

# Building Readers®



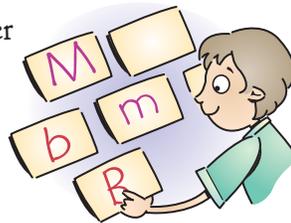
How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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## Memory game teaches letter recognition

Ready for some language-learning fun? Play the Letter Memory Game with your child! Here's how:

- **Gather** 12 index cards or pieces of paper (cut the same size).
- **Choose** six letters your child knows. Make an uppercase and a lowercase card for each letter.
- **Mix up** the cards. Put them face down on the table or floor.
- **Explain** to your child that you're looking for uppercase-lowercase matches.
- **Take turns** flipping two cards. If you get a match, keep it.
- **Play** until all the cards are gone. Whoever has the most matches wins!
- **Make** the game more challenging by adding more letters.



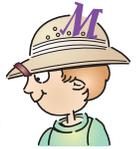
**Tip** Research shows that your child's early vocabulary is the biggest determining factor in her literacy later on. *This means language matters.* So talk to your baby. Read to her. Sing her silly songs. Start today.

**Source:** "How Does Play Encourage Literacy?" Born Learning, [http://bornlearning.org/files/uc\\_playencourage\\_literacy\\_lr.pdf](http://bornlearning.org/files/uc_playencourage_literacy_lr.pdf).

**Source:** *10 Minutes a Day to Reading Success*, ISBN: 0-395-90152-9 (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1-800-225-3362, [www.hmco.com](http://www.hmco.com)).

## Hunt for letter sounds

Go on a letter-sound scavenger hunt. Here's what to do:



- **Talk to your youngster** about the sound a certain letter makes. "Remember that 'M' makes an *mmm* sound."
- **Go into the kitchen.** Ask him to find things that start with the *mmm* sound.
- **If he struggles, help him.** "Milk starts with *mmm*, right?"
- **Once he masters one letter,** choose another.

## Book placement matters

When sharing books, be sure your child can see them in front of her. Don't let her look from an odd perspective (such as upside-down, if you're across from her). She could have trouble learning to read straight-on.



**Source:** Sherry Ann Perry, Ph.D., *The Complete Help Your Child Learn to Read Book*, ISBN: 0-9659958-0-1 (Parent-Assisted Learning Services, 541/726-7995, [www.helpyourchildlearntoread.com](http://www.helpyourchildlearntoread.com)).

## Questions & Answers

**Q:** Sometimes my child and I look at pictures in books and invent our own stories. Does that "count" as reading?

**A:** Yes! Just by looking at books together, you're showing your child how they work. He's learning that stories have beginnings, middles and endings. He's practicing the proper way to hold books and turn pages. These are all important parts of reading.



## Resource for families

Take the guesswork out of choosing children's titles. *Books Your Kids Will Talk About!* by Susan Hepler and Maria Salvadore suggests hundreds of children's books. It explains each story and provides recommended reading levels.

**Source:** Susan Hepler & Maria Salvadore, *Books Your Kids Will Talk About!* ISBN: 0-8106-2051-0 (National Education Association, 1-800-229-4200, [www.nea.org/books](http://www.nea.org/books)).

# Does your child's home library meet her needs?

Take this quiz to find out. Answer *true* or *false* to the following:

My child's home library is:

- \_\_\_ **1. Diverse.** We don't have tons of books, but the ones we do have are interesting.
- \_\_\_ **2. Down** where she can reach it.
- \_\_\_ **3. Kid-friendly.** Nothing is "hands-off."
- \_\_\_ **4. Not limited to books.** We also include magazines, newspapers and catalogs.
- \_\_\_ **5. Important.** That's why it's out where everyone can see it.



### How did you do?

If you answered mostly *true*, your home library is right on the mark! Mostly *false*? Try some suggestions from the quiz.

Source: "Building a Family Library," Reading is Fundamental, [www.rif.org/parents/articles/family\\_library.msp](http://www.rif.org/parents/articles/family_library.msp).

## Recording stories encourages language learning

Let your child make a book on tape—but forget the book. Instead, record him as he creates his own tale. By taping your child's story, you'll:

- **Give him a sense of pride.** After all, if Mommy wants to tape his stories, they must be good, right?



- **Teach him** to consider its parts (including its beginning, middle and end).
- **Help him focus.** Recording a story may get him to think critically about it. Hearing it played back reinforces its meaning.
- **Support his language learning.** Get him excited about telling stories today, and he may want to write them tomorrow.

Source: Robin Campbell, *Facilitating Preschool Literacy*, ISBN: 0-87207-187-1 (International Reading Association, 1-800-336-7323, [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)).

## Use storybook collections wisely

Does your child have a big storybook filled with lots of tales? Great! But when deciding which ones to read with her, remember:

- **Not every tale** may be right for her. Some might be geared for preschoolers. Others may be meant for older kids.
- **You should read** each story yourself first. If some seem too advanced for your child, don't share them with her yet.
- **You can revisit** the "too old" stories as she grows. They may be perfect later.
- **It's a good idea to look** for collections where all the stories are age-appropriate. Ask your librarian for suggestions.

Source: Dorothy Butler, *Babies Need Books*, ISBN: 0-435-08144-6 (Heinemann, 1-800-225-5800, [www.heinemann.com](http://www.heinemann.com)).



**Lucky the Golden Goose**, by John Wrenn (Red Truck Publishing, Inc.).

Why does that crazy goose keep saving pumpkin seeds? Because he knows that saving pays off big in the long run!

**Where Is Coco Going?** by Sloane Tanen (Bloomsbury Children's Books). The fuzzy toy chick meets sharks, camels and scary trees—all on her way to Grandma's house! Bright, splashy photos tell the tale.

## Homemade holder revs up writing

Help your little writer make a special pencil holder. Here's how:

- **Cover** an empty tin can with construction paper.
- **Decorate it** with stickers, yarn or dried pasta.
- **Label the can** "Writing Tools" and put your child's name on it.
- **Fill it** with pencils. Keep it where your child can reach it.
- **Praise** his scribbles—they're part of language learning!

## You can't hurry love (of reading)

Do you rush through story time? Slow down! If you seem bored with reading, your child may lose interest, too. Instead, relax. Have fun. Give your youngster (and yourself) a chance to absorb the tale.



Source: "Raising a Reader," National Association for the Education of Young Children, [www.naeyc.org/ece/1998/19.asp](http://www.naeyc.org/ece/1998/19.asp).

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