

What Should I Do To Help My Child Be Ready to Read?

Reading is the product of decoding and comprehending printed language (Gough et al., 1981). It's complex, so there are a lot of activities you can do with your child to help them become a reader.

- **Read to your child every day.**
 - When you read, show your child how you “track” the words on the page by using your finger to point to each word left to right that you read.
 - Read a variety of types of books including nonfiction, fiction, comics, and poetry. Let your child pick the books, since choice makes everything more interesting to children.
 - Before you read, look at the cover, title, and pictures to help you make a prediction of what the book might be about.
 - Read signs aloud when you are out and about
- **Have fun with stories**
 - During car journeys, when walking to school or instead of a bedtime story, have a go at making up stories or changing the characters in familiar stories – ‘The Tiger that came to Tea’ could become ‘The Elephant that came to Tea’! What chaos did the elephant cause?!
- **Talk about what you read including the parts of the story, new words, and connections to the book:**
 - “What part or character did you like the best or the least?”
 - “What do you think will happen next?”
 - “Does the part you just read remind you of anything in your own life or anything that you’ve read before?”
 - “What do you already know about...?”
 - “Can you get a movie in your head while you listen to this story?”
- **Have your child pretend-read the story to you using the pictures for help.**
- **Act out the story. Or, if it’s a nonfiction book, use the information and vocabulary in a pretend play scenario.**
 - “Let’s play fireman!”
- **Practice identifying and writing both uppercase and lowercase letters.**
 - Play with letter blocks: “Let’s build a fence with letters that have a stick in them.”
 - Cut out letters in magazines: “Cut out all the letter ‘F’s you find.”
 - Make letters out of play-dough, pipe cleaners, pretzels, LEGO, or shaving cream.
 - Match uppercase to their lowercase magnetic letter counterparts.
 - Write letters on paper with pencil, crayon, pen, or glue.
- **Connect letters with letter sounds.**
 - Using favourite toys, talk about what they are (“doll”) and what letter and sound the word starts with (“Doll starts with d which makes the sound /d/.”). Practice this throughout the day with food, furniture, clothes ... anything. (Add ending sounds once beginning sounds seem solid.)
 - Play “I Spy” with letter sounds. “I spy something blue that starts with an /m/ sound.”

- When reading picture books, practice noticing beginning and ending letters and sounds. Try for one or two per book. Don't stop so much that it interferes with the story.
- **Become rhyming experts.**
 - Sing rhyming songs such as "Down by the Bay"; "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe"; and "Miss Mary Mack".
 - Read rhyming books such as nursery rhymes, [Silly Sally](#); [Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site](#); [Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?](#); and [Dr Seuss](#).
 - Play with rhymes. Say a word and take turns making up nonsense words that rhyme with it. ("What rhymes with cloud? Bloud and zloud.") Be prepared to laugh hysterically.