

Parent Guide



EVERY
CHILD
READY
TO READ®

@your library®

NARRATIVE SKILLS

Narrative skills include being able to describe things and events as well as tell stories. Being able to tell or retell a story helps children understand what they read.

Early Talkers

- Talk to your child about what you are doing.
- Tell your child stories.
- Encourage your toddler to tell you about things (even if it's more babble than actual words). Listen patiently and ask questions.
- Read favourite books again and again. This helps children learn that things happen in order: first, next, last.

Talkers

Use the tips above, plus:

- Ask your child to tell you about their day.
- Read a book that you have read before, but let your child tell the story in his own way while you listen.

Pre-readers

Use the tips above, plus:

- Listen to your child carefully when he talks.
- Let your child tell you about a picture he has drawn. Listen patiently and ask open-ended questions: point to the picture and ask "what's that?" or "what's happening?".
- Add to what your child says. If your child says "big truck", then you say "yes, a big red fire truck".
- Help your child relate what is happening in the story to his own experience, i.e. "what happened when **we** went to the park?".
- Encourage sentence completion: "the billy goats would not go over the bridge because under the bridge there lived a great big ____".

PRINT AWARENESS

Print awareness includes noticing print, knowing how to handle a book and knowing how to follow words on a page. Being familiar with printed language helps children feel comfortable with books and helps them understand that print is useful.

Early Talkers

- Use board books or cloth books and have your child hold the book.
- If there are only a few words on the page, point to each word as you say it.
- Point out all of the places that print is used everyday – on signs, labels, books and magazines.

Talkers and Pre-readers

Use the tips above, plus:

- Point to the words in the book as you say them, especially words that are repeated.
- Let your child turn the pages.
- Let your child hold the book and read or tell the story.
- Hold the book upside down and see if your child turns it right side up.



PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words. This encourages children to recognize language patterns and helps them sound out written words on their own.

Early Talkers

- Say nursery rhymes so that your child hears words that rhyme. Emphasize the rhyming words.
- Sing songs. Songs often have different notes for each syllable in a word, so children can hear the different sounds in words.
- Add actions as you sing a song or recite a poem. This helps your child break down language into separate words.
- Make up your own silly, nonsense rhymes.

Talkers

Use the tips above, plus:

- Play word games such as, "what sounds like 'ran'?" or "what starts with the same sound as 'ball'?".

Pre-readers

Use the tips above, plus:

- Ask whether two words rhyme: "do 'cat' and 'dog' rhyme?", "do 'cat' and 'hat' rhyme?".
- Say words with chunks left out: "what word would we have if you took the 'hot' away from 'hotdog'?".
- Put two words together to make one word: "what word would we have if we put 'cow' and 'boy' together?".
- Say words with sounds left out: "what word would we have if we took the 'buh' sound away from 'bat'?".

HELP YOUR CHILD GET READY TO READ!

What is early literacy?

Research shows that children get ready to read years before they start school. Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write. There are six pre-reading skills (outlined in this guide) that children must know in order to learn to read successfully. You can help your child learn these skills – starting at birth!

Why are parents and caregivers so important in helping children get ready to read?

- Children learn best by doing things – and they love doing things with you!
- You know your child best and you can help him learn reading skills in the ways that are easiest for him.

How to get your child ready to read:

- Use the helpful tips in this guide to enrich your reading time together.
- Sign up for our preschool programs to get hands-on experience for you and your child. Our preschool programs introduce the six Every Child Ready To Read® skills in fun and exciting ways!
- Talk to one of our Children’s Librarians, trained experts who can offer advice, tips and tricks, book suggestions and much more.
- Not sure which books are best for your child’s age and development? Go to www.opl.on.ca/ECR2R.php to get a list of suggested titles available from the Oakville Public Library.
- Use the language that is most comfortable for you. We have children’s materials in languages other than English.
- Visit the Oakville Public Library often!



Reading Stages

Early Talkers – Ages 0-2
Talkers – Ages 2-3
Pre-readers – Ages 4-5

PRINT MOTIVATION

Print motivation is a child's interest and enjoyment of books. Children who enjoy books will want to learn how to read.

Early Talkers

- Make book sharing time special; a time just for you and your child.
- Begin reading books early – even when your child is a newborn.
- Choose books with clear and simple pictures.
- Point to pictures and talk about them in an excited voice.

Talkers and Pre-readers

Use the tips above, plus:

- Let your child see you reading books, newspapers or magazines that you enjoy.
- Take a break if your child becomes tired, loses interest or gets upset. A few enjoyable minutes at a time are better than a longer, unhappy time together.

LETTER KNOWLEDGE

Letter knowledge includes learning that each letter is distinct, and that each letter has its own name and unique sound. Knowing the names and sounds of letters helps children figure out how to sound out written words.

Early Talkers

- Help your child see and feel different shapes as you play, i.e. say “the ball is round”.
- Read alphabet books with clear pictures and letters.
- Use your child’s finger to trace the shapes of the letters.
- Point out letters on toys, food boxes and other objects around the house.
- Talk with your child about what is the same and what is different between two things.

Talkers

Use the tips above, plus:

- Help your child write her name, especially the first letter.
- Play with letters: make letters from clay or use magnetic letters on the fridge.

Pre-readers

Use the tips above, plus:

- Show your child that the same letter can look different, i.e. uppercase A and lowercase a.
- Help your child write words that interest him – like “dinosaur” or “truck”.

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary is knowing the names of things. The more words children hear and understand, the more ready they will be to read on their own. Books offer vocabulary that conversation and television do not.

Early Talkers

- Talk with your baby or toddler about what is going on around you. Speak clearly and use short sentences. Repeat yourself when your child shows interest.
- When your baby babbles or your child talks, listen carefully and answer.
- Ask your baby or toddler lots of questions. Even if she does not have the words to answer, she learns that questions are invitations for her to respond.
- Choose books that contain things you don’t often see during your daily activities. Name the pictures as you point to them.

Talkers

Use the tips above, plus:

- Talk about feelings – yours and your child’s.
- When your child talks with you, add more detail to what she says.

Pre-readers

Use the tips above, plus:

- Learn together by reading non-fiction books on subjects that your child likes.

Over for 3 more skills →

