die at a time. Ask your child to name a word that rhymes with the picture that lands face up. Then, keep rolling and rhyming!



Foster a love of learning to boost your child's excitement about reading

To read well, children shouldn't just be learning about letters and words. They should be learning about everything!

The more background knowledge preschoolers gain, the better prepared they are to read. And the more excited kids are about learning, the more they will *want* to read.

To make learning fun:

- **Promote creativity.** Ask your child to invent a story, paint a picture or build something with boxes.
- **Give your child items** to count or measure.
- **Encourage passions.** Does your child love animals, stars or rockets? Explore interests together online and in books.



Books to delight your early reader

- ***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, from bulldozers to ambulances.
- ***Little Miss, Big Sis*** by Amy Krouse Rosenthal. Little Miss can't wait to be a big sister! She waits and waits ... until the new baby comes. Then, she realizes how life changes with a new baby in the house.
- ***The Story Book Knight*** by Helen Docherty. Leo is a knight who loves to sit and read favorite books. When he must go fight a dragon, he brings the books along with him.



Q: My preschooler's name is long. My child tries, but can't quite write it. How can I help?

A: Tracing is one effective way to teach preschoolers how to write words. Use a pencil to print your child's name in large, neat letters on a piece of paper. Next, have your child trace over your letters with a marker or a crayon. As your preschooler gets better at it, you can experiment with other words.

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