

Explore the Playground of Books

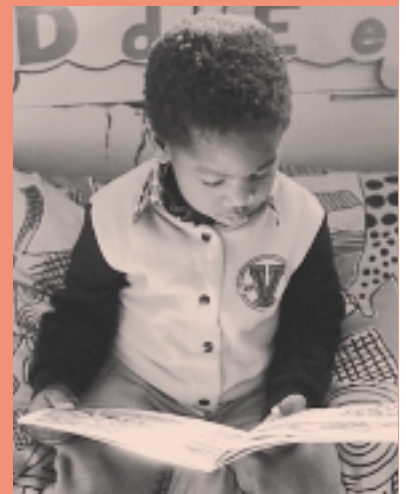


Tips for PARENTS of Beginning Readers

Get into the swing!

To a young child just learning to read, the world of books and stories is like a big playground waiting to be explored. To learn new things, children need the help of people they trust, and parents and caregivers play a very important role. Think about children playing on the swings. When they are very young, they need you to stand behind them and give them a push. As they grow older, they learn to swing all by themselves, with you watching from the sidelines, of course!

Reading aloud and encouraging your child's early attempts at reading help give your child the same kind of support, and will help him or her grow as a reader. Children who are surrounded by books learn to love books. You and your child can discover a whole playground of books to enjoy together. As your child grows you can continue to read aloud, while your child takes the first steps toward reading independently.

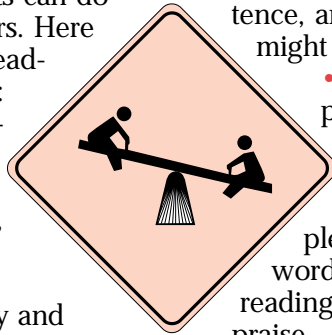


Sliding into reading

Children between the ages of four and six usually start to recognize some words on a page. Your child has grown from the toddler who could recognize the logo on a favorite cereal box to a child who can hold a book and begin to understand the mystery of the written word.

There are many things that parents can do to help their children grow as readers. Here are some tips to build your child's reading confidence as you read together:

- Follow the words with your finger from left to right as you read them.
- Read books your child chooses, even if you have read them many times before!
- Point out key words in the story and explain words that children may not know.
- Ask a lot of questions like, "What's happening now?" "What do you think will happen next?" "Where did he go?" "What is she doing?"
- Answer your child's questions, even if they interrupt the story.
- Encourage your child to look at the pictures for clues to the story.
- Put aside a book if your child isn't interested, and pick another one.
- Allow time after reading to talk about the book, and invite your child to re-read parts of the story with you.



- Reading is hard! Encourage your child to try, even if it's not right every time.
- Practice letter sounds together. Practice writing and reading letters and words.
- When you get to a word your child doesn't know, look together for clues in the pictures that might provide the answer.
- If your child has trouble reading a word, skip over it, read the rest of the sentence, and try to determine what word might make sense.
- Choose books that rhyme, that repeat familiar phrases, or that have a predictable story.
- Applaud your child's efforts! Don't dwell on mistakes, and give plenty of encouragement. Every new word your child learns is a step toward reading and deserves your attention and praise.

A jungle gym for the imagination

Books can be a place where children learn new things about the world around them, and you can help by choosing good quality books that also are fun to read. Children like all kinds of books. They like books about things they do and places they go every day, and they also like books about new places and things.

For young children just learning to read, you can help choose simple books children can read on their own and some harder books you can read together. Here are some suggestions for selecting good books for your preschooler:

- Ask friends, relatives, neighbors, and teachers to share titles of favorite books.
- Look for lists of award-winning or recommended books for children.
- Check the book review sections of newspapers and magazines for new children's books.
- Choose books on subjects you know your child is interested in.

The merry-go-round of books

Most children have one or two favorite stories that they want to hear again and again. They will hear them so many times that they will know them by heart and may want to "read" them to you. This is an important step in a child's reading. As a parent, you can support your child's learning by being patient, praising your child's efforts, and suggesting that you read new books together, too. Here are some more tips for encouraging a child's first attempts at reading:

- Choose books that have a strong story and an ending that is easy for a child to guess.
- Introduce books with poems, songs, and rhythm.
- Experiment with different kinds of books and offer variety (but keep old favorites around as well).

The best playground in town

Where is the best place to find books for children of all ages, absolutely free? Your public library! Libraries are places for children and parents to explore together. The library has many books, resources, and activities just for children.

Yet, parents and caregivers may take one look at the thousands of children's books and say, "Where do I begin?" Your librarian can help you make good book choices for your young child, so don't be afraid to ask. It's easy to make your library a favorite place for you and your child to explore. Here are some ideas:

- Make library visits a regular activity that your child can look forward to.
- Get a library card for yourself and your child (even a three- or four-year-old). Children love the feeling of having their own card.
- Attend library story times (including evening story hours for working parents).
- Guide your child in choosing books, but remember that children should be allowed to choose books, too.
- Use the card catalog or computer with your child to look up book titles, authors, and favorite topics.
- Set a good example by taking good care of books and returning them on time.

Books in your own backyard

Even in today's fast-paced world of video games, television, and computers, there is an important place for books in a young child's life. As a parent or caregiver, you can begin to build a library of books for your whole family to enjoy. All children enjoy having books that are their very own.

Trips to bookstores (including second-hand bookstores, garage sales, and thrift shops) can be a positive reinforcement for your young reader. In addition to your library visits, occasional bookstore trips will excite children to pick out books to add to their collection. Giving a book as a birthday gift, a reward, or for other special occasions shows children that you care personally about them, their interests, and their future.

Read, write, and explore!

The world of books and reading is waiting for you and your child to explore together. With your help, your child can take the first steps toward reading independently. By reading aloud together and encouraging early attempts to read and write, parents can help build young children's confidence. So read, write, and explore the playground of books together—the fun is just beginning!

Other brochures in this series include:

*Get Ready to Read! Tips for Parents of Young Children

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

Summer Reading Adventure! Tips for Parents of Young Readers

*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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