

# Family Focus

## Building a Foundation for School Success

### Getting Ready for School Reading with Your Child Every Day

*Reading books aloud with children in any language can introduce them to new information, expand their imaginations, and build their vocabulary. When your child sits with you and listens to a book you are sharing, you also are strengthening your parent-child relationship.*

#### Why is this important for school readiness?

Reading develops children's language skills. If your family is multilingual, reading to your children in your home language will help them become better readers in both your home language and English. Books use words that you may not use every day with your child. Reading helps expand your child's vocabulary.

Reading exercises your child's brain. Research shows that specific areas of the brain are affected when children are read to on a regular basis from an early age. These areas include memory, problem-solving, emotion, thinking and behavior regulation.

When children are read to, they develop knowledge about the world as well as learn new words. The more they know about, the more questions they will ask, and the more successful they will be in school, not just in literacy but in all areas.

Reading develops a child's imagination and creativity. As children hear a story, they imagine the characters, the setting, and what will happen next.

The act of reading with a child can build a stronger bond between the child and parent because they are spending time together, sitting together, reading and talking.

#### What can families do to help?

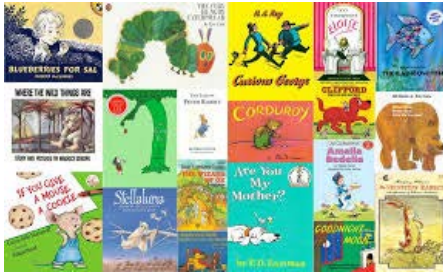
- ❖ Reading TO a child is not the same as reading WITH a child. When you read with your child, you have conversations about the book, predict what's happening next, and enjoy the experience together.
- ❖ Visit your public library and get a library card. Many libraries have a selection of books that can be accessed on-line and read from a digital device. Libraries also have many family activities that are free. Be certain to check out the calendar of events at your local library.
- ❖ Set up a cozy area in your home with a basket of books, a comfortable seat, and some favorite stuffed animals for your child to "read" to.
- ❖ Let your child take the lead in choosing books that are interesting to him or her. If you are not familiar with a book your child selects, first look at the pictures in the book before you read it aloud to make sure it is not violent.
- ❖ Include non-fiction books. Books that include real pictures can expose a child to new things he or she may never have seen before.



## Activities to do with your preschooler:

### ❖ *Types of Books Preschoolers Tend to Like*

Your child will enjoy choosing books with topics and characters that he or she finds interesting. But what are the types of books young children like? Here's a list to provide you with some ideas:



#### 3-4 Years of Age

- Small books that fit into small hands and has thick pages.
- Books with simple rhymes.
- Books with familiar routines such as bathing and bedtime.
- Lift the flap books.
- Books that they can learn “by heart” because they have few words.

#### 4 – 5 Years of Age

- Books that tell stories.
- Books that make them laugh.
- Books they can “memorize”.
- Books about familiar real-world objects and events: trucks, going to school, animals, insects.
- Counting books, alphabet books, non-fiction books.



### ❖ *Read with Your Child: Shared Reading Practices*



In shared reading, you sit with your child and you read a book that your child is interested in.

- While reading, you pause every now and then to ask your child open-ended questions (ex., Why do you think Max escapes to the land of the Wild Things?).
- Ask questions that start with “What if” or “Suppose”. Expand on your child’s answers.
- Encourage your child to make predictions, comment, and ask you questions about the story as you read.
- Choose times when you’re not in a rush as your shared reading time. You want to be able to give your child as much time as he or she wants to dig into the story and characters.



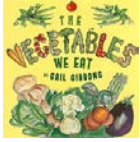
### ❖ *When Once is Not Enough: Repeated Reading Practices*

Your child will love to hear his or her favorite books read aloud over and over again. This is a good thing! Repeated readings of the same book helps your child master the story line, the language used in the book, and encourages a love of reading. Here are some ways to make repeated readings interesting:

- Welcome your child’s comments and questions about the story. Have a conversation about it.
- Let your child “read” the story to you. After hearing a story read many times, your child will memorize sections of it and enjoy saying the words and turning the pages of the book as if he or she were reading.
- Let the child pick the book for you to read. Show that you are excited about the story even if you’ve read this story dozens of times.



❖ Identify, Connect Word with Print, Learn: *Sharing Word Books*



Reading and sharing “word books” that clearly label the pictures help your child learn new words, recognize familiar words, and connect words in print to the picture. This type of book helps your child feel confident that he or she can “read” the picture. Let your child pick out word books with topics that interest him or her. When you read a word book, point to the objects on the page and let your child name them. Ask questions such as, “What is this?” or “Where have you seen this?”



**Resources for families:** [Get Ready to Read](#) website & [Raise a Reader: A Parent Guide to Reading for Ages 3-5](#) website

**Resources used for this tip sheet:** Bonfiglio, C. (2017). [10 Benefits That Highlight the Importance of Reading with Young Children](#), Pruettt, K. (n.d.). [Reading to Preschoolers Falls Short on the Road to Literacy](#), & Center for Early Literacy Learning: [Practice Guides to Use with Parents: Reading and Storytelling](#)

