

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Mexico Academy & Central School District

Three strategies will keep your family reading over the summer

Whether it's the final weeks of preschool or the middle of summer break, maintaining your family's reading routine is crucial. Daily story time builds your preschooler's reading readiness, making it a habit worth keeping.

To keep reading on your family's priority list:

- 1. Schedule it.** If summer days are less structured, set aside 20 minutes each morning or afternoon to read with your child.
- 2. Visit the library.** Write down the library's summer hours and pick up a schedule of children's activities.
- 3. Combine it** with other activities. If you are going to the pool, bring a few books along, find a dry spot and read together. If a hike is more your family's style, cool off in the shade with a book. Heading to a sibling's soccer game? Share a story on the sidelines.



Sharpen your child's thinking skills

Don't let your little thinker's brain turn to mush over the summer! To encourage reading and thinking:

- **Explore new things** with your child. Head out to a new park or playground and read the signs. Take a trip to a theater or art gallery and read about what you see.
- **Investigate the wonders all around.** Read about constellations and try to spot them on a clear night. Identify the trees or birds in your yard by looking at a guidebook or online.
- **Learn a new skill.** Teach your child how to prepare a simple dish by following a recipe. Try a parent-child cooking class.
- **Be creative!** Any activity that makes your child think will strengthen reading-readiness skills.

Make letter practice fun with crayons and color

Help your child review the letters of the alphabet and make a piece of art. Pick a word and 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 to create a kaleidoscopic effect.
- 3. Read each letter aloud** together as your child traces it, reinforcing the connection between the sound and the visual shape.



Enthusiasm sparks enthusiasm!

Want your child to be thrilled about books and reading? Then, let your own excitement show!

Along with reading stories together, sharing your passion for books and reading



is one of the most effective ways to nurture your child's love of words!

Spot reading problems early

It's never too soon to identify potential reading difficulties. Children who show difficulty recognizing and manipulating the sounds within words (a skill called *phonological awareness*) may later struggle with reading.

Keep an eye out if your child has trouble with rhymes or struggles to recognize words that start with the same sound. If you have any concerns, talk with your child's preschool teacher or pediatrician.



Tell your preschooler 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 your child, 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. Describe the characters, the setting and the action of the scene.

Listening skills support reading skills

Language growth is highly dependent on strong listening skills. To help your child become a better listener:

- **Speak** in a clear and simple manner using correct grammar. Avoid baby talk.
- **Model** attentive listening. Make eye contact and restate what your child says.
- **Ask** questions that require your child to listen to options and make a choice. “Would you like to wear the red shirt or the green shirt?”
- **Play** games that require listening and following directions, such as Simon Says.
- **Minimize** distractions like the TV or music during conversation so your child can focus on your voice.



Q: Are there specific things I can do now to set my preschooler up for academic success in elementary school and beyond?

A: The key to long-term academic success is fostering a love of learning. Investigate your child’s questions together using books, nature walks or videos to show that learning is a fun, active pursuit. Frame difficult tasks as exciting puzzles, and encourage your child to “stick with it” for the rewarding feeling of satisfaction and pride.

Anytime can be reading time

Reading time does not have to be limited to a strict schedule—you and your child can share a book any time of the day. To get the most out of reading together:

- **Say yes** as often as possible when your child asks you to sit down and read.
- **Read** at different times of day. Your child’s preferred reading time may change with age.
- **Pick up books** when you’re both relaxed and just start reading.



Books to delight your early reader

- ***Tiny Little Fly*** by Michael Rosen. A tiny little fly zooms past a large elephant, a hippo and several other animals. All of the big animals try to catch him, but the fly gets away!
- ***The Pirate of Kindergarten*** by George Ella Lyon. Ginny has a problem: She sees two of everything! A nurse diagnoses her problem and fixes it with an eye patch. How will this Kindergarten Pirate enjoy the rest of the year?
- ***The Little Wood Duck*** by Brian Wildsmith. Mother Wood Duck lays six beautiful eggs. But once they hatch, the littlest duckling has a difficult time swimming in a straight line.



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