

Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

SETA Head Start

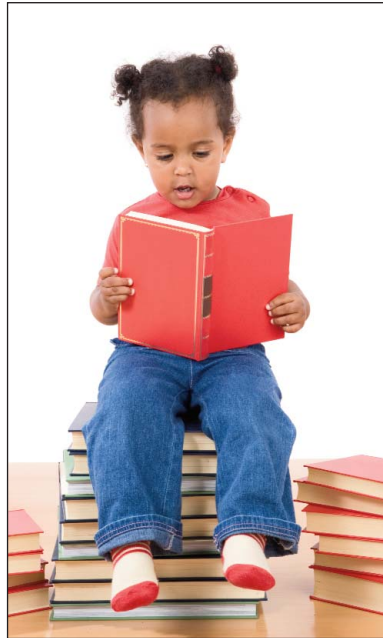
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Motivate your young reader

Families play an enormous role in turning children into lifelong readers. But how can you keep kids excited about books? Aside from making story time enjoyable and interesting, research shows that children are motivated to read by:

- **Previous experience.** Kids are often drawn to books they've had read to them before. So don't balk about reading your child's favorite book for the millionth time!
- **Having access to books.** See why those trips to the library are so important?
- **Being given choices.** Even the youngest child likes to select her own stories. Start off by giving your child a choice between two books.
- **Hearing your suggestions.** If you come across a tale that would be just the thing for your child, offer to read it to her.

Source: Educational Research Service, *What We Know About: Effective Early Reading Instruction*, ISBN: 1-931762-03-1 (Educational Research Service, www.ers.org).



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Support your rookie writer



They may be scribbles to you, but they're real words to your youngster! So never dismiss his early attempts at writing. Instead:

- **Applaud** his efforts.
- **Ask** him to "read" what he's written out loud. It's fine if he puts new words to the same scribbles each time.
- **Display** his masterpiece. Hopefully, it will inspire him to scribble some more!

Bag up a love of reading



Want to get your little one excited about visiting the library? Make a special "library bag." Get an inexpensive tote bag from a craft store. Help your child decorate it with paint or markers. She'll want to go to the library to fill it up—and it can turn her into a lifelong reader!

Spend some quality time playing with rhymes

Rhymes are a terrific tool for boosting your preschooler's language learning. So carve out some "rhyme time" each day by playing:

- **Change the Name.** Rattle off the names of everyone in your family, and then help your child invent crazy rhymes for each one.
- **What Do I See?** Think of an object in the room and give your child rhyming clues about it. If you want him to guess the word "table," you might say "I see a *nable* ... a *wable*"
- **Roses Are Red.** Use the classic verse as a jumping-off point for creating new rhymes together. "Roses are red, violets are blue" Now what?

Source: Linda K. Rath, Ed.D. and Louise Kennedy, *The Between the Lions Book for Parents*, ISBN: 0-0605-1027-7 (HarperCollins, www.harpercollins.com).

Tame that television!



Don't let television take over your home! Along with limiting your child's TV watching to about an hour a day, you can keep his "screen time" under control if you:

- **Offer** other activities for him to do. Make reading just as appealing as watching TV.
- **Never** put a set in his room.
- **Turn** off the tube during meals. Talk as a family instead.

Source: "Tips for Kids and TV Watching," Kidspot Australia, www.kidspot.com.au/article+144+37+Tips-for-kids-and-TV-watching.htm.

Expand your child's word smarts

Your child's brain is like a "language-learning sponge," so help her soak up new words every day! To boost your child's vocabulary and word knowledge:

- **Speak to her often.** Conversation is an excellent way to expose your child to unfamiliar words.
- **Use proper grammar.** If she hears you speaking correctly, she's more likely to do the same.
- **Make recordings** of her saying new words.
- **Play 20 questions.** It will encourage her to use words and logic to solve a puzzle.
- **Share interesting experiences.** A simple walk around the block is a chance to discover new things—and to use new words.

Source: "Helping Your Child at Home with Vocabulary Building," Child Development Institute, www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/learning/vocabulary.shtml.

Make family reading time a part of your routine

Books are too special to keep to yourself—so make reading a family affair! If you think reading is important, your child will, too. To encourage the whole gang to enjoy books together:

- **Think beyond bedtime.** It's great to share stories before bed, but why limit yourself to lights out? Carve out other regular times to explore books as a family, too.
- **Make it cozy.** Toss a comfy blanket on the floor before you all snuggle up to read together.



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- **Read different things.** It's okay to enjoy one book while your child enjoys another. So let him "read" his favorite picture book as you thumb your way through the latest bestseller.



Books to delight your early reader

Mouse Magic by Michelle Cartlidge (Dutton Children's Books). What trick will the wee whiskered wizard perform next? Pull the tabs to find out in this tiny tale made for tiny readers.

Bees! by Elizabeth Winchester (HarperTrophy). The buzzing honey-makers come alive in this fact-packed book full of glossy close-ups. Bet you'll learn something new about the winged wonders!

Not A Box by Antoinette Portis (HarperCollins). Explore alongside the rabbit as he discovers all the ways a simple cardboard box can be enjoyed. Just don't call it a box when it's really a racecar ... or a mountain ... or anything else the rabbit can imagine.

No books on hand? Help your toddler publish one



Is your child a natural storyteller? Encourage her to keep talking—then write those stories down! Using heavy paper, make a booklet from her wild tales. Just fold a few sheets of paper in half, staple or tape the edge and get busy. Write your child's words on one side of each page and have her draw an illustration on the other. Soon you'll have a wonderful book and family treasure!

*"I cannot live without books."
—Thomas Jefferson*



Q: How can I tell if my child has a vision problem? Will it affect her reading?

A: If your child is having problems with her vision, she may have problems learning to read, too. An eye that turns in or out, frequent squinting, frequent tearing of the eyes, or tilting the head when looking at objects are all general signs of vision problems. If you see any of these signs in your child, be sure to have her vision checked.

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

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Editor: Jennifer McGovern.

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P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474

1-800-756-5525, ISSN: 1533-3299
www.parent-institute.com