



TIPS Preschoolers

for parents of

Read early and read often. The early years are critical to developing a lifelong love of reading. You can't start reading to a child too soon! The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

- u Read together every day.**
Read to your child every day. Make this a warm and loving time when the two of you can cuddle close.
- u Give everything a name.**
Build comprehension skills by playing games that involve naming objects. Say things like, "Where's your nose?" Or touch your child's nose and say, "What's this?"
- u Say how much you enjoy reading.**
Tell your child how much you enjoy reading with him or her. Talk about "story time" as the favorite part of your day.
- u Read with fun in your voice.**
Read to your child with humor and expression. Use different voices. Ham it up!
- u Know when to stop.**
Put the book away for awhile if your child loses interest or is having trouble paying attention.
- u Be interactive.**
Discuss what's happening in the book, point out things on the page, and ask questions.
- u Read it again and again.**
Go ahead and read your child's favorite book for the 100th time!
- u Talk about writing, too.**
Mention to your child how we read from left to right and how words are separated by spaces.
- u Point out print everywhere.**
Talk about the written words you see in the world around you. Ask your child to find a new word on each outing.
- u Get your child evaluated.**
Please be sure to see your child's pediatrician or teacher as soon as possible if you have concerns about your child's language development, hearing, or sight.

"Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers" is a five-part television series on PBS. See www.pbs.org/launchingreaders for more information on how you can launch a child into a bright future with reading strategies that work.



TIPS for parents of Kindergartners

Play with letters, words, and sounds! Having fun with language helps your child learn to crack the code of reading. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

u Say silly tongue twisters.

Sing songs, read rhyming books, and say silly tongue twisters. These help kids become sensitive to the sounds in words.

u Read it and experience it.

Connect what your child reads with what happens in life. If reading a book about animals, relate it to your last trip to the zoo.

u Use your child's name.

Point out the link between letters and sounds. Say, "John, the word *jump* begins with the same sound as your name. *John, jump*. And they both begin with the same letter, J."

u Play with puppets.

Play language games with puppets. Have the puppet say, "My name is Mark. I like words that rhyme with my name. Does *park* rhyme with *Mark*? Does *ball* rhyme with *Mark*?"

u Trace and say letters.

Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Do this on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar.

u Let your child choose.

Even easy books are ok. Allowing your child to choose his or her own books builds confidence and independence.

u Play sound games.

Practice blending sounds into words. Ask "Can you guess what this word is? *m - o - p*." Hold each sound longer than normal.

u Watch my lips.

This may feel odd at first, but ask your child to watch your lips and mouth while you speak. Have your child think about how his or her own lips and tongue move. Say, "Can you feel how your mouth moves the same way at the beginning of the words *mouse*, *mom*, and *man*?"

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TIPS First Graders

for parents of

Give your child lots of opportunities to read aloud. Inspire your young reader to practice every day! The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

- u Don't leave home without it.**
Bring along a book or magazine any time your child has to wait, such as at a doctor's office. Always try to fit in reading!
- u Once is not enough.**
Encourage your child to re-read favorite books and poems. Re-reading helps kids read more quickly and accurately.
- u Dig deeper into the story.**
Ask your child questions about the story you've just read. Say something like, "Why do you think Clifford did that?"
- u Take control of the television.**
It's difficult for reading to compete with TV and video games. Encourage reading as a free-time activity.
- u Be patient.**
When your child is trying to sound out an unfamiliar word, give him or her time to do so.
- u Pick books that are at the right level.**
Help your child pick books that are not too difficult. The aim is to give your child lots of successful reading experiences.
- u Play word games.**
Have your child sound out the word as you change it from *mat* to *fat* to *sat*; from *sat* to *sag* to *sap*; and from *sap* to *sip*.
- u I read to you, you read to me.**
Take turns reading aloud at bedtime. Kids enjoy this special time with their parents.
- u Gently correct your young reader.**
When your child makes a mistake, gently point out the letters he or she overlooked or read incorrectly. Many beginning readers will guess wildly at a word based on its first letter.

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TIPS for parents of Second Graders

Find ways to read, write, and tell stories together with your child. Always applaud your young reader and beginning story writer! The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

- u Tell family tales.**
Children love to hear stories about their family. Talk about a funny thing that happened when you were young.
- u Create a writing toolbox.**
Fill a box with drawing and writing materials. Find opportunities for your child to write, such as the shopping list, thank-you notes, or birthday cards.
- u Be your child's #1 fan.**
Ask your child to read aloud what he or she has written for school. Be an enthusiastic listener.
- u One more time with feeling.**
When your child has sounded out an unfamiliar word, have him or her re-read that sentence. Often kids are so busy figuring out a word they lose the meaning of what they've just read.
- u Invite an author to class.**
Ask an author to talk to your child's class about the writing process. Young children often think they aren't smart enough if they can't sit down and write a perfect story on the first try.
- u Create a book together.**
Fold pieces of paper in half and staple them to make a book. Ask your child to write sentences on each page and add his or her own illustrations.
- u Do storytelling on the go.**
Take turns adding to a story the two of you make up while riding in a car or bus. Try making the story funny or spooky.
- u Point out the relationship between words.**
Explain how related words have similar spellings and meanings. Show how a word like *knowledge*, for example, relates to a word like *know*.
- u Use a writing checklist.**
Have your child create a writing checklist with reminders such as, "Do all of my sentences start with a capital? Yes/No."
- u Quick, quick.**
Use new words your child has learned in lively flash card or computer drills. Sometimes these help kids automatically recognize and read words, especially those that are used frequently.

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TIPS Third Graders

for parents of

Read about it, talk about it, and think about it! Find ways for your child to build understanding, the ultimate goal of learning how to read. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

- u Make books special.**
Turn reading into something special. Take your kids to the library, help them get their own library card, read with them, and buy them books as gifts. Have a favorite place for books in your home or, even better, put books everywhere.
- u Get them to read another one.**
Find ways to encourage your child to pick up another book. Introduce him or her to a series like *The Boxcar Children* or *Harry Potter* or to a second book by a favorite author, or ask the librarian for additional suggestions.
- u Crack open the dictionary.**
Let your child see you use a dictionary. Say, "Hmm, I'm not sure what that word means... I think I'll look it up."
- u Talk about what you see and do.**
Talk about everyday activities to build your child's background knowledge, which is crucial to listening and reading comprehension. Keep up a running patter, for example, while cooking together, visiting somewhere new, or after watching a TV show.
- u First drafts are rough.**
Encourage your child when writing. Remind him or her that writing involves several steps. No one does it perfectly the first time.
- u Different strokes for different folks.**
Read different types of books to expose your child to different types of writing. Some kids, especially boys, prefer nonfiction books.
- u Teach your child some "mind tricks."**
Show your child how to summarize a story in a few sentences or how to make predictions about what might happen next. Both strategies help a child comprehend and remember.
- u "Are we there yet?"**
Use the time spent in the car or bus for wordplay. Talk about how *jam* means something you put on toast as well as cars stuck in traffic. How many other homonyms can your child think of? When kids are highly familiar with the meaning of a word, they have less difficulty reading it.

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