

Reading 2

More about getting your child ready to read

The key to preparing for reading is helping your child attach meanings to words. For example, when they see the word “stop” on a stop sign and realize that you stop your car when you come up to the sign, they begin to understand that the word has meaning. When children are able to do that, reading has more meaning in their lives and they have an easier time learning to read.

But parents should understand that learning to read should be pleasurable, even fun. Pressing too much and forcing young children to do work that is too advanced may interfere with a child’s reading readiness. Children should not think of reading as an exercise, a drill, or a chore.

With patience and understanding, you can help your child build a foundation that includes some basic skills that are necessary to learning to reading and a love of words and books that will lead children to want to read and learn.

On Back

Steps you can take to help get your child ready to read.

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You & Your Child



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Let your child set the pace

Children should feel pleasure and accomplishment when learning to read.

Some young children are eager to start learning to read. Others are less so. Some want parents to read the words of books. Others are happy just looking at the pictures. Let your child set his or her own pace.

Never criticize

Do not criticize your child's ability to make progress in preparing to read. Criticism takes the fun out of reading.

Help your child become familiar with letters

It helps a great deal when children are able to identify and tell the difference between the symbols and shapes that make up the alphabet before they start to learn to read in school.

Activities that help children become familiar with letters and numbers include playing with picture dominos, putting together alphabet puzzles, and building with blocks that have letters and numbers of them.

Be patient

Don't worry if your child can't remember a letter he or she knew the day before. Be supportive without being critical. Your child will eventually learn with your help. Remember, it is more important that your child learns to read well than early.

Create a short book together

Another fun activity that helps prepare children for learning to read is having them create a book.

Ask your child to make up a story and to draw pictures that tell the story. When the pictures are finished, have your child re-tell the story. Write the words your child uses next to the pictures.

Play word games

Make the idea of reading fun. There are many games you can play that will help your child become ready to read. For example:

- Try to come up with different words that rhyme.
- Use magnetic letters to have your child try to spell simple words – dog, cat, etc. – on your refrigerator.
- Create a story together and have your child fill in some missing words.

Practice simple writing

Your child might have fun helping you write words down. Allow your child to help you write a grocery list. Show your child how to write the name of an item he or she wants you to buy at the store.

Walk around the house with paper and a crayon and help your child write labels for objects. For example, show your child how to write chair, table, books, rug.

Limit television

Try to encourage your child to find other ways to amuse himself or herself. When your child is not in front of the TV, he or she might find that it is fun to draw pictures, practice letters, or look at books.

When you allow your child to watch TV, try to select programs that will promote learning, such as Sesame Street or Mister Rogers' Neighborhood.

What to do every day

- Read aloud to a young child or have an older child read aloud to you.
- Set aside a special time to read. But don't make it too long. About 20 minutes is long enough.
- Set a good example. Read yourself.

