Children who can describe things and events, can have conversations about what is happening in books, and who can tell stories are better able to understand what they hear, and later, what they read.

Read books that have words or phrases that repeat, such as “Jump, Frog, Jump!” Encourage your child to say the repeated phrase with you each time.

Re-read books so your child can become familiar with the story, making it easier to retell the story.

Have your child retell the story.

Encourage your child to tell you something from her own experience related to what happened in the book.

Use puppets or props to tell the story to help your child remember it; have your child use props to help retell the story (see “Play” section on page 2).

Encourage your child to talk about the pictures in the book, even if what she says is not in the story. Ask open-ended questions (ones that cannot be answered with yes or no).

Have your child draw pictures and ask her to tell you about them.

Expand on your child’s descriptions. You: What have you got there? Child: A ball. You: Oh, it’s a big, red, bouncy ball! What game shall we play with it?
Talk

Children learn most from books when they are actively involved. Rather than just reading a story to your child, try sharing the reading:

- What do you think will happen next?
- What does this remind you of?
- What is the frog doing in this picture?
- How do you think the boy is feeling? Why?

You don’t have to stop on every page; in fact, your child may lose interest if you do. But asking some open-ended questions along the way helps your child get ready to read.

Sing

**Five Little Speckled Frogs**

*(Match actions to words)*

Five little speckled frogs  
Sitting on a speckled log,  
Eating some most delicious bugs.  
Yum, yum!

One jumped into the pool,  
Where it was nice and cool.  
Now there are four little speckled frogs.  
Burr-ump!

Repeat, counting down until there are no little speckled frogs.


Write

This website has a variety of activities to help your preschooler learn to write. It is most effective to keep these activities fun and a natural part of the day, such as making a grocery list or practicing their name.

[www.first-school.ws/theme/handwriting.htm](http://www.first-school.ws/theme/handwriting.htm)

Play

Help your child re-tell stories by using props made from felt or flannel. Here’s a low-cost fun idea:

Use a pizza box or similar flat box with a lid (many pizza stores will give you an unused one if you ask). Cover inside and/or lid with felt or flannel. Make characters or other objects from the story out of felt, or print clip art from a computer and glue a piece of felt to the back. The felt makes it easy to move them around as your child tells the story. Use the box for other stories, and store felt pieces inside.