

Building Readers[®]

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Rochester Community Schools

Nurture your child's writing skills

So what if your little scribe can't write yet? Encourage her efforts anyway! To nurture your child on the road to writing:

- **Give her materials.** Keep plenty of paper, pencils and markers around the house. Be sure they're down low where she can reach them. Encourage her to scribble and draw often.
- **Let her help you write.** Ask her to pitch in with making the shopping list. If she can't form letters yet, have her draw pictures of the items.
- **Teach her to print her name.** Applaud her efforts—even if they don't resemble actual letters yet!



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*"There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world.
Love of books is the best of all."*

—Jacqueline Kennedy

Make books a big part of your child's life

Get your budding bookworm excited about reading! Here's how:

- **Plan special events.** Are you planting a new tree in the yard? Find a flower-filled tale to honor the event. Will you soon be traveling "over the river and through the woods"? Look for a story about a similar trip.
- **Carry books everywhere.** Whether you're going to the mall, the dentist or a friend's house, tote a few tales along. Share them with your child during downtime.
- **Put reading on your schedule.** Devote a short period of time each day to books. It'll show your child that they're an important part of his life!

Source: Karen Milligan, "How To Inspire in Your Child a Love of Reading," HowToDoThings.com, www.howtodothings.com/education/how-to-inspire-in-your-child-a-love-of-reading.

Affect school success at home



The biggest factor in your child's school success isn't what he learns in class. It's what he learns at *home*. In other words, you're the biggest influence when it comes to his education! To support his success in school:

- **Demonstrate** a positive attitude toward learning.
- **Surround** him with books and reading.
- **Teach** him to be self-reliant.
- **Encourage** him to communicate clearly.

Source: "Getting Ready for Kindergarten at Bayfield Elementary Primary School," Bayfield (CO) Primary School, www.bayfield.k12.co.us/BEPS/Parent%20Guide.pdf.

Click for wordy fun!



Fresh out of reading-rich activities to try with your child? Visit www.KiddyHouse.com and click on "Parent's Corner." You'll find links to plenty of helpful sites. And when you're done, let your child click on "Kid's Corner."

Take your child to plays



Take your child to plays, musical performances and puppet shows. (Many libraries and bookstores sponsor special performances for young children.) These kinds of shows are a great way to stimulate your child's mind and imagination. They will develop her language skills. And they will help her make the link between words and their meanings.

Try these 'hands-on' ways to sharpen your child's motor skills

Strengthen your child's fine-motor skills—it'll help her turn pages in books and better control pencils and pens. Here's how:

- **Have her scrunch** up sheets of newspaper in one hand.
- **Let her cut** play dough with a plastic pizza wheel or plastic knife. (Supervise carefully.)
- **Teach her to** "pick up" water with an eye dropper.
- **Have her peel** stickers from a sheet and stick them onto paper.

Source: "Ready for Kindergarten: Fine Motor Activities," Beal Early Childhood Center, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/schools/Beal/readiness/finemotoractivities.html.

Become a super storyteller

Not every great story is found in a book. Sometimes, the best tales are the ones you tell! To spin a story that will keep your youngster eager and engaged:

- **Get excited.** If you're not interested in the tale you're sharing, your child won't be, either. So tell him a story that you enjoy, too.
- **Keep it simple.** Tales with too many characters, scenes and plots may be too complicated for young listeners. But punchy, straightforward ones may be just right.
- **Don't expect perfection.** Try not to criticize your efforts as a storyteller. Instead, relax and enjoy the experience.



Source: Bob Baldwin, "The lost art of storytelling," [HowtoTellaGreatStory.com](http://howtotellagreatstory.com/articles/article49.html), <http://howtotellagreatstory.com/articles/article49.html>.



Q: My friends' preschoolers know how to read, but my four-year-old doesn't. What's wrong?

A: Nothing! Each child learns to read at her own pace, so don't compare your child to others. Doing so may turn something fun—like sharing stories—into something stressful. Just keep surrounding your child with words. Teach her to love books and you'll build a lifelong reader.

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



Books to delight your early reader

My Gigantosaurus Book of Time by Jan Lewis (Lowe & B. Hould). Looking for a BIG way to learn about time? Rock—and rhyme—around the clock with these playful dinosaurs as they enjoy their day.

Where Is Boots? by Kiki Thorpe (Simon Spotlight). The sneaky little monkey is so good at hide-and-seek that Dora can't find him. Not without your help, that is—so start lifting those flaps!

Find time for language fun



The research is in: Parents play a huge role in boosting their kids' language-learning skills

just by doing simple activities at home. Language-rich activities include:

- **Chatting** together.
- **Reading** and telling tales.
- **Singing** songs.
- **Acting** out stories.
- **Playing** rhyming games.

Enjoying these activities with your child is more than a fun way to pass the time, though. They'll also help put him on the road to reading by:

- **Broadening** his vocabulary and knowledge of words.
- **Sharpening** his memory and listening skills.
- **Exposing** him to the different sounds found in words.
- **Increasing** his attention span.

Source: Deborah Davis, "Easy Ways for Families to Help Children Learn," Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, www.nwrel.org/cfc/publications/pdf/ways.PDF.

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