
READY for SCHOOL Parent News:
Reading Readiness Activities

There are many things you can do in your home to help prepare your child to read. Here are a few ideas:

- **Model a love of reading.** Read children’s books together frequently. Have your child see you reading a magazine, a novel, or the sports page.
- **Letter recognition** is part of reading readiness. Purchase a set of magnetic letters that your child can manipulate on your refrigerator while you are preparing or cleaning up meals. Occasionally stop to identify letters for her. When you have a few extra minutes together in the kitchen, make letters with toothpicks or cut pieces of straws (closely supervising so that your child does not put these in her mouth). Ask your child to identify the letters. When your child is able to recognize most letters, see if she can make letters for you to identify.
- **Sound recognition** is another important skill. Once your child knows letter names, point out a letter in the environment. “There’s a “B” on this cereal box. “B” sounds like “bbb”. What else starts with a “bbb” sound?”
- **Rhyming** helps children discriminate similar sounds. Play rhyming games while you are in the car or during other waiting times. Say, “Bed – Shed. Those two words rhyme. Can you think of a word that rhymes with “shoe?” Accept real words or made-up words as correct responses. Choose books to read to your child with lots of rhyming words. Some examples are *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown or many of Dr. Seuss’ books (for example, *The Cat in the Hat* or *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*. After you have read these books together a few times, pause where the rhyming word should go and let your child fill it in.
- **Reading comprehension** is an important part of pre-reading. As you are reading a book together, pause periodically and ask a question like, “What do you think will happen next?” At the end of the story, ask questions like, “What was the first thing that happened in this story?” or “Who was the story about?” Don’t do this every time you read a book – sometimes just read it straight through without asking questions.
- Developing a vocabulary of **sight words** is also an important pre-reading skill. As you point out familiar words, your child will begin to make the connection between the spoken and the written word. For example, point out familiar words in print like your child’s name, the sign for a favorite fast food restaurant or grocery store, or traffic signs like “Stop.” Developing a sight word vocabulary can also happen as you and your child read and reread favorite stories. Using books with repetitive text such as *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle, occasionally point to the words as you read them. You can also write down what your child says about his drawings and read the words back to him, pointing to each word as you say it.

Look for ways to build these opportunities into your daily routine and make them fun. You want to keep your child excited and motivated to learn to read.