

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

D30 Elementary School

Keep your preschooler's thinking skills sharp during the summer

Don't let your little thinker's brain turn to mush over the summer! Read together every day and:

- **Explore new things** with your child. Head out to a new park or playground. Take a trip to an age-appropriate theater or art gallery. Pay a virtual visit to another country online.
- **Investigate the wonders** all around. Point out the stars and constellations to your child on a clear night. Identify the trees in your backyard. Go on a bird-watching expedition.
- **Learn a new skill.** Teach your child how to prepare a simple recipe. Enroll in a parent-child class.

Be creative! *Any* activity that makes your child think will strengthen reading-readiness skills.



"It is better to read a little and ponder a lot than to read a lot and ponder a little."

—Denis Parsons Burkitt

Listening skills support reading skills

Listening is a vital part of language development and a key step to building reading 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 to show you understand.
- **Ask questions** that require your child to listen to options and make a choice. "Would you like to wear your red shirt or your green shirt today?"
- **Play games** that require listening and following directions, such as Simon Says.

Spot reading problems early

It's never too early to watch out for potential reading difficulties. Kids who have trouble with sounds in words often have difficulties with reading later.

Keep an eye out for signs that your child is struggling with rhymes or has trouble recognizing words that start with the same sound. If you have concerns, talk with your child's preschool teacher or pediatrician.



Enthusiasm sparks enthusiasm!

Want your preschooler to get excited about books and reading? Then get excited about them yourself!

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!



Promote reading this summer

It is important to maintain your preschooler's interest in books and reading over the summer months.

To promote reading:

- **Keep books within** your child's reach.
- **Check out new reading** materials often from the library so your child always has books to explore.
- **Let your child see** you reading.
- **Bring books** on trips and errands to help pass the time.
- **Enroll your child** in an online summer reading program.



More isn't always better when it comes to illustrations in books

Books filled with too many illustrations can hamper language learning. Why? Because when preschoolers see multiple pictures on a page, they may struggle to follow the story.

To maximize language learning when reading to your child:

- **Seek out books** with a single picture per page.
- **Avoid too many lift-the-flap books.** The act of lifting the flaps and looking underneath distracts from the words on the page.
- **Clarify multi-illustration stories.** When reading books with more than one picture per page, point to the drawing that goes with the text you're reading at the moment.



Source: Z.M. Flack and J.S. Horst, "Two sides to every story: Children learn words better from one storybook page at a time," *Infant and Child Development*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Use the colors of the rainbow to practice letters

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.
3. **Read each letter aloud together** as your child traces it.



Build literacy skills with your child's name

There is one word your child will hear, read and write every day throughout life—her name! It's also a great word for increasing reading readiness.

Here are a few ideas to try:

- **Label household items** with your child's name—a coat hook, toys and bedroom door. Read the labels often.
- **Make a puzzle.** Write your child's name on an index card, then cut the card into pieces, leaving one letter on each piece. Can your child put them back together?
- **Get creative.** Have your child write her name in sand with a finger or make the letters out of cookie dough.



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.



Q: My child is only in preschool, but I'm already concerned about his doing well in elementary school and beyond. How can I set him up for success?

A: By making him *want* to learn! Surround your child with books and other types of reading materials. Talk to him every day. Draw and count together.

Sing the alphabet. Paint pictures. Basically, ignite a "knowledge spark" in him!

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