

Learning to read *begins* before children start school. Help your children develop early literacy skills now; this makes it easier for children to learn to read once they begin school.

Five of the best ways to help your child get ready to read are:



Learn how to help your child get ready to read with simple activities such as the ones suggested here.

Find more ideas at your library.

Every Child Ready to Read[®] is a project of the Association for Library Service to Children and the Public Library Association, divisions of the American Library Association.

www.everychildreadytoread.org

Fun Writing Letters and Words

Scribble, Scribble

Help your child experiment with writing using pencils, crayons, markers, and chalk on different kinds of paper and cardboard. Encourage him or her to make scribbles like the strokes used later to form letters: straight lines, curves, and circles. Suggest drawing a story. This can be as simple as three pictures: one for the beginning, the middle, and the end of the story. Have your child dictate the story to you and create captions for the pictures.

Name Games

Find as many ways as you can think of to play with the sounds and letters of your child's name. Help your child find the letters of his or her name in print around your house or when you go to the store. Help your child write each letter and repeat the sound it makes.

Write It Down

Help your child understand that written words stand for spoken words and that writing has a purpose. Use a chalkboard or magnetic letters on the refrigerator to write family messages. Create a menu of meals for the week and ask your child to write or draw what he or she would like to eat. Ask your child to add to a grocery or to-do list. As you find a grocery item or finish a chore, ask your child to check it off the list.

Jack Be Nimble

Many activities that young children enjoy are terrific for developing the fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination, which they need for writing. Encourage your child to cut paper with child-friendly scissors, place beads on a string (or pasta shapes on a shoelace), play with blocks, and do simple jigsaw puzzles. Punch a basic design—a letter, a boat, a flower—in a piece of cardboard. Your child can lace a shoelace or string through the holes in the design. Even pinching spring-loaded clothespins can help build the muscles your child will use for writing.