



Supporting Reading Skills

Listening to stories, nursery rhymes, songs and conversations will help your child first learn that speech is made up of sounds, syllables and words.

Suggestions for supporting your child's reading skills

- **Make reading important.** Create special time for reading each day that becomes part of your child's routine. Make reading "together time" that encourages your child to have a positive association with books and with reading.
- **Read interactively with your child.** Read out loud and let your child look at the pictures for as long as they want, talk about what they see, and ask questions about the story. Encourage your child to think about what you're reading by asking questions or helping them to make predictions about what they think will happen next. See if your child can relate the story back to something that happened in your family.
- **Read poetry and nursery rhymes.** Listening to, repeating, and playing with words that rhyme inspires beginning phonemic awareness, or the ability to notice the individual sounds in words (for example, the "d" in dog or the "l" in log).
- **Make up stories for your child.** Storytelling allows you to change the story depending on how your child responds and teaches your child about story structure.
- **Create a rich language and print environment.** Make books, letters, words, etc., available to your child throughout the house.
- **Trace words with your finger from left to right when reading.** Doing so will help your child learn that in English we read from left to right and from the top to the bottom of the page.
- **Point out letters as you read.** Point out letters your child can recognize and emphasize the sound they make, (for example, after you read the word bear, say "look, a b, for bear, buh buh, bear.>").
- **Visit the library.** Get your child a library card and take a trip to the library. Ask the librarian to recommend quality, age-appropriate books. Getting new books builds excitement about reading.
- **Teach your child to recognize his or her name.** Put their name around the house (for example, on the door to their room, by their seat at the table).

- **Make crayons and paper easy to get to.** Ask your child to title his or her pictures and write down what they say clearly on the paper.
- **Make your child aware of print all around them.** Point out signs on the bus, labels on food products, billboards on buildings. Take advantage of all the regular routines of your child's day to point out print.
- **Make lists with our child.** Include your child in making grocery and to-do lists. Use your lists together and show your child how important reading and writing are (for example, when you're at the grocery store, and let him find items on the list).
- **Use "elaborative" language.** When you can, instead of simple instructions or comments, take advantage of opportunities to use descriptive and complex language.
- **Encourage your child to write.** Give him or her a pen and paper, for example, and play restaurant. Tell your child to take down your order (overtime you'll watch the progression from scribbles to actual letters).
- **Talk to your child about things you read that are interesting.** Bring up topics that would be interesting and exciting for your child, opening them up to a future of reading for information and understanding.
- **Make reading fun.** Play around with funny voices to imitate animals or unusual characters in stories. Create mini plays and performances whatever it takes to help show your child's perception that reading is fun and not work.
- **Introduce new books.** Even if your child still wants to hear the same book over and over, keep trying to check out new ones as well by finding books that follow his or her interests and imagination.