

# READY TO READ



## Simple Activities that Promote Early Literacy at Home

### SING

Songs are a wonderful way for children to learn about language. Singing also slows down language so children can hear the different sounds that make up words. This helps children when they begin to read printed language. Sing songs and play music for your child.

1. Sing the alphabet. This will help your child to learn about letters.
2. Sing nursery rhymes and other rhyming poems. This allows your child to hear the different sounds in words. Encourage your child to sing along with you.
3. Clap along to the rhythms in songs to help your child hear the syllables in words.



### TALK

Children learn language and other early literacy skills by listening to adults talk. As children listen to spoken language, they learn new words and what they mean while gaining important general knowledge about the world around them. This knowledge will help children understand the meaning of what they read.

1. Make sure your child has lots of opportunities to talk with you, not just listen while you talk.
2. Respond to what your child says and extend the conversation. "Yes, we did see a truck like that last week. It's called a bulldozer." Stretch your child's vocabulary by repeating and adding onto what they say. "You want a banana? That's a very healthy choice."
3. If English isn't your first language, speak to your child in the language you know best. This allows you to explain things more fluently, so your child will learn more.

## READ



Reading together is an important way you can help prepare your child to read. Starting from birth, shared reading increases vocabulary and general knowledge while helping children develop an interest in reading. Children who enjoy being read to are much more likely to want to learn to read themselves.

1. Read every day. Make time to enjoy at least one story with your child. Set aside a designated storytime.
2. Make shared reading interactive. Before you begin a book, ask your child to look at the cover and predict what it will be about. Allow your child to turn the book's pages. Ask questions as you read. When you finish the book, ask your child to retell the story.
3. Use books to help teach new words. Define unfamiliar words for your child as you read.

## WRITE



Reading and writing go hand in hand. Both represent spoken language and communicate information. Children can learn pre-reading skills by participating in writing activities like scribbling, drawing, and forming letters. Keep paper and crayons or markers on a table that children can access easily.

1. Writing begins with scribbles and other marks. Encourage this by providing many opportunities to draw and write.
2. Encourage children to "sign" their artwork; this practice will help them understand that print represents words. As they practice eye-hand coordination and develop their hand muscles, children can begin to write the letters in their names.
3. Talk to your children about what they draw and write captions or stories together. This helps connect spoken and printed language.

## PLAY



Children learn a lot about language through play. Children think symbolically when they play, which helps them to understand that spoken and written words can stand for real objects and experiences. Play also helps children to express themselves and put thoughts into words.

1. Give your child plenty of playtime. Allow children to have unstructured time to use their imaginations to create stories about what they're doing.
2. Encourage children to engage in dramatic play. When children use puppets, dolls, or stuffed animals to make up stories, they develop important narrative skills which help them to understand that stories have a beginning, middle, and end.
3. Pretend to read a book. Have your child tell you a story based on the pictures in a book. Ask your child to "read" a familiar book and tell you the story.