

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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

Teach new words to a new reader

When you build your child's vocabulary, you are helping make her a successful reader. Here are a few ways to introduce her to new words:

- **Expose your child to all types** of writing. Don't limit her to books! Have her leaf through magazines, comics, maps and brochures, too.
- **Talk about new words.** When she comes across an unfamiliar word, explain what it means. "*Gigantic* is a great word! It means really, really big."
- **Point out words that appear** within other words. Take *big*, for instance. Show your child how it's also part of *bigger* and *biggest*. She'll learn that many words are related.



Source: Texas Education Agency, "New Words: Practical Ideas for Parents," Reading Rockets, niswc.com/new_vocabulary_ideas.

"The only important thing in a book is the meaning that it has for you."

—W. Somerset Maugham

Connect with your child's teacher

A brand-new year of preschool is underway. Start it off right by building a strong relationship with your child's teacher. Here's how:

- **Start the conversation.** Make a point of saying hello to your child's teacher during the first few days of class.
- **Volunteer.** Do you have a few spare hours? Pitch in at school! Ask the teacher how you can help. And the bonus is that your child will love seeing you at school!
- **Stay informed.** Read every email and handout that your child's teacher sends home. If something doesn't make sense, ask about it. Remember, you and the teacher are partners in your child's education.

Practice writing the alphabet all around the house

Now that your child is learning the letters of the alphabet, you two can have some fun by writing the letters in a variety of places. Write:



- **In the bathtub.** Let him write letters on the side of the tub with shaving cream. (Supervise carefully!)
- **In the kitchen.** Sprinkle flour or sugar onto a baking sheet. Then have your child write letters using his finger.
- **On the driveway.** Have your child write big letters with sidewalk chalk.

Wondering leads to great conversations

Children love to ask *why*. Make the most of it! Turn your child's question into a conversation. Find out what she thinks about the topic. Talking with your child is one of the best ways to help her build her language skills.



Employ everyday reading boosters

Your child is learning more about language every day. Help him work on identifying letters and the sounds that they make. Then, to support his growing language skills, be sure to:



- **Set an example.** Let him see you reading and writing every day.
- **Sing the alphabet song** and recite nursery rhymes together.
- **Play language-rich games** like "I Spy" that encourage him to speak.

Source: "Building Phonics Skills," Scholastic, niswc.com/language_phonics_skills.

Tips for choosing books to read with your child

With so many books out there, it can be hard to figure out which to read with your child. Keep these tips in mind when you're looking for new titles:



- **See if you like it.** Read the book's opening pages. Are they engaging? Funny? Interesting? If you like the book, chances are your child will enjoy it, too.
- **Notice the artwork.** Many children love big, bold pictures, so your child may enjoy stories accompanied by splashy illustrations. And books with unique artwork can lead to interesting conversations.
- **Ask an expert for input.** If you're searching for books at the library, ask a librarian for help. You can also look online for popular books.

Source: V.V. Lewis and W.M. Mayes, *Valerie & Walter's Best Books for Children*, Collins.

Simple crafts excite your child about writing

Writing is an important part of reading. Get your budding reader excited about writing by making:

- **Macaroni letters.** Fill one bowl with dry macaroni and another with pieces of dry spaghetti. On a sheet of paper or a place mat, have your child form letters with the pasta. Use macaroni for the curves and spaghetti for the straight parts.
- **A pencil holder.** Wrap a clean dry can or jar with construction or contact paper. Have your child decorate it with stickers, markers or glitter. Lastly, have him put his favorite writing pencils inside the can!



Q: My child goes nonstop all day. She'll hardly ever sit still for a story. What should I do?

A: Make books a bedtime ritual! Keep a stack of kid-friendly titles on hand, and read a few of them together every night. Not only will it help your child enjoy books and become a reader, it'll also serve as a calm, quiet transition from playtime to resting time.

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

Add life and laughter to reading

In order for your child to become a lifelong reader, it's critical that he find reading enjoyable. When you read together, point to pictures and talk about the things you see. For example, if the book is about animals, see which animals he can identify. Then, talk about what you know about those animals.



Laugh at the silly things you read. Read with expression and use different voices. If a word sounds funny, say it again. The sillier, the better!

Books to delight your early reader

- **Little Bea** by Daniel Roode (Greenwillow Books). As soon as Little Bea wakes up, she is off and running! She encounters many of her friends and plays all of her favorite games as she goes.
- **Ice Boy** by David Ezra Stein (Candlewick Press). Even though his parents tell him to stay home in the freezer, Ice Boy dreams of seeing the world. So, he goes off on an adventure and transforms in accordance with the stages of the water cycle.
- **Exclamation Mark** by Amy Krouse Rosenthal (Scholastic Press). Exclamation Mark can tell that he doesn't fit in with periods. He tries to be just like them, until he meets another punctuation mark who helps him realize how important and wonderful he can be!



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