

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

ChildCareGroup
WorkSource for Dallas County

For better reading, choose the best books

It's never too early to build your child's love of learning and reading. Start by choosing books that are appropriate for your child's age.

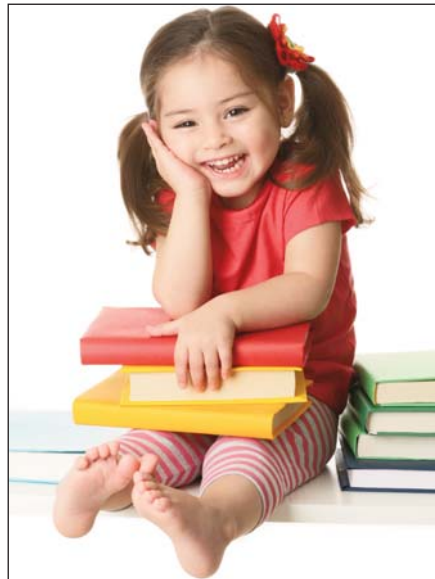
For very young children find:

- **Books with bright colors** and simple objects.
- **Books that are fun** to read aloud.
- **Books which develop a rhythm.**
- **Books made of cloth**, or books that have pages with different textures.

For children in preschool try:

- **Books with nursery rhymes.**
- **Books about everyday** experiences.
- **Books that repeat words** and phrases.
- **Books with more complex** stories.
- **Books with surprises.** (Try a pop-up book!)

Source: "Choosing a Children's Book," The Children's Book Council, www.cbcbooks.org/readinglists/choosing.html.



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You are your child's most important teacher!

The research is in—and it says what parents do at home has a big influence on a child's success in school. So read to your child every day. Why? It will help your child:

- **Succeed in school.** The earlier you get involved, the more powerful the effect will be on your preschooler's future academic achievement.
- **Learn new words.** Even reading just one storybook a day will build your child's vocabulary.

And research says that no matter where you live or what your income, when you make reading a priority at home, your child will be more likely to succeed in school.

Source: Kathleen Cotton and Karen Reed Wiklund, "Parent Involvement in Education," Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/3/cu6.html.

Write ABCs around the house



Now that your preschooler is learning his ABCs, have some fun writing the letters around your home. Have letter writing fun in the:

- **Bath tub.** Let him write letters with shaving cream.
- **Kitchen.** Sprinkle flour or sugar on paper. Then have him write letters with his finger.
- **Driveway.** Have him write big letters with sidewalk chalk.

Source: Barbara Whiting, "Preschool: Writing Name," About.com, <http://homeparents.about.com/cs/parentingtips/a/name.htm>.

Timing is everything



Read to your child often, but don't read for too long. If she gets antsy during story time, put away the books for a while. Follow her lead, and never turn reading into a power struggle.

Source: "While You Can't Read to a Child Too Early, You Can Read for Too Long," Reading Pathfinder, <http://readingpath.org/toolong.html>.

No April sun? Read for fun!



Has a rainy day canceled your outdoor fun? Try an indoor reading picnic. Pack some sandwiches, fruit and drinks into your picnic basket—and don't forget the books! Then spread out your blanket on the living room floor. To add to the fun, invite Teddy or another favorite toy. Together read some books about April showers.

Source: Charlotte Hopkins, "Reading Activities for Preschoolers: Ten Ways to Make Reading Fun for Younger Tikes," MomSense, www.christianitytoday.com/momsense/2007/002/3.8.html.

Trust in the power of consequences

Sooner than you think, your preschooler will be a teen. If you promote responsible behavior now, it's more likely you'll enjoy her teen years. Start by setting and enforcing limits. For example, ask your child to pick up her books. Say that you will take them away for one day if she doesn't. If she doesn't pick them up, don't nag. Just enforce the consequence. Put the books where she cannot get them. The next day when she asks for her books, say they are put away for the day; she can look at them tomorrow. Enforce the consequence every time. You'll be surprised at how quickly she catches on!

Source: Jim Fay and Charles Fay, Ph.D., *Love and Logic Magic for Early Childhood*, ISBN: 1-930429-00-1 (The Love and Logic Press, Inc., 1-800-338-4065, www.loveandlogic.com).

Play letter games with your child

Your child will need to learn his letters before he can learn to read. Here are three simple and fun ways to help him:

- 1. Give your child plastic letters.** Take turns naming the letters and saying the sounds they make.
- 2. Play on the computer** with your child. Point to a letter on the keyboard. Say the name of the letter. Then have your child press the key and watch the letter come up on the screen. Ask your child to tell you what the letter is.
- 3. Encourage your child** to notice all the letters around him. Have him point out letters while in the car.



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Source: "Teaching Our Youngest: A Guide for Preschool Teachers and Child Care and Family Providers," U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.ed.gov/teachers/how/early/teachingouryoungest/index.html.



Q: I know that listening is important. What can I do to build my daughter's listening skills?

A: You're right—good listeners become good students! After reading a story, ask your child:

- **Questions about what you've read.** What was in Jeremy's big box? How did Emily find her lost kitty?
- **To tell the story in her own words.** Let her hold the book and point to the illustrations.

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



Books to delight your early reader

Someone Bigger, by Jonathan Emmett (Clarion Books). Sam's dad says that Sam is too small to fly his new kite alone. But when the kite pulls Dad into the sky, guess who saves the day!

Tissue, Please! by Lisa Kopelke (Simon & Schuster). Frog keeps wiping his nose on his arm. Yuck! Find out what happens when he finally learns to use a tissue to blow his nose.

Pronounce words correctly to increase vocabulary



Your future reader is learning new words every day. By age two, most children know 200 words, and they continue learning more every day. Young children often pronounce words focusing on the emphasis on one part. So a child might say "ghetti" for spaghetti. It's tempting to say "ghetti" back to your child, but he will actually expect you to say it correctly. And when he says "spaghetti," praise him for his good pronunciation!

Source: Dorothy Eimon, *Learning Early*, ISBN: 0-8160-4014-1 (Checkmark Books, an imprint of Facts on File, Inc., 1-800-322-8755, www.factsonfile.com).

"Early experiences with spoken and written language set the stage for children to become successful readers and writers."

—A Child Becomes a Reader
National Institute for Literacy

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