

# BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

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Mrs. Michelle V. Zeko, superintendent

## Try teacher tips for picking out books to read with preschoolers

There are so many books for young children—how do you choose what to read with your preschooler? Here are some teacher-tested strategies:

- **Select books** that match your child's interests. Look for stories with interesting characters and eye-catching illustrations.
- **Match the story length** with your child's attention span. Consider two or three very short stories instead of one long one.
- **Don't worry** about how old the book is. A story is new to your child if she hasn't heard it before.
- **Stop reading** if your child decides she doesn't like the book. It's OK if you are already a few pages in. Just pick up another book and start again!



*"When I am reading a book, whether wise or silly, it seems to me to be alive and talking to me."*

—Jonathan Swift

## Teach your child to take care of books

Learning how to take responsibility for property is an important step for school success. Use books as an example to show your preschooler how to take care of items that belong to him and others:

- **Show him how to use items properly.** If he looks at a book, he should put it away when he's finished. He should not leave it where it might get damaged.
- **Take special care with things that belong to others.** Teach your child to treat library books carefully. Take him to the library when books are due and have him hand them to the librarian himself.

## Celebrate National Poetry Month with your child

April is National Poetry Month, so it's an ideal time to read some poems with your child. Check out a book of silly poems from the library by a poet such as Shel Silverstein or Jack Prelutsky.

When you read 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 poetry lover!



## Let your preschooler turn the pages

When reading with your child, have him turn the pages of the book. This builds important motor and attention skills.

Your child will have to pay close attention to your verbal cues and pauses to figure out when to flip each page!



## Prepare for summer reading fun

No, preschool isn't over. But now is the time to start thinking of ideas for keeping your little one immersed in reading over the summer break.

Be sure to ask your child's teacher for suggestions for:

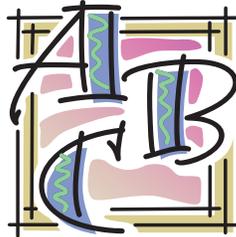
- **What kinds** of books to read together.
- **Where you** and your child can attend reading events in the community.
- **Which language-learning activities** to do together.



## Spice up your preschooler's language awareness with games

Who said learning to recognize words and sounds is boring? Get your child to love letters and words with these playful activities:

- **Same or Different?** Name two words for your child, and ask her to tell you whether they start with the same sound or different ones. For instance, say, "Pie and potato." See if your child recognizes that they both begin with the *ppp* sound.
- **Word Circle.** Show your child an easy word (such as *and* or *to*) and see how many times she can find it in a short article or piece of junk mail. Each time she spots the word, have her draw a circle around it.



### Nouns are all around!

It's not too early to start teaching your preschooler about grammar. Start with the basics. Explain that a *noun* is a person, place or thing. Together, search the house for a few nouns.



The couch? It's a thing—and a noun. The bathroom? Absolutely—places are nouns, too. And Mommy? She's a person—and the best noun of all!

## Big writing tools can make writing easier for preschoolers

Most preschoolers love to write, even if some of their masterpieces are mostly just scribbles. But not every child this age is good at holding and controlling skinny pencils or crayons.

To inspire your junior scribe to keep trying, offer him other types of writing instruments, including:

- **Chunky crayons, markers or highlighters.**
- **Sidewalk chalk.**
- **Thick pencils** (both regular and colored).

Using bigger, thicker tools can do more than just boost your child's efforts. Each time he picks one up, he is strengthening his fine motor skills—which may help him master those thinner pens and pencils later on!



## Books to delight your early reader

- ***Maybe a Bear Ate It!*** by Robie H. Harris (Orchard Books). 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!



- ***Fletcher and the Springtime Blossoms*** by Julia Rawlinson (Greenwillow Books). The tiny fox is sure those swirling white blossoms are snow. But, wait! They're really flower petals—spring is finally here!
- ***A Leaf Can Be...*** by Laura Purdie Salas (Millbrook Picture Books). A leaf is more than just a leaf. It can be lots of different things! This beautifully illustrated book includes interesting facts about leaves as well as a glossary of leaf-related terms.



**Q:** I have a preschooler and an infant. How do I find time to read to each of them every day?

**A:** You don't always have to squeeze in separate story times for your children. Instead, read together as a family! Give your preschooler the "big kid" job of choosing the books, and then snuggle up and share them with both kids at once.

Do you have a question about reading? Email [readingadvisor@parent-institute.com](mailto:readingadvisor@parent-institute.com).

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