

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Readiness Program
Intermediate Unit 1

Play games to build reading readiness

Your child's playtime is more than just for fun. Different activities and games help develop important parts of reading preparation.

When your child:

- **Works a puzzle**, she is learning to identify different shapes and sizes. This will help her when she begins to look at letters and words.
- **Builds with blocks**, she is learning how items relate to one another. She is also learning words such as *bigger*, *smaller*, *over* and *under*.
- **Plays make-believe**, she is using her imagination and building creativity. This will help her visualize the words that she reads, improving her understanding of books.



Source: "How to Get Preschoolers Excited about Reading," Reading Is Fundamental, www.rif.org/assets/Documents/parents/Preschool.pdf.

*"There are worse crimes than burning books.
One of them is not reading them."*

—Ray Bradbury

Talking to your child builds key skills

Your child will need to develop basic language skills before he can learn to read. Here are some things you can do to help him:

- **Find opportunities to talk** with your child throughout the day. Talk about what you are doing as you straighten up the house or make dinner, for example.
- **Ask your child questions** that require more than *yes* or *no* answers. If you take a walk, don't just ask, "Aren't those flowers pretty?" Ask him which flowers he likes best. Then, talk with him about his choices.
- **Show your child** that you are interested in what he has to say. Listen to him and respond to what he says.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, "Language and General Knowledge," Colorin Colorado, www.colorincolorado.org/article/29874/.

Practice turning the pages with your child

When you read with your child, have him turn the pages of the book to build important motor skills.



By reading together regularly, he'll learn to turn pages at the right time. He's paying attention to your verbal cues. When you pause, he knows it's time to flip the page.

You can also prompt him to turn the page: "What's going to happen next? Let's turn the page to find out!"

Explore nonfiction at the library

The next time you're at the library, explore the nonfiction section with your child. She may love looking at books with photos of animals, insects or outer space—and you'll both learn some interesting new facts, too!



Celebrate National Poetry Month with your child



April is National Poetry Month, which is the perfect reason to read some poems with your child. Check out a book of silly poems from the library by poets such as Shel Silverstein or Jack Prelutsky.

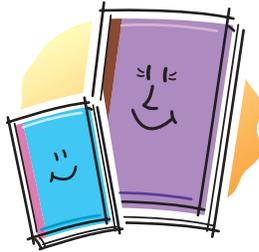
When you're reading with your child, help her listen for patterns and rhymes within the text. Not only will you and your child enjoy reading together, you'll also be creating a future poetry lover!

You can turn your child into a reader in any language

Even if you're uncomfortable reading to your child in English, you can still boost her language and reading skills. There are plenty of ways to nurture her language learning.

Try to:

- **Listen to audio books together.** If you have a print copy of the book, try to follow along.
- **Attend story time.** Find out when your local library hosts reading events, and take your child whenever you can!
- **Set an example.** Read for pleasure yourself. Let your child see you writing letters and grocery lists. It doesn't matter if your book isn't written in English or that you're writing in another language. You're showing your child that reading is important, and that sends her a powerful message.



Act out stories with finger puppets

Using finger puppets can be a great way to make reading time really special. Make puppets that represent the characters in your child's favorite stories.

Tape finger-sized loops to the back of construction paper cut-outs. Your child can use the puppets to act out stories as you read them together.



Books to delight your early reader

- ***Maybe a Bear Ate It!*** by Robie H. Harris (Orchard). What happened to a young cat's favorite book? He can't find it anywhere. A bear must have eaten it—or maybe a stegosaurus stomped on it!
- ***A Leaf Can Be...*** by Laura Purdie Salas (Millbrook). A leaf is more than just a leaf. It can also be a shade spiller, an air cleaner, a fine healer and so much more. This beautifully illustrated book includes a collection of facts about leaves as well as a glossary of leaf-related terms.
- ***Rosie's Walk*** by Pat Hutchins (Simon & Schuster). Join Rosie the Hen as she goes for a walk across the yard and around the farm—but watch out for the sly fox that is following her!



Four tips for picking books for your child

There are so many books for young children—how do you choose what to read? Here are some hints:

1. **Pick books** that you and your child will enjoy reading. It's hard to show enthusiasm if you don't like the story.
2. **Match the length of a story** with your child's attention span. Consider two or three very short stories instead of one long one.
3. **Don't worry about how old** the book is. A story is new if your child hasn't heard it before.
4. **If your child doesn't like** the book you're reading, stop! The same goes for you if



you don't like reading it. Pick up another book and start again!

Source: "Time With Your Kids: Choosing the Right Books for Your Child," Building Blocks for a Healthy Future, http://bblocks.samhsa.gov/family/time/choosing_right_books.aspx.



Q: I mostly read nursery rhymes with my child. What other kinds of stories should we explore together?

A: Consider folktales or fairy tales. Not only are they a good introduction to literature, but stories such as *Cinderella* also have a long tradition around the world (and across cultures). Even better, you'll

have countless versions to choose from—many of which are beautifully illustrated and kid-friendly.

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

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