

Building Readers[®]



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How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Reading with your preschooler isn't tricky!

What's the trick to reading with preschoolers? There isn't one! Sharing books with youngsters is about engaging their minds and having fun. When you snuggle up to read with your preschooler, remember that she's:



- **Naturally curious.** Share simple nonfiction books with her. Help her learn new or surprising facts.
- **Able to make choices.** Take her to the library often. Let her select some titles on her own.
- **Ready to learn** about art. Find books rich with pictures. Introduce her to all kinds of art forms.
- **Interested in** people and families. Look for stories about parents, children and friends.

Source: "Read Together. Grow Together." Mattituck-Laurel Library, www.suffolk.lib.ny.us/libraries/matt/read_together.htm.

Tip Did you know: Children exposed to secondhand smoke have lower IQs than kids who aren't? They also do worse on standardized math and reading exams. So don't risk your child's smarts. Put out that cigarette!

Source: Karen Cicero, "Health & Safety News," *Child*, April 2005 (Gruner + Jahr USA, 1-800-777-0222, <http://gjsa.com/>).

Q: I try to have "formal" story time with my child, but it never works. What should I do?

A: Make it informal! You don't always need big chunks of time to read. Squeeze in books wherever. Share stories while waiting at the doctor's office. Keep kid-friendly books in the car to read during traffic jams. Fill your child's downtime with words!



Questions & Answers

Teach your child to read and recycle



Are your little one's old books gathering dust? Recycle them! Here's how:

- **Donate them.** Are the books in good shape? Give them to an area homeless shelter or other charity.
- **Host a book swap.** Get together with other parents and exchange your little-used titles. That way, every youngster goes home with "new" stories.

Comparisons are super skill-builders



During story time, teach your child to make comparisons. "Look at the car in the book. Is it bigger or smaller than ours?" Get him to think about what you're reading. It'll boost his knowledge and his language skills!

Source: "Tips on: Family and Education, Reading with Children," LifeTips.com, <http://academic.lifetips.com/subcat/69084/family-and-education/reading-with-children/index.html>.

Colorful, Clickable Tales

Fresh out of things to read? Visit AntBee (www.antbee.com), a site offering free children's tales for your youngster to enjoy. Check out the "Story of the Month," or browse "More Stories" for other terrific yarns.

Is your home set up for learning?

Take this quiz to find out if your home is a language-rich learning environment. Answer *true* or *false* to the following:

- At home, my preschooler has:
- ___ 1. **Ten or more** picture books.
 - ___ 2. **Games or other materials** that teach the alphabet.
 - ___ 3. **Easy access** to writing materials like crayons, pencils and markers.
 - ___ 4. **More than one** rhyming book.
 - ___ 5. **A table or other place** where she can sit and practice scribbling and writing.



How did you do?

If you answered mostly *true*, your home is literacy-friendly! Mostly *false*? Read over the materials listed in the quiz. If possible, keep these items on hand at home.

Source: "Home Literacy Environment Checklist," Get Ready to Read! www.getreadytoread.org/pdf/Home_Checklist.pdf.

Reading terms defined

Reading-related terms have you confused? Don't worry! Here's what they mean:

- **Phonemic awareness.** Understanding that words are made up of sounds. These sounds can be blended to form different words.
- **Phonics.** The study of the sounds letters make. Understanding the letter-sound relationship is a foundation of reading.
- **Vocabulary.** The words a reader knows. The larger a child's vocabulary, the easier it is to grasp what's being read.
- **Comprehension.** The understanding of text. As kids learn to read, good comprehension is the goal.

Source: Linda K. Rath, Ed.D., and Louise Kennedy, *The Between the Lions Book for Parents*, ISBN: 0-06-051027-7 (HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1-800-242-7737, www.harpercollins.com/hc/).

Celebrate your unique reader

Children are many things, but "exactly alike" isn't one of them. So they won't always enjoy the same things—even when it comes to reading. The key is to find what your child likes, not what you think he should like. For example:



- **Think beyond bedtime.** If he's too sleepy for nighttime stories, share books after breakfast. If he winds down in the afternoon, break out the books then.
- **Set your own standards.** Is it impossible for him to sit quietly for long? Schedule short breaks during story time. Get up and stretch. Move to music. Remember: Reading should be fun.



The Little Family,
by Lois Lenski
(Random House).

Sally and Tommy play outdoors. They ride in the car. They feed the chickens. But best of all, they lick the batter when Mother bakes a cake!

Adventures with PawPaw: Costa Rica, by Diana Scimone (Peapod Publishing, Inc.). "Hello, green snakes twirling ... hello, monkeys whirling." PawPaw the puppy is here to explore your beautiful land!

Give your child a bathtub brain booster



No, your preschooler doesn't shave yet. But he can still have fun with shaving cream—and boost his literacy skills in the process. The next time he's in the tub, give him a can of shaving cream to play with. Encourage him to write the ABCs in the water or on the wall. Applaud his efforts—even if they're messy!

Adopt new routines for the new year

Celebrate the new year with a new reading routine. Read your child her bedtime stories by flashlight. Sure, it's silly. But it's also creative. Who knows? It may encourage her to hit the sack without arguing!

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