

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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

## Start some new routines to increase your child's interest in reading

The start of a new school year is a great time for your family to begin some fun new reading routines!

To add variety to your regular routines:

- **Break the mold.** Do you only read with your child before bedtime? Think about other times you can look at books together, such as during breakfast or after baths.
- **Tell a story.** Did your family do something special over the summer? Does your child have a special interest? Make up stories together about the adventures you take together or the things he loves best.
- **Mix up your materials.** Expand your child's horizons by moving beyond books. Some days, spend story time browsing through magazines, newspapers or cookbooks.



*"There are perhaps no days of our childhood we lived so fully as those we spent with a favorite book."*

—Marcel Proust

## Simple activities expand word smarts

Your child's brain is a language-learning sponge. It is absorbing everything you say! To boost his vocabulary and word knowledge:

- **Speak together often.** Conversation is one of the best ways to expose your child to new words.
- **Use proper grammar.** If he hears you speaking correctly, he's more likely to do the same.
- **Play 20 Questions.** This game will encourage him to use words and logic to solve a puzzle.
- **Share interesting experiences.** This doesn't have to be a big undertaking. A simple walk around the block or trip to the store is a chance to discover new things—and to use new words.

**Source:** "Helping Your Child at Home with Vocabulary Building," Child Development Institute, [niswc.com/vocabulary\\_sponge](http://niswc.com/vocabulary_sponge).

## Poetry builds anticipation

Children often like knowing what will come next when they read. Through repetition and rhyme, poetry helps your child anticipate what will happen next. When you are reading with your child:



1. **Pick a nursery rhyme or poem** that uses repeated phrases.
2. **Read it aloud** a few times.
3. **Read it again**, pausing at the sections that repeat or rhyme, to see if she can fill in the blanks.

**Source:** B. Cullinan and B. Bagert, "Family Reading Activities," Reading Rockets, [niswc.com/readaloud\\_rhyme](http://niswc.com/readaloud_rhyme).

## Bag up a love of reading

To get your child excited about visiting the library, help him make a special library bag. Find an old tote bag and help your child decorate it with paint or markers. Then, take frequent trips to the library to fill it up!



## Help your child publish his own books

Is your child a natural storyteller? Encourage him to keep talking—then write those stories down! Using construction paper, make a booklet to keep track of his tales.



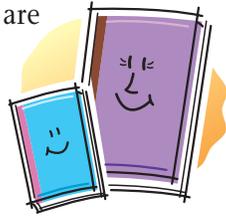
Just fold a few sheets of paper in half, staple or tape the edge and get busy. Write your child's words on one side of each page and have him draw an illustration on the other. Soon you'll have a wonderful book and family treasure!

## Get hands on to sharpen your child's fine motor skills

Fine motor skills are critical to your child's progress in school. When the tiny muscles in her hands are strong, she will be able to turn pages in books easily. She will also have better control over pencils, pens and crayons as she writes and draws.

To help your child build her fine motor skills, encourage her to:

- **Scrunch up sheets of newspaper** in one hand.
- **Use an eye dropper** to "pick up" water.
- **Peel stickers from a sheet** and stick them onto paper.
- **String beads or buttons** onto a piece of yarn.
- **Cut play dough** with a plastic pizza wheel or plastic knife. (Supervise carefully.)



**Source:** "Activities for the Development of Fine Motor Skills in Young Children," Shrewsbury Public Schools, [niswc.com/fine\\_motor\\_tasks](http://niswc.com/fine_motor_tasks).

## Conversations during meals boost literacy

Mealtimes are a great time to talk with your child. Talking with your child helps her develop oral (spoken) language skills—and language skills are the first step toward literacy!

When children hear new words, they learn to figure out what the words mean from the way they are used in conversation. Saying, "The banana is still green—it's not *ripe*, so it won't be sweet if we eat it now," helps your child learn that *ripe* describes when a piece of fruit is ready to eat.

During mealtime, use words that are new to your child to describe food. Talk about a *crunchy* apple or a *chewy* cookie.

Meals are also a great time to ask her about her favorite foods, how her day was or any other topic that interests her.



**Q:** I want my child to love reading. Is reading books together the only way to get him there?

**A:** Although reading together is one of the best ways to build your child's love of reading, there are lots of other activities that will boost his literacy skills.

Ask your child questions. Send him love notes.

Make up stories together. Keep art supplies on hand and have your child tell you stories about what he draws.

Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

## Use music to build language skills

Listening to music with your child is one good way to help him build those critical language skills. Plus, it's fun! Play your favorite songs for him and sing together as you do chores. Sing along to songs on the radio. When you are listening to lyrics and singing along, you are exposing your child to rhymes and vocabulary words.



**Source:** "Literacy Tips for the 10-Minute Parent," [pbskids.com](http://pbskids.com).

## Books to delight your early reader

- ***The Wonderful Book*** by Leonid Gore (Scholastic Press). Some animals find a book in the forest and use it to make wonderful things, such as a table, a bed and a hat.
- ***Cuckoo: Cucú*** by Lois Ehlert (Harcourt Brace & Company). Cuckoo is a very pretty but spoiled bird. One day, she is the only bird able to come to the rescue and save their seeds. This book also includes the Spanish telling of the Mexican folktale.
- ***Peanut Butter and Jellyfishes*** by Brian P. Cleary (Millbrook Press). This beautiful alphabet book includes silly descriptions of animals and plants. From antelopes forming an arc to a zebra named Zachary at the zoo, see what all the letters of the alphabet can do!



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