

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Alva Public Schools  
Title I

## Kick off the new school year with fresh literacy activities

The beginning of a new school year is a great time for your family to create some new reading-related routines. Here are some ideas to try:

- **Break the mold.** Do you only read with your child before bed? Add some other places and times to look at books together, such as outside or during breakfast.
- **Take book breaks** throughout the day. When you and your child are busy doing a chore, such as picking up the house, stop and say, “Book break!” Then, snuggle up and share a story.
- **Write stories.** Think about one of your child’s favorite books. Together, make up a new tale using the same characters, and write it down. Ask your child to select a new topic to write about together each week.



### Use picture cards to introduce nouns

Your child won’t learn grammar formally until elementary school. However, it’s not too early to introduce *nouns* (a part of speech that refers to people, places and things).

Find and cut out pictures that show people, places and things. Paste each picture on a separate card. Then:

1. **Turn over a card** and have your child identify what the picture shows (for example, a book).
2. **Ask your child** if that picture is a person, a place or a thing. (A book is a thing.)
3. **Repeat with each card** and then have your child sort them into categories.

## Active reading boosts literacy skills

When children actively participate during read aloud time, they get more out of what they read. To promote active reading:

- **Let your child pick** the book you’ll read and turn the pages.
- **Make it a conversation.** Ask questions before, during and after you read.
- **Make connections.** If a character is scared of the dark, ask about a time your child felt scared. What made your child feel better?



### Visit your child’s favorite characters online

Are you looking for free literacy activities for your preschooler? Check out the PBS KIDS website at [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org).

There, you’ll find a ton of educational activities for your child, all based on favorite characters—from shows like Sesame Street, Arthur and Super Why!



### Play tic-tac-toe with new letters

The next time you and your child play tic-tac-toe, consider mixing things up a little. Instead of using the letters X and O as your markers, why not use A and B? Or Z and W?

Have your child choose two new letters each time you play. Keep changing letters, and soon your preschooler will recognize the whole alphabet!



## Review numbers to strengthen both reading and math readiness skills

Building a strong foundation for reading involves more than learning words and letters. Your child will need to read numbers, too. To review numbers with your child:

- **Point out page numbers** while you are reading books, a newspaper article or a piece of mail.
- **Look for numbers everywhere you go.** Ask your child to identify numbers in your home, on street signs, or as you run errands.
- **Count objects.** This helps your child develop one-to-one correspondence, which links the abstract idea of numbers to specific, visible items. You might count the legs on a table or the number of dogs you see while on a walk.
- **Talk about** how numbers can be written as numerals (*10*) or words (*ten*). Show your child examples of both.



### Use music to build your child's language skills

Listening to music together is a fun way to help your child build crucial language skills. Play your favorite songs and sing as you do chores together. Sing along to songs on the radio. Simply by listening to lyrics and singing along, you are exposing your child to rhymes and vocabulary words.



**Source:** M. Gràcia, "The Association between Music and Language in Children: A State-of-the-Art Review," *Children* (Basel).

### Build your preschooler's language skills at the kitchen table

Mealtimes are perfect times to talk with your preschooler. Back-and-forth conversations help children develop spoken language skills—which are the foundation for reading.

When children hear new words, they learn to figure out what the words mean from the way they are used in conversation. Saying, "The banana is still green—it's not *ripe*, so we can't eat it yet," helps your preschooler learn that *ripe* describes when a piece of fruit is ready to eat.

During mealtime, use words that are new to your child to describe food. Ask about favorite foods or invent silly new dishes!



### Books to delight your early reader

- ***That's Life!*** by Ame Dyckman. What happens when a silly creature named Life shows up on a boy's doorstep? Find out in this cute story about learning how to go with the flow.
- ***Here and Now*** by Julia Denos. This beautifully illustrated picture book introduces readers to mindfulness and meditation. It's a simple story about noticing all of the things around you.
- ***Peanut Butter and Jellyfishes*** by Brian P. Cleary. This alphabet book includes silly descriptions of animals and plants. From antelopes forming an arc to a zebra named Zachary at the zoo, see what all the letters of the alphabet can do!



**Q:** I want my preschooler to love reading. Are there other activities we should do together in addition to reading books?

**A:** Yes! Although reading together is one of the most effective ways to build your child's love of reading, there are lots of other activities that will make reading fun. For example, ask questions about books and encourage your child to talk. Act out stories together. Keep art supplies on hand and have your child draw pictures about what you read.

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