

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Rochester Community Schools

Reading aloud provides countless benefits

When you read aloud with your child, you are helping him learn about sounds and words, building his vocabulary and showing him that reading is fun!

To make the most of your read-aloud time:

- **Choose a book** that will capture your child's attention, such as an exciting folktale or a story with animals.
- **Ask your child questions** about the book before, during and after reading time. Stop while reading and ask questions like, "What might happen next?" or "Why did the person in the story do that?"
- **Encourage your child to look** at the pictures to understand the story.
- **Point out interesting or funny words.** Have your child repeat those words back to you.



Source: "Tips for Reading Aloud with Preschoolers," education.com, www.education.com/reference/article/Ref_Tips_Reading_Presch/.

"A man is known by the books he reads."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Listening skills build reading skills

Listening is an important way that your child learns about language and words. This is a step to developing key reading skills. To help her become a better listener:

- **Speak to your child** in a clear, simple manner with correct grammar. Avoid using baby talk.
- **Have conversations with your child** every day. This way, she is practicing listening and speaking.
- **Model good listening** with your child. Make eye contact and repeat what you have heard to show you understand.
- **Ask your child questions** that require her to make a choice. "Would you like to wear your red shirt or your green shirt today?"
- **Play games that use listening** and following directions, such as Simon Says.

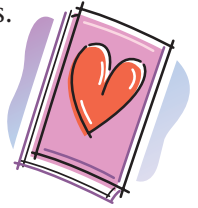
Source: K. Stanberry, "Understanding Language Development in Preschoolers," Get Ready to Read!, <http://tinyurl.com/br45tsn>.

Keep your child reading this summer

It is important to maintain your child's interest in books and reading over the summer months.

You can:

- **Visit the library** weekly. Check out new books each time you go.
- **Pack books** to help pass the time on trips and errands.
- **Get involved** with your library's summer program.
- **Write a story** with your child about her summer adventures.



Take a 'walk' through picture books

Take a "picture walk" with your child. Open a colorful book and spend time enjoying the artwork.

Chat about what you see. Then ask her to guess what the story might be about based on the illustrations.



Help your child identify words that have similar ending sounds

Rhymes emphasize the *phonemes* (the sounds that letters make) that words have in common.

To have your child practice identifying rhymes, say three words aloud. Two of the words should rhyme and one



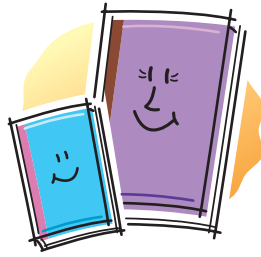
should sound very different, like *cat*, *hat*, *tree*. Say each word slowly, and ask which sounds different. Exaggerate *cat* and *hat* so he can hear the *at* sound.

Source: J. Fitzpatrick, *Phonemic Awareness: Playing with Sounds to Strengthen Beginning Reading Skills*, Creative Teaching Press.

Five ways to encourage your young reader

Help your child see reading as an exciting activity, and you'll motivate him to read often! To make reading a fun activity:

1. **Keep a wide variety of reading materials** within your child's reach, including books, magazines and catalogs.
2. **Create a special place** for your child to keep his books.
3. **Have older children read to younger ones.** If an older sibling likes to read, chances are a younger one will want to be just like him!
4. **Point out letters and words** wherever you go—such as at the grocery store, on street signs and on menus.
5. **Use extra reading time** as a reward. Never make reading or looking at books a punishment.



Source: "Motivating Kids to Read: Children Who Can Read, But Don't..." Reading is Fundamental, www.rif.org/us/literacy-resources/articles/children-who-can-read-but-dont.htm.

'Rainbow write' to practice letters

Pick a word, such as your child's name, to help her review letters of the alphabet—while she makes a piece of art!

1. **Print the word** lightly on a piece of paper.
2. **Have your child** trace the letters several times, each time using a different color crayon.
3. **Read each letter aloud** as your child traces it. Make sure she says the letter with you!



Books to delight your early reader

- **My Friend Rabbit** by Eric Rohmann (Roaring Brook). Mouse's friend Rabbit always means well, but trouble follows him wherever he goes. See what happens when Rabbit comes up with a plan to get a model airplane out of a tree.
- **Jack's House** by Karen Magnuson Beil (Holiday House). Jack says he built a house—but Max the dog knows the true story. Hear Max's take on the construction in this funny adaptation of the classic tale, "The House that Jack Built."
- **Oh, No!** by Candace Fleming (Schwartz & Wade). When Frog falls into a deep hole, Mouse tries to help him out ... but then Mouse falls in, too! New helpers keep falling into the hole—will the animals make it out?



Storytelling can boost your child's reading

Storytelling is an enjoyable activity to share with your child. But more importantly, it can also turn her into a reader. That's because every time you tell your child a story, she:

- **Adds to her vocabulary.** Even if she doesn't understand a word right away, she'll grasp the variety language offers.
- **Is inspired to tell tales herself.** The more excited she gets by hearing stories, the likelier she may be to create her own.
- **Learns about story structure.** Each storytelling session shows that tales have beginnings, middles and endings.
- **Develops her imagination.** Brain researchers have found



that children with strong imaginations are better able to master language.

Source: L. Fredericks, "Developing Literacy Skills Through Storytelling," The Corporation for National and Community Service, <http://tinyurl.com/mcwpyz6>.



Q: How can I tell if my child will like our library's summer reading program?

A: Is the program relaxed and kid-friendly? Will your child be able to choose his own books and read (or be read to) at his own pace? Does the program have an interesting theme? If the answers are mostly yes, he'll probably have a wonderful time. Talk to your librarian to find out more about the program.

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

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