

BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Abbeville County Schools

Six reasons you should read aloud to your preschooler every day

Reading aloud to young children is one of the most effective things families can do to prepare them for school success. When you read together, you:

1. **Demonstrate** valuable reading readiness skills.
2. **Show** your child that reading is an important activity that is also fun.
3. **Spend** quality time together, which builds your child's confidence and feelings of self-worth.
4. **Encourage** him to think and use his imagination.
5. **Boost** his language skills—which helps him do better in all areas of school.
6. **Strengthen** his vocabulary. Children almost always hear words in books that they don't hear in everyday language.



"There are perhaps no days of our childhood we lived so fully as those we spent with a favorite book."

—Marcel Proust

Connect with your child's teacher

After the pandemic challenges of last year, many families are looking forward to a brand-new year of preschool. Get off to a great start by building strong relationships with your child's teachers. Here's how:

- **Start the conversation.** Introduce yourself to teachers and assistants early on in the school year.
- **Get involved.** Ask the teacher if there is anything you can do from home to help. Your child will love seeing you participate!
- **Stay informed.** Read everything the school sends home. Ask questions whenever you have them. Remember, you and the teacher are partners in your child's education.

Take advantage of your library

Libraries have a lot to offer. Make sure your family is making the most of your local library—in person and online. Be sure to:

- **Get your child** her own library card.
- **Let her choose** books to check out herself.
- **Ask the librarian** to recommend books on topics your child likes.
- **Find out about** library programs, such as story times and other children's activities. Ask about virtual events, too.



Help your child publish a book

Is your child a natural storyteller? Encourage him to keep talking—then write those stories down!

Fold a few sheets of paper in half, staple or tape the edge and get busy.

Write your child's words on one side of each page and have him draw an illustration on the other.



Music builds language skills

Listening to music with your child is one effective way to help her strengthen emerging language skills. Plus, it's fun!

When you are listening to lyrics and singing along, you are exposing your child to rhymes and language patterns. Play favorite songs and sing together as you do chores. Clap with the rhythm as you sing the words.



Squeeze, pinch and peel to sharpen your child's fine motor skills

Fine motor skills are critical to your child's progress in school. When the tiny muscles in his hands are strong, he will be able to turn pages in books easily. He will also have better control over pencils, pens and crayons as he writes and draws.

To help your child flex his fine motor skills, encourage him to:

- **Scrunch up sheets of newspaper** in one hand. Then switch hands.
- **Use an eye dropper** to "pick up" water.
- **Peel stickers** from a sheet and stick them onto paper.
- **String beads or buttons** onto a piece of yarn.
- **Pick up small pieces of cereal** with blunt-nose tweezers.
- **Cut play dough** with a plastic pizza wheel or plastic knife. (Supervise carefully.)



Talk about the basics of print

Preschoolers need to learn that there are some common aspects to books and reading. Show your child that:

- **Words** are made up of letters. Point to letters as you say their names.
- **Printed words** are read left to right. Follow with your finger as you read.
- **Words and pictures** both convey meaning. What information can your child get from words? From pictures?



Simple activities expand word smarts

Your child's brain is a language-learning sponge. It is absorbing everything you say! To strengthen her vocabulary and word knowledge:

- **Speak together often.** Conversation is one of the best ways to expose your child to new words.
- **Avoid using baby talk.** If your child hears you speaking correctly, she's more likely to do the same.
- **Play 20 Questions.** This game will encourage your child to use words and logic to solve a puzzle.
- **Share interesting experiences.** A walk around the block or trip to the store is a chance to discover new things—and to use new words.



Books to delight your early reader

- ***Peanut Butter and Jellyfishes*** by Brian P. Cleary. This beautiful alphabet book includes silly descriptions of animals and plants. From antelopes forming an arc to a zebra named Zachary at the zoo, see what all the letters of the alphabet can do.
- ***The Wonderful Book*** by Leonid Gore. Some animals find a book in the forest and use it to make different things, such as a table, a bed and a hat.
- ***Exclamation Mark*** by Amy Krouse Rosenthal. Exclamation Mark doesn't fit in with periods. He tries to be just like them, until he meets another punctuation mark who helps him realize how important and wonderful he can be!



Q: My child goes nonstop all day. He'll hardly ever sit still for a story. What should I do?

A: Try to make books a bedtime ritual. Keep a stack of kid-friendly titles on hand, and read a few of them together every night. Not only will it help your child enjoy books and become a reader, it'll also serve as a calm, quiet transition from playtime to resting time.

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