

# Early Literacy Begins with YOU!

There are five simple practices that help children get ready to read:



The five practices provide fun learning experiences for children of different ages and interests.

Children learn about language by listening to parents talk and joining the conversation.

The way you talk as you share books develops children's language and helps them later learn to read.

Books are wonderful conversation starters.

Here are ways you can **TALK** to children to increase vocabulary and comprehension.

When you talk with your child:

- **Use new words: label feelings and explain words**
  - **Take turns: ask open-ended questions**
- **Make connections: share experiences from past and present**
  - **Talk about concepts: shapes, colors, textures, and size**
- **Make observations: compare items-what is alike and different**

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Songs are a natural way to learn about language.

Singing helps children hear the smaller sounds in words because words are separated into syllables in music, often with a distinct note for each syllable.

Singing slows down the pronunciation of words, which makes each part of a word easier for children to hear.

Being able to hear the smaller sounds in words is called phonological awareness.

Here are ways you can **SING** to children to increase vocabulary and comprehension and to hear the sounds in words.

When you sing with your child:

- **Define new words: take time to explain new vocabulary as you sing**
  - **Sing nursery rhymes: singing nursery rhymes helps children hear the sounds of language**
  - **Make connections: sing as a family while making dinner, preparing to leave, or bedtime**
- **Talk about rhyming: point out words that rhyme after you sing them**
  - **Share a laugh: Make up silly words as you rhyme for fun**

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Developing early literacy skills now will make it easier for your child  
to learn to read when he or she starts school.

Children's reading success in kindergarten and beyond begins  
with positive language and literacy experiences from the time they are infants.

Children who start kindergarten ready to learn to read have greater success  
throughout their school years and are more likely to graduate from high school  
and be successful readers and learners throughout their lives.

Here are ways you can **READ** to children to increase  
your child's pre-reading skills .

When you read with your child:

- **Read for information: read information (nonfiction) books about science, math, interesting people, other countries, and much more.**
- **Read alphabet books: alphabet books offer many wonderful opportunities to learn letter names and sounds.**
- **Explore sounds: create sound effects of animals, cars, trains, etc. as you read.**
- **Ask Questions: ask who, what, when, where, and why questions as you read.**
- **Create a different ending: problem solve while reading**

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Among the first words children want to write are their names.

This usually begins as scribbling. As children learn letter names and improve their motor skills, they begin to form the letters of their name.

Here are ways you can **WRITE** with children to your child's pre-reading skills.

Here are some activities that promote writing:

- **Paint or draw:** as children draw or paint, they practice eye-hand coordination and exercise the muscles in their fingers and hands.
- **Word jar:** make a word jar by writing new words on slips of paper and collecting them in a jar. Ask your child if some of the words “belong together” and group them. For example, group the names of animals, people, places, feelings, etc.
  - **Make connections:** practice creating letters using playdoh with your child. Compare upper and lower case. Compare letters you have in common.
- **Create books:** fold papers in half and create your own book! Have children draw the illustrations. Write down what they say about their drawings.
- **Chalk Art:** use your imagination to create art using chalk on a chalkboard or sidewalk.

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Play is one of the best ways for children to learn language and literacy skills.

Play helps children think symbolically: a ruler becomes a magic wand,  
today becomes a time when dinosaurs were alive,  
a playmate becomes an astronaut exploring space.

Through play, children realize that one thing can stand for another.

This also helps children understand that the written words  
stand for real objects and experiences when they learn to read.

Here are ways you can **PLAY** to children to build pre-reading skills.

When you play with your child:

- **Open a restaurant: practice being a cashier.**  
**Add up their items and provide a total to incorporate math.**
- **Put on a puppet show: put on a puppet show together using farm animals. What sounds do these animals make? What is their habitat?**
- **I Spy: play I spy games using letters. Say, “I spy with my little eye something that starts with the sound /b/. What is it?”**
  - **Read riddle/joke books: laugh with your child as you read riddle/joke books.**
- **Play dress up: grab some costumes and have fun! Dramatic play helps children develop narrative skills as they make up a story about what they are doing.**