

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

PHELPS COUNTY R-III

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

Show your child how important reading is to your entire family

Reading shouldn't always be a solo act! Involve your whole family in preparing your child to be a reader. To make language learning a family affair:

- **Share family history.** Ask siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins to tell your child stories about your family's past.
- **Create a reading nook.** Set aside a comfy spot at home where everyone can plop down with a book. Have a family reading time at least once a week—everyone gets together and reads!
- **Read all day long.** Look at street signs. While grocery shopping, ask your child to help you find specific products. Even if he can't read yet, he can look for the *k* in *ketchup* or the *b* in *bread*.



Source: "10 Tips for Parents of Young Children," Reading is Fundamental, niswc.com/familyofreaders.

"I have always imagined that paradise will be a kind of library."

—Jorge Luis Borges

Fill your home with letters and words

It's important to expose your child to letters and words—even before he can read them. He will begin to recognize the shapes of the letters and to understand how letters combine to make different words.

Here are some things you can do:

- **Hang an alphabet poster** in your child's room.
- **Label your child's pictures.** For example, if he draws a dog, write the word *dog* under the picture.
- **Look at many kinds of reading material**, including magazines and newspapers. Encourage your child to look at the pictures while you read him the captions.
- **Have your child help you make** grocery lists or to-do lists. Say the words out loud as you write them and talk about the letters each word contains.

Source: "Learn to Read - World of Words," niswc.com/readingenvironment.

Help your child get a feel for letters

Make learning the alphabet a tactile experience. Using two senses, touch and sight, can help your child remember what she is learning.



Run your child's finger over letters that you have:

- **Cut out** of sandpaper.
- **Traced in glue** and sprinkled-on glitter.
- **Glued down** in yarn.

Source: D. Nielsen, *Teaching Your Children*, Frank Shaffer Publications.

Raising a reader begins at birth

Your child is never too young to enjoy books and being read to.

When you read aloud with your child daily, she develops important brain capacity. You're also creating a special bond between the two of you.



Source: C. Stuckenschneider, "Making the Most of Parent Involvement, Raising Readers," *emissourian.com*, niswc.com/parentreading.

Encourage early writing efforts

Writing and reading go hand in hand. So be sure to have paper, pencils and crayons on hand for your child to

use. Encourage his early efforts at writing, even though they may be no more than scribbles. Ask him to tell you what he has written. Write what he says below the scribbles and read it back to him.



Source: *Reading as Language, Tips for Parents About Reading*, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Comprehensive Center, Region X and Curriculum and Instruction Services.

Build your child's thinking skills in order to boost reading skills

To become successful readers, children have to know how to think. Good thinking skills are something children develop through practice. To encourage your child's cognitive development, or thinking skills, you can:



- **Ask your child to retell stories** in his own words or to make up his own stories about what he sees.
- **Practice sequencing after reading together.** Have your child tell what happened first, second, etc. in the story.
- **Encourage your child to compare** the book you just read to others you have read together.
- **Ask your child for his thoughts about books**, including his predictions, favorite moments and characters, as well as things he didn't like about what you read.

Make new rhymes from old favorites

When your child plays with words, he is building key skills for reading. Try this rhyming activity together: Sing a favorite song with your child, like "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Then sing it again—but this time, change some of the words. For example, "Mary had a little cat. Its feet were icy cold." Challenge your child to make up new words to finish the rhyme.



Source: D.T. Dodge and C. Heroman, *Building Your Baby's Brain: A Parent's Guide to the First Five Years*, Wadsworth.

Your child can be the author of a book

Have your child tell you a story—and then turn that story into a book! Your child will love seeing her creation translated from her imagination to the page. To do this:

1. **Have your child dictate** a story to you.
2. **Write each sentence** on the bottom of a sheet of paper.
3. **Read the story together** and have your child illustrate each page.
4. **Write the title** and your child's name on a piece of paper for the cover. Add another piece of paper for a back cover.
5. **Staple the pages together** to bind the book!

Source: "Helping Your Preschool Child," U.S. Department of Education, niswc.com/makingabook.



Books to delight your early reader

- **When Randolph Turned Rotten** by Charise Mericle Harper (Knopf Books for Young Readers). Randolph and Ivy are best friends who do everything together. But Randolph isn't happy when Ivy gets invited to an all-girls sleepover party, so he devises a plan.
- **The Dot** by Peter H. Reynolds (Candlewick). Vashti can't figure out what to draw during art class, so she puts a dot on her paper. When her teacher tells her to sign the page, her dot is transformed into a work of art!
- **Wild About Books** by Judy Sierra (Knopf Books for Young Readers). When librarian Molly McGrew accidentally drives her bookmobile into the zoo, all the animals decide they want to learn to read.



Q: My preschooler scatters her books everywhere! How can I get her to take better care of them?

A: Teach her to respect her books. Give her a safe place to keep them—a shelf or a milk crate, for example—and insist she put them there each time she's done reading. Putting her books away will eventually become habit.

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

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