

GETTING READY TO READ

PRINT MOTIVATION is a child's interest in and enjoyment of books. Children who enjoy books will be more likely to want to learn how to read. **You help by:** Making book sharing a pleasant experience; letting your child see you read.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS is the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words. Rhymes help children hear these sounds. **You help by:** Saying nursery rhymes; reading books that rhyme; singing songs together.

VOCABULARY is knowing the names of things. It helps children understand what they read. It also helps children recognize words when they try to sound them out. **You help by:** Talking with your child; repeating words over and over again; explaining words your child does not know.

NARRATIVE SKILLS is the ability to describe things and events and to tell stories. Researchers find that when children start to read this skill helps them understand what they are reading. **You help by:** Talking to them about what you are doing as you go about daily tasks; encouraging them to tell you what they are doing; using books to help them learn and tell stories.

PRINT AWARENESS is noticing print, knowing how to handle a book, and how to follow the written words on a page. In English, we open a book and turn pages from right to left. We read words from left to right and top to bottom. We are reading the words on the page, not the pictures. **You help by:** Reading books with your child; letting your child turn the page; running your finger under some of the words.

LETTER KNOWLEDGE is knowing that letters are different from each other and have different names and sounds. Researchers find that this skill helps children to understand that words are made up of smaller parts. **You help by:** Providing plastic shapes and letters for your child to play with; teaching your child what sounds the letters make.



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LETTER KNOWLEDGE ACTIVITIES

1. Play a matching game. Start with five letters. Write one letter on each card; make two cards per letter. Lay the cards face up on a table. Have your child choose a letter, say its name and the sound it makes, and then find a match. You can make the game easier or harder depending on what your child knows. For example: All upper case letters; all lower case letters; match the upper case letter to the lower case.
2. Children like to pretend and use their imagination. Have your child form letter shapes with her body. As she catches on, have her move as quickly as possible from one letter to the next.
3. Provide clay or playdough for your child to form letters. Let her choose the letters she would like to make. If she is not sure how, take a piece of dough and have her imitate you. To spell her name, use upper case for the first letter and lower case for the rest of the letters in her name. Here is a recipe for playdough:
Mix these together in a bowl:
4 cups flour
1 cup iodized salt
1 1/2 cups warm water
Knead the dough for 10 minutes and you're ready to make shapes, letters, and more.



PRINT MOTIVATION ACTIVITIES

1. Your child is curious about the world around her. Think about what interests your child. This is a chance for both you and your child to learn together. Ask the Librarian to help you find a nonfiction book on the topic of your child's choice. Share the book with your child. You do not have to read every word. Talk about the pictures. Let your child tell you what she knows too.
2. When your child asks you questions, you may or may not know the answer. Even if you know the answer, look for a book that would answer your child's question. You can say, "Let's find out together." The next time your child asks you a question, read the information together. You can always ask at the public library!
3. When you are driving or riding together, give your child a book to read to you. Let her tell you the story or talk about the pictures.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

1. Choose a book that rhymes, for example, *Bears in Pairs*. Read it together. When you read it a second time, read a page and ask your child which words on that page rhyme. When you read it a third time, read part of the text and leave out the rhyming word. Let your child say the rhyming word. If she does not know it, give her the starting sound. You need not do this with every rhyming pair, or on every page, just enough for some fun. Impromptu rhyming games for other books.
2. Play the game "I Spy."
Say: "I spy with my little eye, something that starts with a sound like 'sssss.'"
Or: "I spy with my little eye, something that is blue and rhymes with far" (a blue car).
Then let your child be the one to say, "I spy."
3. Sing with your child. Children often like

funny songs. Try ones where children fill in words that rhyme, such as *Willaby Wallaby Woo*. They can think of rhymes to match—even nonsense rhymes!

Willaby wallaby woo;
An elephant sat on you.
Willaby wallaby wee;
An elephant sat on me!
Willaby wallaby w ____;
An elephant sat on ____!

The Library has a variety of CDs for young children. Ask the Librarian to help you find some good CDs for your child.

VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

1. Help your child learn new words by describing his play. If he is playing with blocks, say, "You're stacking them higher and higher. It looks like a skyscraper." Have your child draw a picture using different color crayons. Talk about the colors, not just blue, but sky blue, teal, navy blue. How are they the same; how are they different? The colors are written on the crayons to help us.
2. Your child can understand things that cannot be seen. Even if he does not understand everything you say, you can talk about concepts and ideas: opposites, spatial position (above, in front of, behind, below), infinity, fairness, freedom.
3. Vocabulary can be learned through conversation, reading books, and even by watching high quality videos. Check-out a *Between the Lions* video from the Library and watch it with your child. Research suggests that watching the program helps children develop early literacy skills.

NARRATIVE SKILLS ACTIVITIES

1. Research shows that your child's ability to tell stories will help him understand what he reads. As you read a book together, you be

the listener and let your child tell you the story. It is all right if parts are left out, or if he makes up others. Aside from your child telling you about the book, he can also tell you about something he knows or something he remembers doing.

2. Puppets are good tools for narrative practice. Have your child use puppets or stuffed animals to tell a story or act out an event from her day. Skokie Public Library has many Puppet & Book Sets available for check-out!
3. Let your child choose a book he already knows. Let him hold the book and read it to you. He may have memorized some of the words in the book or remember the story. He may even make it up as he goes along. Nevertheless, encourage his "reading."

PRINT AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

1. As you walk, drive or shop, let your child read as many signs as she can. She may be recognizing the symbol rather than reading the word. She is learning that print is a symbol for the real thing. If there are signs she cannot read, tell her what they are. Try finding two new signs to read.
2. Choose a book that has a repeated phrase. The Librarian can help you find one, like *Little Red Hen* or *Jump, Frog, Jump*. When you read the repeated phrase, point to each word. When you read it again, see if your child can say the phrase and point to the words.
3. Let your child draw a picture. Ask her to tell you about the picture. Write down what she says, under the picture, or on the back, or on a separate sheet of paper. She will see how you write words and what direction they go.

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