

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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

## Play sound and sight games to prepare your preschooler for reading

The more practice your child gets looking and listening, the more ready he will be to read. Try some of these fun games together:

- **Letter search.** Let your child pick a “letter of the day.” Ask him to point out his special letter each time he sees it.
- **Compound word search.** Look for compound words that name familiar objects, such as *football*. Ask your child, “If you take away the *foot* from *football*, what word is left?”
- **Rhyme time.** Rhymes teach your child that some words use the same sounds as other words. Whenever you can, ask your child questions, such as, “What word sounds like *cat*?” When he learns a new word, ask him if it sounds like any words he already knows.



*“Reading should not be presented to children as a chore, a duty. It should be offered as a gift.”*

—Kate DiCamillo

### Build reading excitement with the mail

What could be more exciting for your child than receiving her very own mail?

Ask relatives and family friends to send her notes and cards. Read each one with her and then ask her to dictate a response. She can also draw a special picture on her note before it goes into the envelope. Have her watch you address the envelope. This also demonstrates the importance of writing.

Give your child any junk mail that you receive. Catalogs can be especially fun to look at together. Ask your child about what she sees in the pictures before reading the printed descriptions aloud to her.

## Music enhances reading skills

Music and songs can play a big role in your child’s journey toward reading readiness. Try these activities together:

- **Sing** nursery rhymes.
- **Invent** silly songs using your names.
- **Read** the words along with a favorite song.
- **Listen** to music (and sing along) in the car and while you do chores at home.



## Turn off those screens!

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends preschoolers use screens no more than one hour a day. That includes videos, TV, online games and apps. So, instead of turning on a screen, encourage your child to pick up a book!



## Start the new year with new rituals

The new year is the perfect time to adopt some fun, new reading habits! Here are two to try:

1. **Turn bath time into book time.** Is your child lukewarm about sharing stories during the day? Read to him while he’s in the tub! The sudsy change of scenery may just make him enthusiastic about story time.

2. **Have a character day.** Let your child dress up—and act—like a favorite book character.

If he’s the Very Hungry Caterpillar, he can wear green clothes and a red hat. Throughout the day he can snack on fresh fruit—just like the caterpillar does.

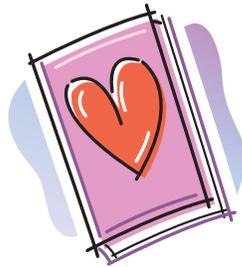


## Choose funny, compelling stories for your child

When your child was a toddler, chunky pages and bright illustrations might have been all he wanted in a book. But now that he's in preschool, he probably expects a bit more from stories.

To find books that will engage your child, remember that preschoolers:

- **Have longer attention spans.** So it's OK to choose wordier books than you did when your child was younger.
- **Love a good joke.** Goofy tales may tickle your child's funny bone—and inspire him to keep reading.
- **Are curious about the world around them.** Look for stories that introduce your child to new topics or ideas.



## Let your child 'read' to you

Help your child build her language skills by having her "read" a story to you. Even if she can't read the text, she can still be a great storyteller.

Have your child flip through the pages of her favorite book and use the pictures as a guide. If she goes a little off topic, that's OK! She's building creativity skills as she builds pre-reading skills.



## Develop your child's cognitive skills

Learning to read involves more than just learning letters and sounds. Your child will need to develop cognitive (thinking) skills. To promote them, help her:

- **Work with patterns.** Make a pattern by stacking three blue blocks and then three green ones. Ask your child to copy it. Add more colors as she improves.
- **Use her memory.** Put six items on a tray. Let your child look at the items for one minute. Take the tray away and see how many items she can remember.
- **Recognize similarities and differences.** Draw three people. Make them all the same—but put a hat on one of them. See if your child can pick out what is different. If this is too easy, try a more subtle difference, like adding an extra button on one person's shirt.



## Books to delight your early reader

- ***Fabulous Frogs*** by Martin Jenkins (Candlewick). This colorful nonfiction board book will introduce you and your child to the many different kinds of frogs.
- ***Horrible Bear!*** by Ame Dyckman (Little Brown Books for Young Readers). What happens when Bear accidentally breaks a little girl's kite? Find out in this silly book about manners and the power of saying "I'm sorry."
- ***Leave Me Alone!*** by Vera Brosgol (Roaring Brook Press). Grandma is desperate to find a quiet place to knit—away from her 30 energetic grandchildren. Will she find it when she climbs through a worm hole and journeys to the moon?



**Q:** My preschooler tries hard to write his name, but he can't quite do it. How can I help him?

**A:** One effective way to help your child write his name is to teach him to trace. Use a pencil to print your child's name in large, neat letters on a piece of paper. Next, give him a marker or crayon and have him trace over your letters. As your child gets better at it, you can experiment with other words.

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

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