

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Rochester Community Schools

Make language learning 'All About Me' for your child

Here's a clever way to increase your child's reading readiness: Make an "All About Me" book. Not only is it creative, it'll strengthen both her spoken and written language skills.

You'll need:

- **Paper.**
- **A hole-punch.**
- **Crayons** or pencils.
- **Yarn** or twist-ties.

To assemble her book:

- **Stack** five or six sheets of paper together.
- **Punch** three holes down one side. Help her thread string or twist-ties through the holes to form a book.
- **Help** your child write "All About Me" on the cover.
- **Have** her write or draw her favorite things on each page.
- **Encourage** her to read and share her masterpiece.

Source: "Helping Your Preschool Child," U.S. Department of Education, www.ed.gov/parents/earlychild/ready/preschool/preschool.pdf.



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Learn how to choose the right books to read with your child



When it comes to choosing books for your child, remember that there's no such thing as "one size fits all." Still, there are things to keep in mind when picking books for your preschooler. For example, kids this age:

- **Enjoy stories** about familiar things.
- **Like interesting tales** and playful rhythms and rhymes.
- **Get a kick** out of pop-up pages and flaps to lift.

Source: "Choosing a Children's Book," The Children's Book Council, <http://cbcbooks.org/readinglists/choosing.html>.

Understand family literacy



Confused by the term "family literacy"? Then download the International Reading Association's free booklet, "What is Family Literacy?" (www.reading.org/downloads/parents/pb1044_involved.pdf). It'll explain why you matter so very much to your little one's future reading success!

Be gentle with your books!

It's terrific that your youngster loves books—but don't let him love them to death! Keep him from handling his books so roughly that he destroys them.

To teach your child to be gentle with books:

- **Be a role model.** Do you slide books off the coffee table and onto the floor? Or use them as coasters? Don't—your child is watching.
- **Designate a book nook.** Whether it's a shelf or a box, give your child someplace safe to store his books.
- **Show him what to do.** "This is how we take a book off the shelf. Here's how we put it back."

Watch your child's TV time



Children ages three to five spend an average of 13 hours and 28 minutes a week watching television. Limit the time your child spends watching TV. When he's tuned into the TV he is doing nothing to build the key literacy skills he'll need to be a good reader.

Source: "Raising Readers," The Department of Education, www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/families_raising.html.

Turn a wiggly child into a lifelong bookworm

Nurture your child's love of books and you'll build a lifelong reader! Here are two ways to do just that:

- 1. Make story time "pressure free."** In other words, keep it kid-friendly. Never force your child to sit still longer than she's able. If she's fidgety after a few minutes of book time, let her get up and do something else.
- 2. Put your child in charge.** Whenever possible, let her choose what to read. True, your eyes may cross at the thought of enduring *Corduroy* for the hundredth time, but do it anyway. When it comes to stories, preschoolers adore repetition!

Turn the holidays into reading days

Fill your little one's holiday season with books. Here are three festive reading-related activities to try:

- 1. Create colorful bookmarks.** Help your child cut wrapping paper into strips. (Use safety scissors.) Then help him jot a personal note on the back of each one. Now cover them with clear contact paper. Voilà! He has made perfect gifts for book lovers.
- 2. Start a new tradition.** Host a special "holiday book night" for extended family. Invite grandparents, aunts, uncles and other relatives to come enjoy an evening of stories and cocoa with your child.



Photo: iStock/Getty Images

- 3. Give books as gifts.** Shopping for your child's friends and cousins? Bring him along to the bookstore and let him help choose the perfect titles!



Books to delight your early reader

Snow is My Favorite and My Best, by Lauren Child (Dial). Lola wishes it would snow every day. Hmm, says big brother Charlie. Too much snow may not be such a good thing . . .

Hansel and Diesel, by David Gordon (Laura Geringer Books). How much trouble can two little trucks get into? Plenty—especially when they wander away from home and into the Wicked Winch's garage!

Building vocabulary at home is as easy as A-B-C!



You know it's important to help your child build his vocabulary—but how can you do this without simply reading to your child all of the time? Use this clever twist on the alphabet game. Here's how to play:

- 1. Take turns** with your child going through the alphabet (you take "A," he gets "B," etc.).
- 2. For each letter**, name a word that begins with that letter ("Apple," "Bat," "Canteloupe" and so on).
- 3. Go through** the alphabet again when you finish. But avoid repeating any words from the last round!

Source: "Building Vocabulary Words—Games & Activities," Time 4 Learning, www.time4learning.com/readingPyramid/vocabulary.htm.



Q: I know reading with my child is fun for her now, but will it really make a difference to her later?

A: Definitely! Studies show that the things you do to support your child's reading skills matter more to her future school success than how educated you are or how much money you make. So keep sharing books with her. It matters!

Source: "Literacy-at-a-Glance," Reading is Fundamental, www.rif.org/about/newsroom/literacy_ata_glance.msp.

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

"A room without books is like a body without a soul."

—Cicero

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