

Five Best Ways To Help Your Child Get Ready To Read

1. Read!

Nothing is more pleasurable for a child than reading time with an adult. Sitting in a parent's lap or snuggling while reading bedtime stories connects reading with happy, loving moments and promotes a love of learning and reading. Children enjoy looking at pictures and hearing the words and stories. They want to be read the same stories over and over again. Some will "memorise" their favourites and pretend to read before they learn the words. Taking trips to the library, sharing story hours, picking out books and treating books with loving care, all promote a lifetime love of reading. Model the value and importance of reading to your child by having your own "reading time" with books, newspapers and magazines.

2. Talk!

Researchers have concluded that one of the most important predictors of reading success in kindergartners is how many spoken words a child hears up to the age of five. Words from TVs, computers or tapes don't count because the brain does not respond in the same way as it does to a live human voice. Great talk times include reading time, playtime, travel time, and meal times. As a child starts to talk, ask "I wonder" questions, ("I wonder what Mr. Bear wants to eat? I wonder where that birdie is going?") to encourage happy, positive conversations, stimulate thinking and ideas and provide lots of opportunities to introduce new words.

3. Child-Powered Play!

The best kind of play is child-initiated and child-powered. This is how children explore their world and learn about themselves. Child-powered play provides lots of opportunities to experience success, and build self-confidence and a sense of personal power that are key to learning new skills. Provide your child with simple toys that allow the child to explore, create and experience repeated success. Avoid "bells, whistles, and battery" toys that "do it all" for the child.

4. Pretend Play!

A rich imagination develops an ongoing curiosity, which creates a desire to read to gain knowledge. Pretend play fuels the imagination and helps children develop social skills as well as explore and understand their emotions and their environment. Through playing "house," tea parties, and make-believe characters children can model appropriate social behaviour, roles, and values and can develop verbal skills and learn new words. Mothers are the primary pretend play partners for toddlers and preschoolers; by age four, children enjoy imaginative play activities with their peers.

5. Patterning and Puzzle Play!

Our brains interpret the world as patterns, and patterning play helps a child get ready to read and experience learning success! Preschoolers love to learn colours, shapes, numbers and letters—all patterns. Quick patterning play activities are excellent opportunities for your child to experience success. They can provide great talk times between a parent and a child.

Examples of patterning activities are **matching** ("Can you find the two blocks that are the same size?"), **sequencing** ("Which goes first, second, third?") **classifying** ("Put all the foods in this pile and the animals in this one") and **identifying** ("Can you find the banana?") Puzzle play provides repeated success and builds confidence and skill mastery. There is no such thing as a puzzle that's too easy! Children love to do the same puzzles again and again.

Remember, repeated success itself is a pattern!

SOURCE:

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