

# Get Ready to Read!



## Tips for PARENTS of Young Children

### From the beginning

The building blocks of reading and writing are assembled long before a child enters school. From the moment a baby is born, he or she is constantly learning. It's a fact: children learn more in their first five years than during any other period of their lives.

Because these years are so critical to your child's intellectual development, you, the parent or caregiver, play a vital role in influencing the growth of your child as a confident reader, writer, and lifelong learner.

#### **You are your child's first teacher.**

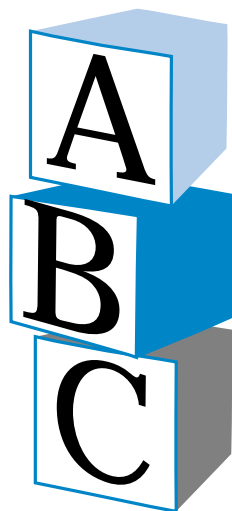
By encouraging, supporting, and nurturing a young child's development, you can make his or her first learning experiences pleasant and fruitful.

As the child's most important teacher, you can help your child make a smooth transition from home to school.



## Make reading a learning adventure

Being considered your child's first teacher of reading may sometimes seem overwhelming to many parents and caregivers. But remember, you have many advantages. Your young child naturally loves and trusts you, and (sometimes!) is an attentive audience that you can work with one-on-one. In many instances, you will be able to give your child individualized attention, even if you care for several children at the same time. Trust your instincts, be patient, and provide plenty of encouragement, and you can make learning to read adventurous and fun!



**Be a reading role model.** So, what is the key to helping your child become a reader? In one word—READING! Why? Because research shows that the most important thing parents and caregivers can do to help their children succeed in school is read aloud to them every day. Reading aloud to children also helps them

- expand their vocabulary
- appreciate the value of books and reading
- understand new ideas and concepts
- learn about the world around them

## Explore reading with your child

The warmth and security of your home can provide many wonderful reading opportunities for your preschool child. Children are by nature inquisitive and curious and are always looking for something to occupy their busy minds. You do not need to spend a lot of money on fancy books or reading programs to start your child on the path of reading. Here are some suggestions for exploring reading:

- Keep books, magazines, and newspapers in your home to give your child constant exposure to reading possibilities.
- Tape label names on objects in your home—such as bed, doll, table, or chair. This can help your child begin to recognize letters and words.
- Help your child see how people use reading and writing through daily events such as reading a recipe while preparing a meal, reading aloud cards and letters, and writing lists or checks.
- Work on your home computer. This can show your child a variety of information in many different forms.
- Outside the home, point out signs, labels, and logos to your child. This can encourage early attempts at reading. Even the youngest child will quickly begin to identify familiar signs and places.
- Visit libraries, bookstores, newsstands, and other places where books and other reading materials are found. Ask for help in choosing books your child will like.

## The time for books is ALL the time

Most importantly—read, read, read books to your child. Set aside some time every day to read to your child. Many parents choose to read before bedtime, but any time of day is a good time for reading. Here are some suggestions for making reading a vital part of your child's day:

- Keep a library in your child's room to teach him or her that books are an important part of your home environment. If possible, include colorful picture books, interactive books with exciting features, nursery rhymes and fairy tales, joke or riddle books, or homemade books.
- Select a special reading place like a rocking chair, a soft rug, or a comfortable couch to create a warm and inviting reading environment. Whenever possible, hold your child in your lap as you read. Let him or her hold the book and turn the pages.
- Familiarize yourself with the book before reading it. This will make you a better storyteller. You can make the reading experience special for your child by taking time to ask and answer questions, reading slowly and clearly, holding the book so your child can see the pictures and words, and making the story interesting with different character voices and sounds.

It does not matter where, how, or what you read to your child—the important thing is that you fit reading into your schedule every day. Even 15 minutes a day will go a long way to foster a lifelong love of reading.

## Get ready to read!

Reading is an activity that all parents and caregivers can help foster in children, building a foundation for future success in school and in life. Reading aloud to your young child, exploring books, and reading together are the most important gifts you can give. So get ready to read—and enjoy the adventure of learning!

Other brochures in this series include:

\*Explore the Playground of Books: Tips for Parents of Beginning Readers

\*Summer Reading Adventure! Tips for Parents of Young Readers

\*Making the Most of Television: Tips for Parents of Young Viewers

\*See the World on the Internet: Tips for Parents of Young Readers—and "Surfers"

\*Also available in Spanish.

This brochure may be purchased from the International Reading Association in quantities of 100, prepaid only. (Please contact the Association for pricing information.) Single copies are free upon request by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Requests from outside the U.S. should include an envelope, but postage is not required.

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