



Learning About Books and Print

Your child was born to learn! From birth, your child is learning important language and literacy skills. He sees printed words and symbols all around him: on signs; in books, magazines, and newspapers; and on many items in your home. You can help your child learn that the print tells us something. These skills will help your child learn to read and write.

You are your child's first and best teacher. With your help, he can learn about print. Every day moments are learning moments! To help her become a good reader and writer, try these easy activities:

YOUR INFANT:

- ◆ Read short, simple books with your infant every day. Choose books that your child can touch and hold. Help her turn the pages. Encourage your child to touch and point to pictures in books. Point out and name the pictures together.
- ◆ Try singing the words in the books that you read.

YOUR TODDLER:

- ◆ Choose books that are not too long, and that have some words that repeat (*The Little Engine that Could* repeats the words "I think I can, I think I can..."). Point to words as you read.
- ◆ Look at the cover of the book and talk about it. Soon your child will recognize favorite books by their covers.
- ◆ Ask your child to help you read. Try letting your child "finish" the text. (For example, read the book *The Three Little Pigs* to your child. You say, "I'll huff and I'll puff," ask your child to complete the phrase, "and I'll blow your house down." At first you may need to help your child do this.)
- ◆ Point out printed words. For example, at breakfast, point to the letters on the "Cheerios" box. When driving or out for a walk, point out stop signs and say, "We need to stop when we see a stop sign."
- ◆ Make a short storybook with your child. Have your child draw pictures on pages. Then make up a story to go with your book. Write words on pages to go with the pictures. Or just let it be a picture book.

YOUR PRESCHOOLER:

- ◆ Read books to your preschooler every day. Be willing to read his favorites over and over again. Talk about the pictures and how they connect with the story. Point to the words when you read, so your child knows the story is coming from the print.
- ◆ Ask your child to help you read. Let your child "read" a favorite book to you.
- ◆ Borrow books on tape or CD from your public library. Help your child to turn the page at the sound of the signal.
- ◆ Help your child to recognize a word that is large on a page that may go with a certain noise (ex., "QUACK!").
- ◆ Take a walk or drive and play a game: Try to find signs with words that you know (ex., STOP, YIELD, WALK, EXIT, McDonalds, etc.).
- ◆ Write your child's name in different places at home so that she can begin to recognize it.