

# Building Readers®

How Families Can Help Children Become Better Readers

SETA Head Start

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## Never underestimate your little learner!

Learning to read may be tough, but never doubt that your child is up to the task! That is, don't underestimate her ability to tackle—and master—new things.

Need proof of her learning prowess? Research shows that people learn *half* of what they'll ever know *by the time they are four years old!*

To support your little learner along the road to reading:

- **Encourage her** to ask questions. When she does, take the time to answer them.
- **Be patient.** Don't expect perfection from her—learning takes time.
- **Talk about** the stories you read together. What happened?
- **Show her** why reading matters. Point out when you're reading.

**Source:** Sherry Ann Perry, Ph.D., *The Complete Help Your Child Learn to Read Book*, ISBN: 0-9659958-0-1 (Parent-Assisted Learning Services).

*“There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate’s loot on Treasure Island.”*  
—Walt Disney

### Just sing, sing a song with your preschooler

Songs aren't just stories set to music. They're also an important tool for boosting your child's reading readiness. Not only do kid-friendly tunes expose him to words and melodies—they also introduce him to new rhymes and phrasing.

So make your child's world more lyrical. Besides singing old favorites with him, teach him new songs, too. If you're unsure where to start, head to the library and borrow a stack of CDs.

And for even more options, check out the huge list of children's songs at <http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/musicchild.htm>.

What are you waiting for? Clear your throat and start singing!

**Source:** “Young and Young at Heart!” National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, <http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/musicchild.htm>.



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### Library visits can go smoothly



Make every trip to the library a good one. For the smoothest possible visit:

- **Go over** the rules beforehand. This includes the all-important “quiet voices” rule!
- **Learn** the location of the restrooms and drinking fountains.
- **Arrive** on time if you're coming for a special program.
- **Leave** if your preschooler gets disruptive. But be sure to go back another time!

**Source:** “Tips for Visiting the Library,” Frederick County Public Libraries, Frederick, MD, [www.fcpl.org/information/children/parents.htm](http://www.fcpl.org/information/children/parents.htm).

### Create new classics



Classic children's books got to be called “classics” because they are loved by millions of readers. But if your child isn't enjoying one of these classics, read him something else! Expose him to a variety of terrific stories—not just the ones he's “supposed to” like.

### Book care teaches responsibility



Responsible readers care for their books. Teach your child to do the same by insisting she:

- **Put her books away** when she's finished reading. Be sure she has a safe place to keep them.
- **Never draw or color** in her books (unless they're coloring books!).
- **Be careful when turning pages.** Show how to turn each page carefully to avoid tearing it.

## Reading activities can spark a love of books

Ignite a love of reading in your child early and it may burn in her forever. To inspire her to enjoy reading, resolve to:

- **Put books first.** Read together every day. Aim for 20–30 minutes, but follow your child’s cues as to when it’s time to stop—if she gets antsy, try again later.
- **Attend reading-related events.** Sign up for story time at your local library. Take in a puppet show. And when your child’s favorite author comes to town for a book signing? Be in the front row together!
- **Cook together.** Grab a children’s cookbook and whip up something delicious. Help your child read the recipe as you go along.

**Source:** Elizabeth Kennedy, “10 Ways to Help You Raise Kids Who Love Reading,” About.com, <http://childrensbooks.about.com/od/forparents/a/resolutions.htm>.

## Everyday objects help teach important concepts

Preschoolers are learning about opposites, adjectives and the sense of space, among other concepts. Sounds complicated, doesn’t it? Luckily, only the *names* of the concepts are complicated. Teaching your child about them can be easy and fun. Here are two ways:

1. **Talk about** what you are eating. Use words like *hot* and *cold*, *salty* and *sweet*, *crunchy* and *smooth*.
2. **Use an old box** to let your child learn about *around*, *under*, *over* and *through* while he plays. Open the ends so the box looks like a



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tunnel. Encourage him to explore the box from many directions. Point out what he is doing. “You are going *around* the box.” “You are going *through* the box.”

**Source:** June R. Oberlander, *Slow and Steady, Get Me Ready*, ISBN: 0-9622322-1-1 (Xulon Press, [www.xulonpress.com](http://www.xulonpress.com)).



**Q:** My preschooler seems interested in writing. How can I nurture that interest?

**A:** Give her plenty of chances to practice her scribbles. Write her name in big letters and help her trace her finger over each one. Let her roll clay into “snakes” and form the ABCs out of it. Use dots to make letter shapes, and then have her connect them. Together, point out words when you see them.

**Source:** “Alphabet Games and Number Games,” ActivityVillage.co.uk, [www.activityvillage.co.uk/alphabet\\_games.htm](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/alphabet_games.htm).

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



## Books to delight your early reader

**Fuzzy Bee and Friends** by Roger Priddy (Priddy Books). The beetlebug is awfully shy, but stroke his silky wings, anyway! Feel his fuzzy, filmy friends, too, in this soft, squeezable story that’s perfect for baby bookworms.

**Flabby Cat and Slobby Dog** by Jeanne Willis (Lerner Publishing Group). The pudgy pets watch TV and snack all day. Now the sofa has shrunk—or maybe the two lazy critters have just gotten too big for it!

## Pave the way to reading by learning about rhymes



The ability to rhyme is a big part of phonemic awareness (the understanding that words are made of sounds). Use rhyming games to spark your preschooler’s language skills. Here are two to try:

1. **Rhyming Cube.** Gather pictures of six simple objects. Glue or tape one to each side of a square box. Have your child “roll” the box like he would roll dice. Ask him to think of a rhyme for whichever picture faces up.
2. **Erase the Rhyme.** Draw several common objects (such as a tree, a sock and a cup) on a dry-erase board. Say a word to your child (such as “bee” or “rock”) and see if he can erase whichever object rhymes with it.

**Source:** Martha Kovack, “Fun Preschool Rhyming Games,” *On the Same Page Bulletin*, Simcoe County, Ontario, Early Years Centres, [www.e3.ca/documents/FunPreschoolRhymingGames.pdf](http://www.e3.ca/documents/FunPreschoolRhymingGames.pdf).

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