

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

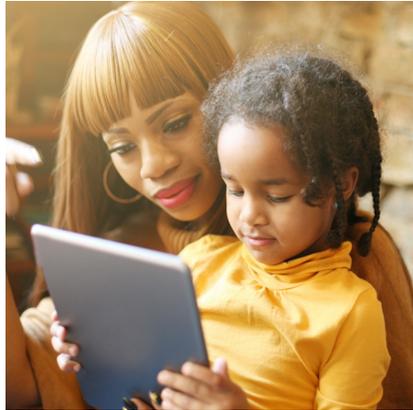
Parent Information & Resource Center
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Focus on the story when reading e-books with your preschooler

We live in a digital age. From tablets to websites full of e-books (electronic books), reading online is different than opening a traditional book with your child. Instead of turning the page, your child may be swiping across a screen.

To make sure your child gets the most out of reading e-books:

- **Listen to the book** in “read-only” mode first. While e-books are often full of exciting and fun interactive features, they can distract from what’s most important: Reading the story!
- **Talk about the story.** Reading an e-book will let your child interact with the book, but it’s not a substitute for interacting with you. As you do with all books, engage your child while you read by talking about what you see and asking questions.



Source: L. Lowry, “E-Book or Paper Book – What’s Best for Young Children?” The Hanen Centre, niswc.com/BR-RR_ebook.

“I read for pleasure and that is the moment I learn the most.”

—Margaret Atwood

Look for these reading milestones

As a budding bookworm, your child is learning new reading-readiness skills every day. In fact, by the time he starts kindergarten, he’ll probably be able to:

- **Repeat** sentences up to nine words long.
- **Grasp** time-related concepts like *later* and *soon*.
- **Name** common objects in picture books or magazines.
- **Understand** and use prepositions (like *on*, *off* and *under*).
- **Use** grammatically correct speech (at least most of the time).

Still, these milestones are only guidelines. Every child develops at his own pace. That goes for your child, too.

Help your child establish responsible reading habits

Did your child just jump up to grab a board game and leave the books he was reading scattered on the floor? If so, tell him to come back and clean up! Preschoolers need to learn to be responsible with their books and to put them away when they are finished reading them.



Boost creativity by creating a new story!

Pick one of your child’s favorite stories, then help her think of a new adventure for the characters. Ask her to draw pictures to illustrate her story. Help her write a caption for each picture. Then, read her new story together.



Rereading favorite books creates positive reading experiences

When your child chooses the book he wants to read, chances are it’ll be one you’ve read over and over. And that’s actually a good thing!

Children often choose familiar books to read and reread because they enjoy having a sense of control over the experience. When a child knows what to expect in a book, he can anticipate what will come next and feel satisfied by knowing the outcome.



Source: S. Lazrow, “Read It Again, Please! The Benefits of Repeated Read Alouds,” Children’s Literacy Initiative, niswc.com/BR-RR_again.

Rhymes get your child ready for reading

Did you know that children’s ability to learn and recite nursery rhymes is closely related to their overall development of language skills? The experts agree: Rhymes are a terrific tool for teaching kids about words and sounds.

Along with being fun to hear and recite, nursery rhymes can increase your child’s:

- **Understanding of the sounds letters make.** This is called *phonemic awareness*.
- **Memory.** The nursery rhymes’ rhythmic patterns make words easier to remember.
- **Knowledge of story structure.** Rhymes are often tales with beginnings, middles and ends.
- **Critical-thinking skills.** Many rhymes are riddles, too. Your little thinker will need to use his brain to solve them!



A scrapbook builds language and motor skills

When your child has a new experience—like going to the dentist or visiting a farm—make a page for her scrapbook. She can draw a picture, which builds pre-writing skills. Talking about what she saw and did strengthens her vocabulary and oral language skills.

Every so often, pull the scrapbook out and have your child tell you what she remembers.



Language skills are linked to reading

Children who have many opportunities to have conversations with others gain speaking and listening skills that are crucial for learning to read and write.

To help your preschooler develop these skills:

- **Talk with him every day.** Ask questions that require him to think: “Why did you paint the bird green?” “Why do you think that character did that?”
- **Have him make predictions** about what might happen next in a story based on what he’s heard so far.
- **Play listening games.** Have him close his eyes, then see if he can identify various sounds (an ambulance, wind chimes, a ticking clock, etc.).



Books to delight your early reader

- **ABC Love** by Christiane Engel (Walter Foster Jr.). This beautifully illustrated book promotes family togetherness and connects each letter of the alphabet to an important concept, such as love, affection and warmth.
- **Ollie’s Valentine** by Olivier Dunrea (HMH Books for Young Readers). Join Ollie as he searches for a valentine of his very own.
- **My Heart Is Like a Zoo** by Michael Hall (Greenwillow Books). Heart shapes are repeated throughout this graphic collection of zoo animals. Simple rhymes will have your preschooler joining you in reading aloud.



Q: I try to read to my child every day, but sometimes I just don’t have time. Does it really matter if I skip some days?

A: In a word, *yes!* You teach your child things like honesty and kindness by modeling those traits each day, right? Well, it’s the same with reading.

If you want her to view words and language as vital parts of life, expose her to reading every day.

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

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