

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Rochester Community Schools

Start new reading routines with your child

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

To add some variety to regular routines:

- **Break the mold.** Do you only read with your child before bed? Find other times to look at books together, such as during breakfast or after baths.
- **Write a story.** Did your family do something special over the summer? Help your child make up a simple tale about it. Do this each fall, and you'll have an impressive homemade library one day.
- **Participate at preschool.** If your child's school day includes story time, try to sit in on a few sessions. Or if your schedule allows, volunteer to read to the class yourself.



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

—Napoleon Bonaparte

Learn about nouns with a sorting activity

Even though your child will not formally learn grammar for many years to come, you can still help him learn about *nouns* (a part of speech that names people, places and things). You just need picture flash cards that show people, places and things.

1. **Show your child a flash card** and have him identify what the picture shows (for example, it may be a picture of a book).
2. **Ask your child** if that picture is a person, a place or a thing. (A book is a thing.)
3. **Have your child sort** the cards into categories. Use pictures of things your child is familiar with, including objects found around your home. You can also use pictures of people and places your child knows.

Source: H.M. Kosur, "Teaching Preschoolers About Nouns as People, Places, and Things," Bright Hub Education, www.brighthubeducation.com/preschool-lesson-plans/45178-preschool-grammar-noun-lesson-plans-and-activities/.

Motivate your child by making reading active

When you engage your child during read aloud time, she'll not only listen—she'll enjoy being involved!



To involve your reader:

- **Have your child choose.** Let your child pick the book you read. Have her turn the pages.
- **Make it a conversation.** Ask questions before, during and after you read.
- **Make connections.** If a character goes to the zoo, talk about a time you and your child went to the zoo. What does she remember from that trip?

Source: S. Cleaver, "12 Ways to Engage Your Preschooler with Literature," education.com, www.education.com/magazine/article/12-ways-engage-preschooler-literature/.

Visit some of your child's favorite characters online

Check out the PBSKids website. You'll find a ton of educational activities for your child, all based on her favorite characters—from the Cat in the Hat to Super Why! Visit it at <http://pbskids.org/>.



Use other letters to play tic-tac-toe



Next time you and your child are playing tic-tac-toe, mix things up a little! Instead of just 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 your child will recognize the whole alphabet.

Using TV time smartly can help your child develop key reading skills

Don't just turn on the TV to keep your child entertained. Experts say that children shouldn't watch more than 10 hours of television each week—so choose what your child will watch carefully and use it to enhance reading together.



When it comes to TV:

- **Watch along with your child** and talk about what she sees.
- **Build reading-oriented activities** around the show you watch.
- **Read books about the topic** that shows cover. For example, if you watch a show about bears, find a story about bears. Make up a new story about bears together.
- **Be a good role model.** Limit the amount of TV you watch, too. Make sure your child sees you turning off the TV to read. Talk about how many things you learn from reading.

Talking at mealtimes makes better readers

Research shows that 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 to strong readers!

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 we can't eat it yet," 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 have conversations with your child. Ask her about her favorite foods or any other topic!



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

A: No! 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 language skills. Ask your child questions and encourage him to talk. Make up stories together. Keep art supplies on hand. Have your child draw pictures about what you read.

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

Poetry makes rhyming fun

Children love knowing what comes next when they read. Through repetition and rhyme, poetry does just that! When you are reading with your child:

1. **Pick a story** that uses repeated phrases. (You can also choose a poem that your child enjoys.)
2. **Read it aloud** once to your child.
3. **Read it again**, pausing at the sections that repeat or rhyme, to see if your child can fill in the blanks.



Source: B. Cullinan and B. Bagert, "Family Reading Activities," Reading Rockets, www.readingrockets.org/article/385.

Books to delight your early reader

- ***My Preschool*** by Anne Rockwell (Henry Holt and Company). Preschool is such an exciting place! Join one little boy as he learns and plays throughout the day at preschool.
- ***Huff & Puff*** by Claudia Rueda (Abrams Appleseed). In this version of the classic fairy tale, readers are encouraged to help the Big Bad Wolf huff and puff and blow the pigs' houses down!
- ***Into the A, B, Sea*** by Deborah Lee Rose (Scholastic). From stinging anemones to thriving zooplankton, this colorful alphabet book features animals that live under the sea. There's even a section with more information about each creature.



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