

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

PHELPS COUNTY R-III

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

Use your child's name to strengthen reading readiness

There is one word your child will hear, read and write every day throughout her life—her name! Why not use it to increase her reading readiness? Here's how:

- **Label household items** with your child's name—her coat hook, toys and bedroom door.
- **Give your child a puzzling challenge.** Write her name on an index card, then cut the card into pieces, leaving one letter on each piece. Can she put them back together to make her name?
- **Write her name in creative ways.** For example, have your child write her name in sand with her fingers or make the letters out of cookie dough.



Source: L.K. Rath and L. Kennedy, *The Between the Lions Book for Parents*, HarperResource.

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

—Denis Parsons Burkitt

Knowing letter sounds is key for prereading

Help your child bolster his knowledge of letter sounds in order to prepare him for reading. You can:

- **Point out letters and explain the sounds** they make while reading together. For example, say, "That's an *m*. *Moon* begins with *m*." Connecting letters and sounds is an important step toward reading.
- **Ask your child to tell you** about his drawings. For example, if he says his picture is a pig on a farm, say, "*Pig* begins with *p*—*pppig*." Write a caption for him, and help him write the letter *P* above his picture.
- **Rhyme with your child.** When he says a word like *hat*, say, "That rhymes with *cat*. What else does it rhyme with?" Brainstorm rhymes together whenever you have some free time!

Source: M.F. Greene, "The Alphabet Mysteries," The Parenting Group.

Mini alphabet books reinforce your child's letter learning

Making miniature alphabet books is a fun activity that can help teach your child the alphabet. To make them:



1. **Cut a piece of paper** into fourths. Staple the pieces together to make a book.
2. **Write a letter** on the cover.
3. **Have your child look** through magazines and find pictures of objects that begin with that letter. Cut them out for him.
4. **Help him glue the pictures** to each page and label them. Next time, make a book about a different letter.

Source: "Helping Your Child at Home," niswc.com/minialphabetbooks.

Save special books for rainy day reading

Spring brings plenty of rainy weather that may keep you and your children inside. Stash away some "rainy day" books, and break them out when the drops start to fall. Since your child sees these titles only occasionally, she'll think they're extra special!



Make sure books are accessible

One of the easiest ways to turn your child on to reading is to make sure that your home is reader-friendly! You can:

- **Keep books within** your child's reach.
- **Let your child practice** turning the pages.
- **Make sure that your child** always has books around to explore.
- **Let your child see** you reading regularly.



Source: D. Butler, *Babies Need Books*, Heinemann.

Build reading skills and help with writing

When you develop your child's reading skills, you're also preparing her to write. When it comes to language learning, the two go hand in hand. Even though your preschooler may not be able to read just yet, there are many things you can do to sharpen her language skills and get her ready for reading and writing later. Here are a few:



- **Read together every day.** It sounds simple, but it's the best way to build her love of words. Even after she learns to read on her own, keep reading together every day.
- **Support your child's reading.** Go to the library together, and don't worry if she always chooses the same books.
- **Be a good listener.** When your child asks questions, really take time to answer them. Let her tell you stories, and you'll be boosting her confidence and her vocabulary!

Source: "From Words to Stories," National Endowment for the Arts, The Creativity Institute, niswc.com/buildingreadingwriting.

Music teaches thinking and listening skills

Singing songs with children is a wonderful way to build thinking and listening skills. Try taking a favorite song like "London Bridge" and substituting arm motions for some words.



First sing the whole song. Then omit some words and put in the arm motions. See if your child can remember where the arm motions go!

Source: J. Silberg, *500 Five Minute Games*, Gryphon House.

Engage your child in everyday conversations

Talking with your child about ordinary experiences and events is a way to broaden his vocabulary and language abilities. You're also exposing him to new ideas that expand his world.

When talking with your child:

- **Explain what you're doing.** Talk through making dinner or sorting laundry. Ask questions that encourage your child to help. "Can you find a lid to go with this pot?"
- **Ask "what if" questions.** Your child will develop critical thinking skills. "What would the world be like if everyone were the same?"
- **Ask follow-up questions** when your child tells you a story. This encourages your child



to tell a complete story, and it shows that you're interested in what he's saying.

Source: K. Winters, "Tot Talk," Read*Write*Now, niswc.com/everydayconversations.

Books to delight your early reader

- **Old Bear** by Kevin Henkes (Greenwillow). As fall becomes winter, Old Bear snuggles into his cave and begins his long hibernation. As he sleeps, he dreams of being a young cub and exploring the world.
- **The Little Wood Duck** by Brian Wildsmith (Star Bright). Mother Wood Duck lays six beautiful eggs. But once they hatch, the littlest duckling has trouble swimming in a straight line.
- **Tiny Little Fly** by Michael Rosen (Candlewick). A tiny little fly zooms past an elephant, a hippo and several other animals. All of the big animals try to catch him, but the fly gets away!



Q: My child is only in preschool, but I'm already concerned about how well he'll do in elementary school and beyond. How can I help him succeed?

A: By making sure he loves learning! Surround your child with books, magazines and other reading materials. Talk with him every day. Draw and count together. Sing the alphabet. Paint pictures. In short, get him excited about learning!

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

Building Readers®

How Families Can Get Children Ready to Read

Publisher: Phillip Wherry.
Editor: Stacey Marin.

Copyright © 2015, The Parent Institute® (a division of NIS, Inc.)
P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474
1-800-756-5525, ISSN: 1533-3299
www.parent-institute.com