

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

PHELPS COUNTY R-III

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

Reap the benefits of reading aloud with your child

Not only does reading aloud show your child that reading is important, it allows you to spend quality time together. When you read aloud with your child, you:

- **Develop her conversation and analytical skills** as you talk with her about books that you read together. For example, you might ask, "What do you think will happen next? Why?"
- **Can expose her to a wide variety** of books and reading materials.
- **Build her language skills** as she hears words and rhymes—and talks about the book, too.
- **Show her that reading** is an enjoyable part of life.



Source: "The Benefits of Children's Stories: The Read Aloud Difference," Little Ones Reading Resource, niswc.com/readaloudbenefits.

"The greatest gift is a passion for reading."

—Elizabeth Hardwick

Five tips for choosing books to read together

When you read books with your child, you put him on the road to learning and loving to read. As you choose books to read together, look for books that:

1. **You will enjoy** and read with enthusiasm. When you're excited about what you're reading, your child will pick up on it.
2. **Reflect his interests.** Look for books that feature kids your child's age, playful animals, dinosaurs, families or other things he is interested in.
3. **Have eye-catching illustrations** that will spark exciting conversations.
4. **Include repetition and rhythmic language**, especially rhymes and chants.
5. **Invite interaction**, such as the *I Spy* "hunt-and-find" books or books that encourage responses from your child.

Point out sight words to your child

Sight words—frequently used words that readers learn to recognize without sounding them out—are an important part of reading fluency. To expose your child to common sight words:

- **Show your child** her name often. She may soon recognize its individual letters and their sounds.
- **Don't skip over "The End."** Show her these simple words that conclude many books.
- **Point out** words such as "love" at the close of greeting cards.



Source: R. Campbell, *Facilitating Preschool Literacy*, International Reading Association.

Let your child choose a 'reading buddy'

Encourage your child to choose a favorite stuffed animal or doll to be his reading buddy. Whenever you read together, have him bring the toy. Your child will learn how memorable it is to share reading with someone special!



Develop motor skills while reading

When you and your child read a book together, get her hands moving as well as her eyes! Touching the book helps your child build her motor skills. Help her:

- **Use her finger to point** out interesting things in the pictures.
- **Trace her finger** under the words while you read.
- **Turn the pages** of the book.

Source: National Research Council, *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*, The National Academies Press, niswc.com/motorskills.

Expose your child to many different sounds

Before your child learns to read, teach her that every word is made up of sounds. Most preschool children are ready for activities that will help them get familiar with the many sounds around them.

To begin familiarizing your child with the sounds that letters make and to help her enjoy practicing making those sounds herself, you can:

- **Read books that are full of silly sounds** and rhymes, such as books by Dr. Seuss. Encourage your child to repeat the rhymes.
- **Read *Mother Goose*** and other books of poetry. Emphasize the rhyming words with your voice. Tell your child to listen for the way those words sound the same.
- **Point out letters and their sounds.** “That’s an M, for Mary. It makes the *mmm* sound.”



Source: Read*Write*NOW! Activities for Reading and Writing Fun, “Early Years—Birth to Preschool,” U.S. Department of Education, niswc.com/listeningsounds.

Use songs to build beginning reading skills

Your child probably has at least one favorite song that she likes to sing over and over again.



Write the lyrics in large print on a sheet of paper. Point to the words as you sing the song together. Then, have her point to the words and “read” them as she sings the song by herself.

Books to delight your early reader

- ***Just Because*** by Rebecca Elliott (Lion Children’s). Toby’s big sister Clemmie is his best friend. She makes him laugh and doesn’t scream and shout at him, and they have a very special bond—just because.
- ***Leonardo the Terrible Monster*** by Mo Willems (Hyperion Books for Children). Leonardo is a terrible monster—he can’t scare anyone! See what happens when Leonardo devises a plan to find the perfect candidate to scare.
- ***Flora and the Flamingo*** by Molly Idle (Chronicle). This wordless picturebook chronicles a duet between a little girl and a long-legged bird. Their dance starts out a little off-balanced, but they soon move beautifully in sync.



Make a family book with your child

Making a book can be a fun way to build your child’s interest in reading. To do this:

1. **Have members of your family** write down favorite stories about time spent with your child. Talk to siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins—everyone can be included! (This is also great for family members who live far away and can email or mail stories). Put each story on a separate sheet of paper.
2. **Have your child illustrate** each of the stories. You can also include a photo of your child



with the family member who wrote the story.

3. **Staple the pages together** to make a book.
4. **Gather together and read** the stories as a family.



Q: My child goes nonstop all day, and she’ll only sit still for a story right before bed. What should I do?

A: Make books a bedtime ritual. Keep a stack of favorite titles on hand, and read a few of them together every night. Not only will it help her become a reader, it’ll also be a nice transition from playtime to sleep time.

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

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Publisher: Phillip Wherry.
Editor: Stacey Marin.

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P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474
1-800-756-5525, ISSN: 1533-3299
www.parent-institute.com