

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Peoria Unified School District
Title I Department

Make learning and practicing the alphabet fun for your child

Look for creative ways to review the alphabet with your child. Here are some ideas to try:

- **Make alphabet cookies.** Help your child use alphabet cookie cutters and dough to cut out yummy letters. No alphabet cutters? You can carve out simple letters with a butter knife instead. They'll still be delicious!
- **Use food coloring outdoors.** Fill a squirt bottle with water and add a few drops of food coloring. (Choose a bold color, like green.) Your child can use the squirt bottle to practice writing letters on the sidewalk!
- **Create alphabet collages.** Have your child choose a letter, such as the first letter in her name. Then, she can look through old magazines and newspapers to find pictures of things that start with the letter. Help her cut them out and glue them onto a piece of paper. She can "read" her collage any time!



"Great books help you understand, and they help you feel understood."

—John Green

Use old mail to inspire reading projects

Before you throw away your extra catalogs and advertisements, have fun with them! Use these items to help your child build verbal and reading skills. Here's how:

- **Ask your child to find** letters or words he knows in a piece of mail. He can also try to identify the beginning letter of items he sees in pictures.
- **Point to a picture** on a piece of mail. Challenge your child to make up a story about it.
- **Have your child** use pictures to create a work of art. Help him cut out pictures and glue them onto a piece of paper. Be sure he puts his name on his work!

Story time can be anytime!

Story time does not have to follow a strict schedule—you and your child can share a book any time of the day! To get the most out of your time reading together:



- **Follow her cues** for when she wants to read.
- **Know that bedtime** isn't the only good time for stories. Your child's preferred time for reading may change as she grows.
- **Choose a time** when you're both relaxed.

Imaginative play boosts reading skills

Encourage your child to act out stories. He can pretend to be a favorite character or make up stories of his own. As he does, he'll be using words in creative ways, which is a good way to build the important language skills he will need for reading.



Simple actions will encourage your child to read

Even though your child may not be reading yet, it's important for him to know about reading—and to want to read! To encourage your child's interest in reading:



- **Visit the library** as a family often.
- **Read to your child** every day.
- **Let your child pick** the books you read.
- **Set an example.** Talk about some of the books you enjoy reading, both together and on your own.

Look for books and more at the library

Your local library offers many ways to excite your child about reading. Once every week or two, make a family trip to the children's section of the library and help your child find some new books. While you're there, you can also:

- **Attend story time.** Your child may enjoy hearing a librarian make a book come alive or participating in a craft related to the book. And sitting still at library story time is good practice for reading time in school.
- **Look for magazines,** audio books, CDs and movies. The library has more than books! Help your child explore the library and experience stories in many different ways.
- **Sign your child up** for his own library card. He'll gain confidence and pride from being in charge of his own books!



Source: "Helping Your Preschool Child," U.S. Department of Education, niswc.com/explore_library.

To get your child ready to read, make reading enjoyable!

There's a lot that goes into loving reading, and it's never too early to foster that trait in your child! To get ready for reading, your child should:



- **Know the letters** of the alphabet and understand that letters make sounds.
- **Look at books** often.
- **Enjoy the stories** you read with her.

Books to delight your early reader

- **Princess Wannabe** by Leslie Lammler (Harper). Fern opens one of her princess books, and she's instantly transported inside the book! She ventures through the land in her magical story on her way to meet the princess.
- **Miss Brooks Loves Books! (And I Don't)** by Barbara Bottner (Alfred A. Knopf). Miss Brooks is a librarian who loves all kinds of books. When she tasks Missy's class with dressing up like their favorite book characters, it takes Missy a while to find one she finds acceptable.
- **Can We Help? Kids Volunteering to Help Their Communities** by George Ancona (Candlewick Press). Everyone, no matter how old or young, is able to give back to their community. This book explores ways that children are able to help out, from assisting with animals to picking up trash left outside.



Music can nurture your child's reading skills

Music can help your child have fun with words and sounds—which is integral to his reading development. To use music to boost your child's reading readiness:

- **Sing songs** and recite nursery rhymes together.
- **Clap out the syllables** in words.
- **Listen to children's music,** especially from movies that your child knows, and sing along!
- **Make up silly songs** together.
- **Turn the spelling** of your child's name into a song (singing M-I-C-H-A-E-L to the tune of "London Bridge Is Falling Down," for example).



Q: I have a preschooler and an infant. How do I find time to read to each of them every day?

A: Don't always try to squeeze in separate story times. Instead, read together as a family! Give your preschooler the "big kid" job of choosing the books, and then snuggle up and share them with both kids at once.

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

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