

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Parent Information & Resource Center
416 Black Avenue, Lexington, S.C. 29072

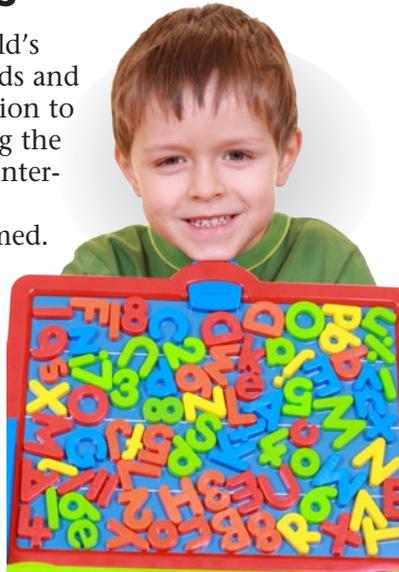
Spark your child's interest in reading by refreshing sight words

You label everything in your child's room to help him recognize words and letters. But he doesn't pay attention to those labels and he's not learning the words. Does this mean he's not interested in reading?

No! He may just be overwhelmed. After all, if you stick a label on everything, there's a good chance it'll intimidate him.

To get him used to sight words without wearing him out or overwhelming him:

- **Label only three or four** objects at a time. And make sure they're basic items like *bed*, *rug* and *door*.
 - **Every few weeks**, take down the current labels and label three or four new objects.
- By keeping a constant rotation of sight words up for your child to see, he will be able to focus on just a few words at a time—and he will look forward to learning new ones!



"There is clear evidence that babies and small children profit from an environment in which language is used creatively."

—Dorothy Butler

The things you do at home matter at school

Your child may get much of her *instruction* at preschool, but she does most of her *learning* at home. And that means the things you do with her every day at home can have a major impact on her future school success!

To nurture your child's love of learning and get her ready to thrive in kindergarten and beyond:

- **Be enthusiastic.** Remind her how exciting and terrific school really is!
- **Read to her daily.** It will build crucial pre-literacy skills.
- **Immerse her in new experiences.** From a trip to the zoo to a walk in the park, never miss a chance to widen your child's horizons.

Libraries can assist parents, too

Do you stay in the children's section when visiting the library? Then you could be missing out on its adult resources.

Along with books, movies and CDs, many libraries offer:

- **Computer** training.
- **English** as a Second Language classes.
- **Parenting** courses.



Ask about what is available. Remember: The better able you are to use the library, the more your child will benefit.

Source: "More Than Books at the Library," ¡Colorín Colorado! www.colorincolorado.org/families/letsread/libraryvisit/more/.

Even Cupid adores books!



Celebrate love this Valentine's Day. The love of reading, that is! Take your youngster to the library on February 14th and find a special title to share together.

Small actions have a big effect on your child's motor skills

Develop your child's fine motor skills—the delicate movements performed by her fingers, hands and wrists—and she'll be better able to grasp pencils and flip the pages of books!



To strengthen these small muscles that do big jobs, have her:

- **Grasp** tiny objects with tweezers.
- **Squeeze** water from an eye-dropper.
- **Pop** bubble wrap with her thumb and forefinger.

Source: "Helping Children Develop Fine Motor Skills," Squidoo.com, www.squidoo.com/helping-children-develop-strong-fine-motor-skills.

Try these writing-rich activities for Valentine's Day this year

Every day offers a new chance to learn. And that goes for Valentine's Day, too. So inspire your rookie writer to practice shaping letters by making:

- **Letter cookies.** If you're baking heart-shaped cookies, turn it into a lesson on the ABCs. Give your child a tube of frosting and help him write one letter on each cookie. Be prepared to get a little messy!
- **A "V for Valentine" poster.** Gather fun writing tools—from glitter pens to highlighters—and let your child fill a sheet of paper with the letter V. It may turn into a rainbow mishmash of squiggly lines, but so what? Your child is still developing important fine motor and writing skills.



Sneak synonyms into your child's vocabulary

Grow your child's vocabulary with *synonyms* (different words with the same meaning). Don't drill them into her, though. Just let her hear you using them.

Why? Because one of the best ways to teach your child new things is to be so playful or low-key that she doesn't realize you're "teaching" her at all.

So use synonyms for these common words the next time you're chatting with her. Her vocabulary will flourish, but she won't suspect a thing.

- **Instead of "big,"** say: *huge, giant* or *massive*.



- **Instead of "small,"** say: *mini, teeny* or *compact*.
- **Instead of "happy,"** say: *cheerful, merry* or *glad*.

Source: A. Rock, "Word Play Tip #2—Expanding Your Child's Vocabulary, Synonym Substitute," About.com, <http://preschoolers.about.com/od/learningeducation/qt/vocabtip2.htm>.



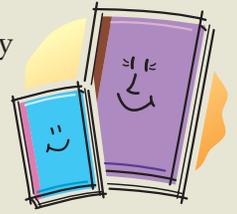
Q: My preschooler doesn't "get" reading yet, and I'm worried. He was an early talker; shouldn't he be an early reader, too?

A: No! Unlike speaking (which comes naturally), reading is strictly a *learned* skill. It's not something the brain is born knowing how to do. So don't be concerned if your child doesn't understand it yet. Children develop at their own pace. Most first show an interest in books, songs and stories then signs and simple words, but actual reading often begins during kindergarten.

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

Turn storytelling into a family game

Build your child's language and memory skills by involving the entire family in a storytelling session. When you have a large group of family members together:



1. **Choose a family photo** that shows something or someone special.
2. **Have one person start** telling a silly, imaginary story about what is happening in the photo.
3. **Take turns adding** details to the story.
4. **Challenge one family member** to retell the entire story once it's finished.

Books to delight your early reader

- **Here Come the Horribles** by Susan Alice Ware (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform).

Who says *horrible* means something bad? Not these silly, fun-loving warthogs! In fact, they think horrible is wonderful!



- **Z Is for Moose** by Kelly Bingham (Greenwillow). What happens when zebra tries to get all the animals on the correct ABC page? Not what he expects! Alphabetical order has never been so disorderly!
- **Sky Color** by Peter H. Reynolds (Candlewick). Marisol is in charge of painting the sky in her class mural. But she doesn't have blue paint! What color will she paint the sky?

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