



Is your child **READY TO READ?**

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PARENTS AND FAMILIES are important partners in the reading life of children. They can help build a love for books and enjoyment in language building activities such as rhymes, wordplays, and chants. Here are twenty-five easy tips parents and families can use to help children enjoy reading.

- Let your child see that you enjoy reading books, magazines, newspapers, and other printed material. Talk about what you enjoyed reading.
- Sing silly songs, try saying tongue twisters, recite chants and poems, tell funny stories, and read rhyming books, as well as books that repeat key phrases.
- Talk to your child about the parts of a book. Give him/her the names, such as: front cover, title, author, and illustrator.
- Let your child "read" you the pictures in a familiar picture book. Ask questions like: What happens next? Then, what? Where did it go?
- Link reading to real life. For example, children quickly learn concepts of hot and cold. If there is a sun on the page, ask: "What's hot in the picture?"
- Give your child "junk mail," such as flyers, coupons, and brochures to read.
- Help your children make his/her own books by cutting out pictures in old magazines and pasting them into "books." Some ideas for this might be making a book of things that are yellow, things that are clothes, things that are foods, things that are happy, etc.
- Provide paper, pencils, and markers for your child to use to pretend to write. Let your child see you writing things like shopping lists, paying bills, writing letters, and notes.
- Show your child how useful words can be by putting labels on things in his/her room and other parts of the home and by labeling his/her belongings.
- Give books as presents or to celebrate a special event.
- Pick a specific letter of the alphabet and show your child where that letter might be found around the house or as he/she visits different places in the community. Have him/her find that letter in printed materials and mark it with a highlighter.
- Keep favorite books or books on tape in the car – a book makes the perfect travel companion.
- Ask your child to help write the family shopping list. Look through grocery ads in the newspapers or from the mail and point out names of fruits, vegetables, juices, and other items that might be on the list.
- Use a book character as a theme for a birthday party or other special event.
- Play "Before and After" games to help your child develop an understanding of sequencing. For example, ask him/her, "Do you put your socks on before or after your shoes?" "Do you pour your cereal before or after you get a bowl?" Also, have your child ask you questions about which things come before or after.
- Try saying tongue twisters, rhymes, chants or other songs as you are traveling in the car, even on short trips.
- Use the pictures in books to teach your child new words. Provide synonyms (words with the same meaning) for the words he/she knows. For example, "Yes, that is a car, but sometimes we call it a vehicle," or "Sometimes we call a backpack a booksack."
- Show that not all reading takes place between the covers of a book. Encourage your child to "read" signs for his/her favorite fast-food restaurants, stop signs, stores, etc.
- Tape record some favorite books for your child so he/she can listen to you read even if you are not home or are busy.
- Help your child listen for different sounds in his/her environment, such as falling rain, wind chimes, clocks, train whistles, car horns, etc. Also have him/her focus on sounds that are at the beginning or at the ends of words. For example, ask "What other word starts like Tom?" "Which one of these words starts like Sam – Is it table or sun?"
- Keep a weather chart for your child to look at. On a calendar, have your child draw a symbol for the day's weather, such as a sun, raindrops, snowflakes, clouds, etc.
- Ask your child to tell you a story, and then you write that story while your child watches. You could write it or use a computer. Then read the story back to your child. Be sure to use your child's name in the story and then see if he/she can pick out his/her name or any other words in the story.
- Talk to your child about your favorite books or stories and why you like them. Ask your child to tell you about his/her favorite book or story and why it is his/her favorite.
- Play OK/No Way: Tell your child to listen carefully to what you say, then make up sentences that could be real or make believe. After each sentence, the child says "OK" or "No Way" For example, John bounces a ball (OK). Mary puts her toys in the guitar (No Way).
- Read to your child every day. Even the youngest of children benefit from the experience of reading.