

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Ladd Community Consolidated School
Mrs. Michelle V. Zeko, superintendent

Too many illustrations may hinder learning

Your child loves picture books, but if her stories are filled with too many illustrations, it could slow her language learning. Studies show that when young children see multiple pictures on a page, they often struggle to follow the story.

Experts suggest parents:

- **Seek out books** with a single picture per page. One splashy, engaging illustration may hold your child's attention and help her better grasp the words she's hearing.
- **Avoid too many** lift-the-flap books. The act of lifting the flaps and looking underneath distracts from the words.
- **Guide children through** multi-illustration stories. When reading a book with more than one picture per page, point to the drawing that goes with the text you're reading at the moment. This will help your child connect the words to the correct illustration.



Source: Z.M. Flack and J.S. Horst, "Two sides to every story: Children learn words better from one storybook page at a time," *Infant and Child Development*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Make predictions to boost thinking skills

The ability to predict the action in a book or the outcome of an experiment is a valuable skill for school success. Preschoolers aren't too young to learn to make educated guesses about what will happen next based on what they know.

To teach your child to predict, use:

- **Books.** Ask frequent questions like, "What will the bear eat?" or "What do you think will happen next?"
- **Experiences.** "What will we see in the grocery store?" "Do you think this bath toy will float or sink in water?"
- **Familiar routines.** "What will we do when we finish with dinner?" "What will you need to do after your bath?"

Discuss the outcomes with your child. "You said we would see apples and grapes in the grocery store. You're right! There they are. Look, I see bananas and strawberries, too."

Talk about summer's good times

Summertime may have passed by too quickly, but you can still talk about it. In fact, you should.

Conversation is an easy way to boost your child's language skills.



When you chat with your child, make it a point to:

- **Expose** him to new words.
- **Demonstrate** the sounds letters make.
- **Model** good listening skills.

So, reminisce with your child about summer's pleasures. You'll both enjoy it.

Take advantage of your library

Libraries have a lot to offer. To make sure your family is making the most of your local library:

- **Get your child** his own library card.
- **Ask the librarian** for book recommendations.
- **Let your child** choose books to check out himself.
- **Find out** about story times and other activities for children.



Get to know your child's teacher

The beginning of a new school year is the perfect time to get to know your child's preschool teacher and set the stage for a successful year.

It's also a great time to discuss your child's reading and learning goals. Be sure to ask these questions:

- **How will you teach** reading skills?
- **How will you measure** reading progress?
- **How can I support** my child's reading efforts at home?

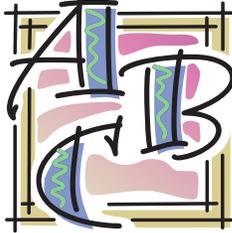


Use your child's name as a learning tool

Your child's name is an important sight word (a word she can recognize at a quick glance). You can also use her name to help build her interest in letters and how they make up words.

Here are a few ideas to try together:

- **Print the letters of your child's name** on a piece of paper. Say each letter as you write it. When you finish, read her name. Then, encourage her to practice writing the letters in her name.
- **Have your child draw a picture.** When she's finished, say, "Let's put your name on your picture." Again, say each letter as you write it.
- **Help your child print her name** on a note card. Have her decorate the card and hang it on the door to her bedroom.



Talk about the basics of print

While there are many types of reading material, the basics of print are the same.



Teach your child that:

- **Words are made up of letters.** Point to letters as you say their names.
- **Words on a page go from left to right.** Follow the words with your finger as you read.
- **Words and pictures** both convey meaning. What information can you get from words? From pictures?

To encourage reading, involve your family

When the whole family reads together, your child knows it's an important activity. To make reading a family affair:

- **Involve other relatives.** Who says Mom and Dad are the only ones qualified to lead story time? Ask Grandpa, Aunt Amy or an older sibling to pitch in, too.
- **Record a story.** Create your own audiobook by recording yourselves reading a story. Let everyone in the family provide a voice. Encourage sound effects.
- **Start the day with stories.** Set a few books and the newspaper on the breakfast table each morning. Enjoy some reading along with your orange juice.



Books to delight your early reader

- *Preschool Day Hooray!* by Linda Leopold Strauss. Help your little one get excited about preschool with this fun picture book—filled with colorful illustrations and rhyming text.
- *A Perfect Day* by Lane Smith. It's a perfect day for Cat, Dog, Chickadee and Squirrel. But what happens when Bear shows up? Find out in this charming book that introduces young readers to the concept of point of view.
- *Sparky!* by Jenny Offill. A little girl begs her mom for a pet. Her mom finally gives in "as long as it doesn't need to be walked, bathed or fed." The girl decides to send away for a sloth. She names it Sparky and hopes it will be the best pet ever.



Q: My four-year-old is already pointing out familiar words on cereal boxes. Will she be a little bored at school?

A: No—she'll be excited. Your child's school will likely have some books suitable for more advanced readers.

The head start she will have from early reading may give her so much confidence in herself that she'll be eager to read even more.

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Publisher: Doris McLaughlin.

Publisher Emeritus: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.

Editor: Rebecca Hasty Miyares.

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P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474

1-800-756-5525, ISSN: 1533-3299

www.parent-institute.com