

# Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Rochester Community Schools

## Help your child learn to love books one story at a time

Building a bookworm? Here are easy ways to nurture her love of reading:

- **Get excited.** Use silly voices when reading together. Jump up and twirl around the room. Remember: It's okay to be goofy during story time!
- **Pair activities with books.** Are you going to the zoo? Read a book about animals when you return. Heading to the dentist? Find a tooth-filled title to share in the waiting room.
- **Make stories personal.** When reading, replace the main character's name with your child's name. She'll love it when "Caitlin" falls asleep in Baby Bear's bed because it's "just right."

Source: "Family Reading Tips," Family Reading Partnership, [www.familyreading.org/i-tips.htm](http://www.familyreading.org/i-tips.htm).



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*"Reading will give you lasting pleasure."*

—Laura Bush

### Create a family full of readers

Reading shouldn't always be a solo act! To get the whole gang involved with your child's language learning:

- **Share your family history.** Ask Grandma or Grandpa to tell stories about your family's past.
- **Look at old photo albums together.** Talk about the people and places you see.
- **Turn grocery shopping into reading time.** Ask your child to help you find specific products. Even if he can't read yet, he can look for the "K" in ketchup or the "B" in bread.
- **Create a reading nook.** Set aside a comfy spot at home where everyone can pop down with a book.

Source: "10 Tips for Parents of Young Children," Reading is Fundamental, [www.rif.org/parents/tips/tip.aspx?View=65](http://www.rif.org/parents/tips/tip.aspx?View=65).

### Look for repetition and rhyme



Choose books that repeat words and books that use short rhyming poems.

Young children love repetition, and they love knowing what comes next in the stories you read with them.

Read these stories slowly, using lots of expression. Encourage your child to join in when the words repeat. After he knows what the stories are about, pause and let him "read" parts of them to you.

Encourage him to pretend to read on his own, too. Pretending to read is an important step in learning to read.

Source: "R and R: Repetition and Rhyme," Helping Your Child Learn to Read, [www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Reading?ReadAlong.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Reading?ReadAlong.html).

### Find book festivals online



Searching for wordy activities? Check out the Center for the

Book's list of regional book fairs and festivals ([www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/bookfair.html](http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/bookfair.html)).

Chances are there's something literary happening in your neck of the woods!

### Surf your way to ABC fun



If you're looking for a cool, free way to teach your little animal lover the alphabet, look no further! Visit

Bembo's Zoo ([www.bemboszoo.com/Bembo.swf](http://www.bemboszoo.com/Bembo.swf)). Watch as the ABCs sway to jungle sounds. Then click on each letter to see (and hear) it transform into a creature. Who knew the letter O could become a wiggly octopus?

## Learn to write by making salt letters

Here's a crafty way to help your child write: Make salt letters! You'll need:

- **Construction paper** or other heavy paper.
- **A pencil** or marker.
- **Glue** (liquid or a stick).
- **Salt** or clean sand.

To make the letters:

- **Have your child choose a letter.** Show him how to draw it on the paper.
- **Help him trace** over the letter with glue.
- **Have him sprinkle salt or sand** over the letters while the glue is still wet. Shake off the excess.
- **Keep the paper flat** until it's dry.
- **Let your child** hang his scratchy masterpiece on the fridge once it's dry.

## Connect with your child's teacher

It's a brand-new year of preschool. Start it off right by building a strong relationship with your child's teacher. Here's how:

- **Introduce yourself.** Make a point of saying hello to your child's teacher during the first few days of class.
- **Volunteer.** Have a few spare hours? Pitch in at school! Whether it's reading aloud during story time or supervising on the playground, the extra help is sure to be appreciated.
- **Stay informed.** Read every note or handout that your child's teacher sends home.



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If something doesn't make sense, ask about it. Remember, you and the teacher are partners in your child's education.



## Books to delight your early reader

**Clifford's First Autumn**, by Norman Bridwell (Scholastic). The big red dog used to be a tiny fuzzy puppy. So tiny, in fact, that football might not be the best game for him. Uh-oh!

**Class Picture Day**, by Andrea Buckless (Scholastic). What happens when you stick your tongue out during class pictures? Nothing—as long as it looks like everyone else is, too!

## Why vocabulary matters



Your child's vocabulary is a big part of her language learning. How big?

According to research:

- **From toddler age** to second grade, kids learn an average of 860 words per year.
- **Vocabulary knowledge** is tied to reading ability and success in school.
- **New words** are picked up more quickly during the "pre-literate" years than any other.

Clearly, vocabulary matters! To build your child's word knowledge:

- **Talk to her.** Chatting is a great way to introduce new words.
- **Read books together.** Reread them, too.
- **Tell stories.** Encourage your child to invent tales.
- **Enjoy dramatic play.** Get out the puppets, dress-up clothes and other props. They may spark her language learning.

**Source:** "Vocabulary Development During the Preschool Years: Its Influence on the Achievement Gap," California Preschool Instructional Networks, [www.cpin.us/docs/mod\\_ca-vocabulary.pdf](http://www.cpin.us/docs/mod_ca-vocabulary.pdf).



**Q:** How can I teach my child to be quiet in the library when the kids' section is pretty noisy?

**A:** Let him explore the grownup sections. Show him biographies of famous people (even if he only looks at the covers). Take him over to nonfiction so he can leaf through nature books. Wherever you go, remind him to use his "library" voice.

Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

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