

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

PHELPS COUNTY R-III

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

Rhyming is integral to reading readiness

Being able to identify words that have the same ending sound—*rhyming words*—is a critical part of your child's reading development. By listening for these similarities within words, your child builds important language skills.

To develop your child's rhyming abilities:

- **Read books that rhyme.** Dr. Seuss books and traditional nursery rhymes are great places to start.
- **Create word families.** Start with a common word ending, like *-at*. Together, make a list of as many words as you can that fit into that word family (such as *cat, mat, sat, fat*, etc.). You can also create word families for *-an* or *-it*.
- **Make up silly nicknames** for each other that rhyme. Your child will get a kick out of calling you "Mom Bom"!



Source: "Nursery Rhymes: Not Just for Babies!" Reading Rockets, nswc.com/importantrhymes.

"A book is a dream that you hold in your hands."

—Neil Gaiman

Grocery shopping can inspire language fun

Why not turn one of your regular errands into a learning experience for your child? When you go grocery shopping, have her:

- **Help you find the items** that you need. For example, you can tell your child that you need a certain brand, and she can look for the first letter of the brand's name. Put her in charge of crossing items off your list, too!
- **Explain why she prefers** one food over another. You might ask your child to tell you why she likes apples more than oranges.
- **Sort items in your cart** by their beginning sound. She may put bread and bananas together, and the carrots, crackers and cucumbers near each other.

Source: J. Williams, "Games for the Grocery Store," Education.com, nswc.com/groceryplay.

Dramatic play builds language skills

When it comes to supporting your child's language development, don't overlook the power of dramatic play.

Drama is a fun way to boost your child's brain power. Encourage your child to:

- **Act out the stories** that you read together.
- **Stage a puppet show.**
- **Pretend to be someone else**, like a sibling, a friend or even you!



Source: D. Weigel, "24 Ways to Boost Your Child's Language Skills," University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, nswc.com/dramaticplay.

Everyday activities get your child ready to write

Brushing teeth, buttoning a shirt and using a fork are all activities that help your child get ready to write. That's because they exercise the small muscles in her fingers and help develop her fine motor skills. She'll use those when she begins to write.



Five easy ways to boost vocabulary

Your child's brain is a sponge—he learns several new words a day. Here are five simple ways to develop his vocabulary:

1. **Read to your child.**
2. **Be creative.** Instead of saying, "Dinner's ready," announce, "Our meal *awaits!*"
3. **Use new words.** Ask your child if his snack is *delicious* rather than *good* or *yummy*.
4. **Play pretend.** If your child is playing doctor, teach him to use words like *stethoscope* and *thermometer*.
5. **Play word games** like "20 Questions" and "I Spy."



Exposing your child to newspapers will build awareness of words

Newspapers are terrific for boosting your child's language learning. Even if he can't read yet, he can still improve his language skills by looking at newspapers because they are:



- **Full of words.** Your child will have plenty of chances to recognize letters. Eventually, he may recognize some simple words.
- **Inexpensive.** Your child can cut old newspapers up to make word collages.
- **Constantly changing.** Headlines change daily, so your child will be exposed to new words all the time.
- **Exciting.** With so many sections in a newspaper, your child is bound to find something he likes. He can flip to the comics, weather map or sports photos.

Source: T. Cowling, "Fun with Newspapers in the Preschool Classroom," Bright Hub Education, niswc.com/preschoolnewspapers.

Make learning the alphabet a blast

Turn learning the alphabet into a game! When teaching your child letters:

- **Get physical.** Show your child how to mold her body into different letters. It's a silly, stretchy way to become letter smart.
- **Head outdoors.** See if your child can find objects to go along with letters. Tree for *T* may be easy, but what will she come up with for *S* and *R*? She can also look at street signs and on buildings and see how many different letters she can find.
- **Sing it.** When teaching your child the alphabet song, be sure to sing it slowly! Make sure she understands that *L*, *M*, *N*, *O* and *P* are separate letters.



Source: "10 Fun Ways of Helping Kids Learn the ABCs," niswc.com/alphabetgames.



Q: My child doesn't always feel like reading stories. What other "bookish" activities can we do?

A: Books aren't the only way to have fun while exposing your child to reading. Listen to audio books. Create new stories based on your child's favorite stories. Host a book character tea party using your child's stuffed toys. Make bookmarks. Just don't give up on story time altogether!

Do you have a question about reading? Email readingadvisor@parent-institute.com.

Encourage your child to choose thought-provoking books

The books you and your child choose to read together can provide many opportunities for her to learn. When picking books, encourage your child to:

- **Find stories with catchy rhymes and rhythms.** She'll pick up on the sounds that make up words.
- **Choose some wordless books.** Not only are they nice to look at, they also encourage children to use their own words to tell stories that accompany the pictures.



Books to delight your early reader

- **Thesaurus Rex** by Laya Steinberg (Barefoot). Learn a ton of new words with Thesaurus Rex as he goes about his day—playing, frolicking, rollicking, frisking and romping throughout the jungle!
- **Catfish Kate and the Sweet Swamp Band** by Sarah Weeks (Atheneum). Catfish Kate and her band rock the bayou until they're challenged by Skink and his Skunktail Boys, who want a quieter environment. Soon, the two groups learn to compromise.
- **Waking Dragons** by Jane Yolen (Simon & Schuster). A young knight must get the family dragons up and ready before he heads to school—from brushing their teeth to feeding them breakfast.



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