

# Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

Rochester Community Schools

## Get set for a reading summer

Preschool may be ending for the year, but that's no reason for your child to stop learning! In fact, if you provide your child with plenty of reading opportunities during summer break, he'll be that much more prepared for preschool or kindergarten in the fall.

To reinforce your child's prereading skills over the summer, let him:

- **Scribble** with sidewalk chalk.
- **Play** dress-up.
- **Read** and invent stories.
- **Visit** the library often.
- **Sing** along to songs on the radio.
- **Look** at pictures in books.
- **Fingerpaint** a couple of masterpieces.
- **Use** safety scissors to cut pictures out of magazines.



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**Source:** "Summertime Preschool Education," PreschoolRock.com, [http://education.preschoolrock.com/index.php/preschool\\_information\\_for\\_parents/summertime-preschool-education](http://education.preschoolrock.com/index.php/preschool_information_for_parents/summertime-preschool-education).

*"I would be the most content if my children grew up to be the kind of people who think decorating consists mostly of building bookshelves."*

—Anna Quindlen

### During story time, share stories that use repetition

When you pick books to read with your child, look for stories that repeat the same words or phrases over and over again. You might read:

- **The Three Little Pigs** ("Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin!")
- **Green Eggs and Ham** by Dr. Seuss ("I do not like green eggs and ham!")

Read the entire story with your child. Then, assign her one of the repeating words or phrases. Read the story again. This time, stop when you come to her part. Have her point to it as she "reads" it to you. She'll be proud of herself—and she'll be building confidence in her ability as a reader, too.

**Source:** "Over and Over Again," Let's Read! Learning Partners, [www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/LearnPtnrs/read.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/LearnPtnrs/read.html).

## Your child's vocabulary grows when you talk together



It's great that your child heard a new word on an educational TV show. But that alone won't build her

vocabulary.

Research shows that:

- **Conversation** is a key part of language development.
- **Children** are more likely to learn new words if they can use them in conversations with you.

So to truly grow your child's vocabulary, let her talk with you about the words she hears!

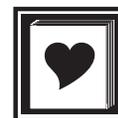
**Source:** Norbert Herschkowitz, M.D. and Elinore Chapman Herschkowitz, *A Good Start in Life: Understanding Your Child's Brain and Behavior from Birth to Age 6*, ISBN: 0-9723830-5-0 (Dana Press, [www.dana.org/books/press](http://www.dana.org/books/press)).

### Take letter-learning outside



Who needs pricey art supplies? Let your child practice "painting" letters with water, instead. All he'll need is a clean paintbrush, a container of water and a nice, dry sidewalk.

### Choices can motivate reading



Your child is more likely to want to read a book about a subject that interests her than just *any* book. So inspire your child to read by letting her pick out books at the library or bookstore.

Being "in charge" of what book to read will ensure that your child enjoys story time.

**Source:** Reading is Fundamental, "What Parents Can Do: Reading Tips From Kids," Reading Rockets, [www.readingrockets.org/article/191](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/191).

## Don't take a vacation from reading!

Is your family going away this summer? Fill your trip with language-learning opportunities. Here's what to do:

- **Gather “vacation” books.** Pack some special “vacation” stories to pass the time on the way there (and back).
- **Read signs aloud.** Ask your child to look for letters.
- **Browse through a library** at your destination if rain spoils your plans.
- **Send postcards—to yourself!** During your travels, take time to write postcards to yourself. (It's fine for your child to scribble or just draw pictures.) Then mail them home. When you return from your trip, you'll have an instant “written” account of your adventure.

## Even simple steps can boost your child's reading

Parents often worry that they can't help their child learn to read if they aren't good readers. But that's not true! There are many things you can do to show your child how important reading is. You can:

- **Check out an audio book** and the paper copy from the library. Play the audio book and turn the pages for your child while you read along.
- **Stick to simple picture books.** Or get a book without any words at all—and make up a story to tell your child.
- **Use the television.** After your child watches a show, ask her questions about it. You will be building her



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comprehension skills—an important part of reading.

- **Ask a friend** or relative to read aloud to your child.

**Source:** Marilyn Lopes, “8 Ways Parents Can Promote Reading At Home,” National Network for Child Care, [www.nncc.org/Parent/8ways.read.html](http://www.nncc.org/Parent/8ways.read.html).



**Q:** I make my fidgety preschooler sit for story time, but he hates it. I don't want him to start hating books—but I know reading together is important. What should I do?

**A:** Stop forcing your child to sit. Instead, make reading time more active. Take stories along with you to the park. Float waterproof books in the tub during bath time. Share tall tales when you're running errands. It'll keep your child moving *and* expose him to words and language.

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



## Books to delight your early reader

**Skippyjon Jones, Lost in Spice** by Judy Schachner (Penguin Group). Skippyjon Jones is a Siamese kitten who thinks he's a Chihuahua. This space-loving (and spice-loving) kitty just *knows* Mars is covered in yummy red pepper, and he's going to blast off to prove it!

**Waddle! A Scanimation Picture Book** by Rufus Butler Seder (Workman Publishing Company). This “scanimated” picture book uses a new technology to show colorful animals in motion. The large print, alliteration and sturdy pages make it a great book for beginning readers.

## Make your local library a favorite summer destination



What's one of the best spots for summertime fun? It's not the zoo or the playground. It's the library!

The library is packed with free things for your child to enjoy this summer. To get the most out of your visits:

- **Ask questions.** You can't sign your child up for that cool summer reading program if you don't know about it! That goes for weekly story time, too. So ask for a list of upcoming activities.
- **Get to know the staff.** Putting names with faces will make it that much easier when you need help finding books or other materials.

**Source:** “Tips for helping children get the most out of visiting the library,” the Lexington Public Library, Lexington, KY, [www.lexpublib.org/parentresources](http://www.lexpublib.org/parentresources).

### Building Readers®

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