

ONLINE RESOURCES

www.rif.org/parents, www.rif.org/readingplanet
Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

www.naeyc.org
National Association for the Education of Young Children

www.pbskids.org
PBS Kids

www.pbs.org/parents
PBS Parents

www.cbcbooks.org/cbw
Children's Book Council



PRINT RESOURCES

*The Cooking Book:
Fostering Young Children's Learning and Delight.*
Laura J. Colker. NAEYC, 2004.

*The Complete Book of Rhymes,
Songs, Poems, Fingerplays, and Chants.*
Jackie Silberg, Pam Schiller. Gryphon House, 2002.

How to Get Your Child to Love Reading.
Esmé Raji Codell. Algonquin, 2003.

The Read-Aloud Handbook, 5th Edition.
Jim Trelease. Penguin, 2001.

*Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud
to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever.*
Mem Fox. Harvest Books, 2001.



For a complete list of RIF parent guides, visit
www.rif.org/parents/resources/parentguide.msp.

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL, INC. (RIF) works to build a literate nation by helping young people discover the joy of reading. For more information and to access reading resources, visit www.rif.org.



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RIF'S GUIDE TO Preschoolers and Reading



A Guide for Parents from
Reading Is Fundamental®



Preschoolers and Reading

You are your child's first teacher.

That's why it's important that you show them how much fun reading can be and prepare them for learning to read. Playing games, singing songs, having conversations, and reading aloud are all great ways to give children the literacy skills they need to enter school. These activities help children connect the words they hear with the words they see—the first step to becoming a strong reader.

The tips and strategies in this Reading Is Fundamental guide will help you turn everyday activities into enjoyable learning experiences.

BUILD ON WHAT THEY KNOW

Preschoolers already know a lot about language. They know people take turns when talking to each other. They understand letters have meaning and can identify some letters of the alphabet. They even memorize favorite stories and “pretend read” as they turn the pages. Be sure to give your preschooler opportunities to practice what they know and explore print in the world around them.

TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN

Talking to your children throughout the day is one of the most important things you can do to prepare them for reading. Your conversations will teach them new words and help them learn to talk and listen to others. To make sure your children get the most from your conversations:

- * Use words you would use with adults such as *cut*, and avoid baby talk words such as *boo-boo*.
- * Ask open-ended questions such as, “Why do you think that happened?”
- * Be a patient listener. Letting them complete their thoughts will help build their confidence and improve their ability to express themselves.



READ ALOUD

Research shows that reading aloud is the best way to give children the tools they'll need to become good readers, listeners, and students. Reading together is also a special time for you to bond with your children. Let them snuggle next to you as you share stories, laugh at silly characters, and root for heroes. Here's how you can make the most out of reading aloud.

- * Read slowly, with expression. Try using different voices for different characters.
- * Follow words with your finger as you read. Your children will see that words are read from left to right.
- * Point to pictures and say the names of objects and colors. Let children repeat the names.
- * Talk about the book as you read. Ask children to describe pictures, repeat phrases used in the story, and predict what will happen next.
- * Remember to have fun! The more fun children have reading aloud, the more they will love books and want to read them.



Quick Tip!

- * Make bath time reading time. Take advantage of this relaxing time by letting children read waterproof books, or by reading them a book as they bathe.



A Month of Reading Fun



Reading every day, even for just a few minutes, and even if it's not a book, improves a child's ability to read and learn. Here is an entire month of literacy activities to share with your children. Do them in any order you choose, just pick the ones that look interesting, or think of your own ideas for daily reading fun.

WEEK 1

- * Make a reading tree. Draw a tree trunk on a piece of paper and tape it to a wall. Every time you read a book together, write the title on a paper leaf and tape it to the tree.
- * Encourage your children to trade books with friends.
- * Write a thank-you note or birthday card together.
- * Read road signs together. Make a game out of it.
- * Work up an appetite by reading a story about food. Make and eat the food you read about.
- * Tell your children, "An animal has escaped from the zoo!" Ask them to make up a story about it. Tell the story to a friend or family member, write it down, or illustrate it.
- * Play a board game. Help your children read the words and identify game pieces, cards, and the spinner or dice.

WEEK 2

- * Have your children draw a picture postcard of an imaginary place. On the back, help them write a message to a friend.
- * Encourage your children to play with plastic or foam letters in the bathtub.
- * Take your children to the library. Attend a preschool story hour and check out books together.
- * Visit a museum, post office, or shop in your neighborhood. Have your children name and describe all the things they see.
- * Read a book together in a new place, such as the playground.
- * Record yourself reading a book on tape. Teach your children to play the tape and "read" the book along with the tape.
- * Encourage your children to make letters (or marks that resemble letters) in the dirt, sand, or snow.

WEEK 3

- * Help your children write letters or e-mails to a friend or family member.
- * Read a picture book without words. Have your children retell the story in their own words.
- * Go to www.rif.org/readingplanet and play a reading game with your children.
- * Sing the ABC song together.
- * Have your children make illustrations for a favorite book.
- * Tell a fairy tale with your children, and take turns making up the story.
- * Make a simple family photo album. Have your children explain or describe the pictures to other family members.

WEEK 4

- * Read aloud a nonfiction book about something your children like, such as dinosaurs or insects.
- * Play a simple card game, such as Go Fish or Concentration, together.
- * Play with sidewalk chalk outside. Draw, scribble, or play hopscotch.
- * Make letters out of clay or bread dough together.
- * Tell your children a story about something that happened to you when you were a child.
- * Let your children make up a sequel or prequel to a favorite story. Write it down as they dictate the story to you.
- * Set up a home library. A few books on a special shelf is a great start. It doesn't have to be expensive—used bookstores, yard sales, and flea markets sell books that children will treasure for years.

CHOOSING BOOKS FOR PRESCHOOLERS

When choosing good books for preschoolers look for:

- * Illustrations and photos that are clear, colorful, and engaging.
- * Simple, fun plots. The action should move quickly so each book can be finished in one sitting.
- * Lively rhymes and repetition that children can repeat and remember.
- * Stories about everyday events, fears, or challenges such as a new baby in the family.
- * Stories that review basic concepts, such as letters, numbers, shapes, and colors.
- * Characters their age or slightly older. Playful animals will also hold their attention.



Quick Tip!

- * Take books everywhere (the car, bus, doctor's office), and make the most of every minute.

ADVENTURES IN LIBRARIES

There's a whole world out there to explore. All you need is a little imagination and a library card. Take a trip to your local library and discover books filled with new places to see, people to meet, and things to try. Borrow as many adventure-filled books as you choose, for free! Your children's librarian will be happy to help you find the best books for your journey. While you're at the library, don't forget to ask about the reading clubs, story hours, puppet shows, and other fun, family activities offered all year long.