

# Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Rochester Community Schools

## You *can* motivate your reluctant reader!

You've heard the research: Kids who are read to regularly may develop a lifelong love of reading. But what if that love doesn't seem to be there for your child? Don't despair! There are ways to turn him into an eager reader. Here are a few:

- **Make story time fun.** It should be about enjoying books—not about teaching your child to read.
- **Embrace his interests.** If your child adores outer space, show him books about planets. If he swoons over crickets, offer him stories about insects.
- **Think outside the book.** For variety, let your child listen to audio books sometimes.

**Source:** Tara Swords, "Adventures of a Reluctant Reader: Learning at an Individual Pace," iParenting.com, [www.childrentoday.com/resources/articles/read.htm](http://www.childrentoday.com/resources/articles/read.htm).



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### Use rhymes to teach about letters and sounds

Carve out a few minutes each day for some rhyme time. It's a great way to help your child learn about letters and sounds. It's fun, too! To encourage your child to rhyme:

- **Sing silly rhyming songs** like "The Name Game." Insert your child's name, of course!
- **Point out objects** around the house and ask your child to find rhymes for them. Stick to simple words like *sink*, *door* and *chair*.
- **Say three words**—such as *hat*, *box* and *mat*, and have your child pick out the two that rhyme.
- **Read nursery rhymes** during story time. Get creative and add your own verses.

**Source:** "Helping Your Preschool Child," U.S. Department of Education, [www.ed.gov/parents/earlychild/ready/preschool/part\\_pg8.html](http://www.ed.gov/parents/earlychild/ready/preschool/part_pg8.html).

### Listening skills help readers



Listen up! Listening is an important part of reading comprehension. If you'd like to strengthen your child's listening skills:

- **Speak** to her slowly and clearly.
- **Get** on her level when you speak.
- **Look** her in the eye.
- **Ask** questions about a story you've just read. "What happened when Curious George wouldn't let go of the kite string?"
- **Be** a good listener yourself when your child is speaking.

### Surf your way to super kids' titles online



Soup up story time by visiting the University of Wisconsin's Cooperative Book Center ([www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/detailBook.asp?idBooks=2434&BOW=true](http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/detailBook.asp?idBooks=2434&BOW=true)). There you'll find a new kids' book review each week. It's a terrific resource for parents of rookie readers!

### Build a responsible reader



Take the time to teach your preschooler how to be a responsible reader. Here's how to get started:

- **Teach him** to treat books with respect. Insist that they never be thrown or left on the floor.
- **Get him** a library card of his own.
- **Carve out** a special spot for his books. Whether it's a shelf or a milk crate, let him be in charge of filling it with stories.

## Ramp up your child's pre-reading skills

Much of your child's learning happens outside of class—so be sure to work on his language skills at home! To boost your child's pre-reading skills:

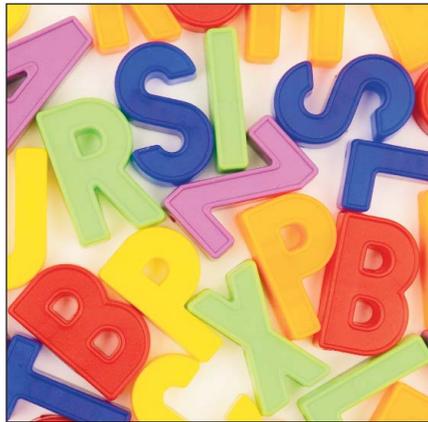
- **Play matching games.** See if he can match letters, shapes and colors.
- **Talk about the sounds** letters make.
- **Read together often.** As you do, trace your finger along the text. This will teach him that words run left to right, up to down.
- **Talk, talk, talk!** Involve your child in daily conversation. It'll help him learn—and use—new words.
- **Sharpen his fine motor skills.** Give him a pencil and paper. Encourage him to scribble and draw.

**Source:** Nicola Morgan, "Pre-Reading Skills," The Child Literacy Centre, [www.childliteracy.com/pre\\_reading.html](http://www.childliteracy.com/pre_reading.html).

## Stoke your child's language learning

Sharing stories isn't the only way to nurture your little learner! There are plenty of other language-rich activities you can try, too. Here are three:

- 1. Write a tale together.** Go on a "grand adventure" to the park with your child. When you return, help her craft a construction-paper book about what you did.
- 2. Stick letter magnets** on the fridge. Encourage your child to play with them. Surprise her by leaving little "magnet messages" for her to find, like "I love you."



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- 3. Make a story-starter box.** Put small objects and photos in a box. Choose one of the items and ask your child to invent a tale about it.



## Books to delight your early reader

**Little Bear's Friend** by Else Holmelund Minarik (HarperTrophy). The young cub is so sad when Emily leaves for school in the fall. How can he stay close to his friend? Will his special pen help?

**Teacher Trouble** by Justin Spelvin (Simon Spotlight). What's up with that wacky new teacher? Why, he's not a teacher at all—he's Robbie Rotten! Can the kids from LazyTown see through his disguise?

## Have fun with poetry



Young children love to act out stories. They love rhyming and repetition, too. Look for books of children's poems that you can read and act out with your child. (Poems that tell simple stories are best.)

Read a poem out loud, being as dramatic as you can. Then, as you read the poem again, have your child act out the story. Be sure to be an appreciative audience—give her plenty of applause. She'll have lots of fun and she'll be learning to connect emotion with the words on the page.

**Source:** "Poetry in Motion: Helping Your Child Learn to Read," U.S. Department of Education, [www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Reading/ReadAlong.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Reading/ReadAlong.html).



**Q:** My preschooler doesn't like the books I choose for him. How can I learn to pick better titles?

**A:** Start by asking your librarian for suggestions. Beyond that, look for books with interesting plots and splashy illustrations. Seek out titles that have flaps to lift or tabs to tug. Also, find stories that relate to your child's world. It'll help him identify with the characters.

**Source:** "Guidelines for Choosing Children's Books," Beginning with Books, [www.beginningwithbooks.org/guidelines.html](http://www.beginningwithbooks.org/guidelines.html).

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

**"Books are the quietest and most constant of friends."**

—Charles W. Eliot

### Building Readers®

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