

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

PHELPS COUNTY R-III

THEME: DON'T BUG ME, I'M READING!

## Build your child's love of reading as early as possible

You are the most important factor in making your child a future reader and boosting his brainpower! Here are a few of the many things you can do to encourage your child to love books and reading:

- **Talk.** Your child may not understand all of the words you use right away, but he will soon. Speak to him as if he knows what you're saying, and he'll learn the rhythms of conversation.
- **Read, read, read.** The more you expose your child to books, the more likely he'll be a reader.
- **Make him the star.** When you read a favorite tale, replace the main character's name with your child's. He'll love hearing his name in the starring role!



**Source:** H.M. Johnson, "50 Simple Ways to Make Your Baby Smarter," Parents.com, niswc.com/lovereading.

*"Books are the quietest and most constant of friends."*

—Charles William Eliot

## Use TV time wisely to encourage reading

Don't just turn on the TV to keep your child entertained. Limit TV time to two hours per day and choose quality programs. You might also:

- **Take the time to watch** along with her. Talk with her about what you see.
- **Look for ways to build** reading-oriented activities around the show you watch. Visit the library to find books about the topic the show covered. For example, if the show was about dinosaurs, find a book about a Triceratops.
- **Be a good role model.** Limit the amount of TV you watch, too. Make sure your child sees you turning off the TV to read.

**Source:** S.B. Silvern and L.R. Silvern, *Beginning Literacy and Your Child: A Guide to Helping Your Baby or Preschooler Become a Reader*, International Reading Association.

## What is phonics?

You may hear your child's teacher talk about *phonics*, an important element in the development of reading and writing skills.

*Phonics* is the relationship between letters and the sounds they make. Knowing that the word *toy* starts with the *t* sound is an example of phonics. Ultimately, phonics will help your child blend all of the sounds in words together in order to read words smoothly.



**Source:** "Teach Phonics at Home," Scholastic.com, niswc.com/whatisphonics.

## Read and reread!

Your child may ask to read the same story over and over—and that's okay! When you reread familiar stories, your child can better recall vocabulary words from it. She is also becoming familiar with the story's beginning, middle and end.



**Source:** J. Owen, "Again, again! That is the best way to learn to read," *The Independent*, niswc.com/rereadingbooks.

## Encourage scribbling to get ready for writing

Scribbling helps your child develop the motor skills he needs to learn to write. It can also help him see that reading and writing are related.

1. **Plan a story** on a topic that interests your child.
2. **Narrate the story** and have your child "write" it down using scribbles.
3. **Have your child "read"** the story back to you and draw pictures to illustrate it.

**Source:** "Learning Partners—Let's Write! Writing Activities," KidSource OnLine, niswc.com/scribbling.



## Boost your child's alphabet skills to build pre-reading skills

Before your child can learn to read, he will need to learn the alphabet. Here are some things you can do to help him learn his letters and the sounds those letters make:



- **Read** alphabet books.
- **Point out** letters where you see them (on signs, labels, boxes and food packaging).
- **Help your child recognize** and practice the beginning sounds of words. For example, "Look at the dog. Dog begins with the letter *d*. What does *d* sound like?"
- **Play simple word games** with your child. For example, pick a word and ask your child to name words that rhyme with it.
- **Write your child's name** on a piece of paper and encourage him to trace the letters with his finger.

**Source:** *Put Reading First: Helping Your Child Learn to Read*, National Institute for Literacy.

## Spark your child's storytelling and creativity

When you make up stories with your child you are helping her learn how language can form stories. And that's an important foundation for reading.

Here's a fun way to do it:

- 1. Put some small items** in an empty box. Use anything you have—a feather, a seashell, a penny, etc. Explain that you are going to make up a story. Have your child pull out two items.
- 2. Begin the story** based on the items your child chose. For example, if she picked a feather and a penny, you might start like this: "This story is about a little bird who went to the store."
- 3. Ask your child to add details**, like the color of the bird and the type of store.



**Source:** "Activities for Engaging Preschoolers: Coffee Can Stories," U.S. Department of Education Community Update, [nismc.com/creativestorytelling](http://nismc.com/creativestorytelling).



**Q:** My four-year-old daughter won't keep quiet at the library. What can I do?

**A:** Have her bring a stuffed animal or doll. Before you go, tell her to remind her reading buddy of library rules—no running, speak in whispers, etc. When you get there, ask her to set a good example for her companion by following the rules herself.

Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

## Talking leads your child to reading

Encourage your child to talk to you often. Talking builds language skills, which are an important part of getting ready to read. You can:

- **Expand your child's vocabulary.** Use new words and explain what they mean.
- **Sing songs** and recite nursery rhymes together.
- **Speak clearly and use proper grammar** to set an example for your child.



**Source:** "Activities to Encourage Speech and Language Development," American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, [nismc.com/talking-toreading](http://nismc.com/talking-toreading).

## Books to delight your early reader

- **Little Pea** by Amy Krouse Rosenthal (Chronicle). Little Pea hates eating candy for dinner—but if he doesn't, he won't get spinach for dessert. Picky eaters will especially love this funny book!
- **Feast for 10** by Cathryn Falwell (HMH Books for Young Readers). Count along with this family as they prepare a special meal—going to the grocery store together, cooking yummy food and cleaning up afterward.
- **Rain Romp: Stomping Away a Grouchy Day** by Jane Kurtz (Greenwillow). On a gray and dreary day, one little girl does not want to get out of bed. But she soon learns that the cure for a gloomy day is to sing and stomp in the rain!



### Building Readers®

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