

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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

## Enrich your child's vocabulary this winter with holiday stories and crafts

The winter holidays aren't just for fun. They're also a perfect time to grow your child's vocabulary.

To expose her to new words during the holidays:

- **Read old-fashioned tales.** The original versions of holiday stories are often more complex than the modern editions. So read a few with your child. Ask the librarian for good ones to try. Your child is sure to hear some new words.
- **Make a winter dictionary.** Staple several sheets of paper together to make a booklet. Label it *My Holiday Dictionary*. Write one word—such as *sled*—per page. Have your child draw pictures of each object under its name. She can also trace over the letters of the words you have written to build both fine motor and pre-reading skills.



*"Show me a family of readers, and I will show you people who move the world."*

—Napoleon Bonaparte

### Help your child learn about nouns

Even though your child will not learn formal grammar for several years, you can still help him learn about *nouns* (a part of speech that names people, places and things).

Create flash cards with pictures of people, places and things your child is familiar with. Then:

1. **Show your child** a flash card and have him identify what the picture shows (a book, for example).
2. **Ask your child** if that picture is a person, a place or a thing. (A book is a thing.)
3. **Have your child** place the card in the correct category: person, place or thing.

## Go beyond X's and O's when playing tic-tac-toe

The next time you and your child are playing tic-tac-toe, mix things up a little. Instead of using the letters X and O as your markers, why not use A and B? Or Z and W?



Let your child choose new letters each time you play. Keep changing letters, and soon he may recognize the whole alphabet!

## Dial up the drama by slowing down

Are you coming to a big, dramatic point in the story you're reading to your child? Slow your voice down. It'll let your youngster know that something serious is about to happen!



## What are sight words?

Sight words are the short, common words (such as *the*, *to* and *of*) that rookie readers should know "by sight." They are so common, in fact, that they're said to make up 50-75 percent of the words kids will encounter when reading.

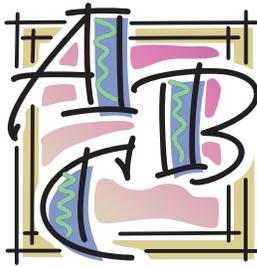
These words don't always follow the rules of phonics, so they can be difficult for your child to sound out. And that makes helping your child learn to recognize them on sight even more important. The more sight words your preschooler knows, the more fluent a reader she is likely to become!



## 'Tis the season for some alphabet fun

Add some seasonal activities to your child's alphabet fun. Here are a few to try:

- **What starts with this letter?** Choose a letter and remind your child of the sound it makes: "OK, Tamara, the letter S makes a sss sound." Together, look around your home for items—such as a *sofa* or a *star*—that begin with that letter. If you and your child are going shopping later, continue your game at the store.
- **Holiday letters.** Glue sheets of gift wrap—the more festive, the better—onto cardboard. Draw big letters and cut them out for instant holiday ABCs.
- **Letter cookies.** If you are baking cookies, include some shaped like the letters in your child's name. Have her help decorate them (which also builds motor skills).



## Pictures build interest in books

Your child can learn from pictures even before he can read or write.

Together, look at the pictures in magazines, catalogs and books.

Then:

- **Make up stories** about what you see in each picture. Ask your child, "Why do you think the family is smiling?"
- **Challenge your child** to find something in the room that is also in the picture.



## Encourage creativity with storytelling

When you tell your child a story (rather than sharing a book with illustrations), he has to visualize the images in his head. That's a valuable skill—especially today, when television, the internet and digital books tend to do all the "creative work" for kids.

If you're not sure how to start telling stories to your child, consider sharing tales about:

- **His infancy.**
- **Your childhood.**
- **Your family's history.**

Still stuck? Retell the plot of a favorite book. That counts, too!



## Books to delight your early reader

- **TouchThinkLearn: ABC** by Xavier Deneux (Chronical Books). Add the sense of touch to letter learning! Your child will want to run her fingers over the raised die-cut letters in this fun, interactive ABC book.
- **Goodnight Everyone** by Chris Haughton (Candlewick). In this lulling bedtime story, all the woodland animals are sleepy—except Little Bear. How will Great Big Bear get her cub to fall asleep?
- **The Cookie Fiasco** by Mo Willems and Dan Santat (Disney-Hyperion). This first book in the Elephant & Piggie Like Reading! Series explores what happens when there are four friends and only three cookies.



**Q:** I correct my child's grammar whenever she says something incorrectly, but it seems to frustrate her. What should I do?

**A:** Stop correcting her! No one likes having mistakes pointed out constantly, and your child is no different. Instead, subtly show her the proper way to speak. If she says, "I goed to the library with Grandma today," reply, "You went to the library today? Wow, that sounds like fun!"

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

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