

How to Excite Soon-To-Be Readers

Help for Parents

It doesn't take special training to help your children develop the skills that lead to reading. The following are some basic guidelines from the nation's oldest and largest children's literacy organization, Reading Is Fundamental® (RIF)®, to help ensure your child will be excited about learning to read.

Talk to Your Children

Talking to your children is one of the most important things you can do to prepare them for reading. Your conversations will teach them new words and help them learn to talk and listen to others. Developing these language skills is the first step to learning how to read.

Help make sure your children get the most from your conversations:

- **Expand vocabulary.** Don't oversimplify your language or use "baby talk." Use the words you use with adults—such as cut, scratch or wound instead of boo-boo.
- **Build language skills.** Repeat what they say, and expand their phrases and simple ideas into longer, more complex sentences.
- **Encourage imagination.** Ask children open-ended questions that require thoughtful answers, not just one-word responses.
- **Be a patient listener.** Let your preschoolers ramble while they complete their thoughts—you'll build their confidence and help them learn to express themselves.

Read Aloud

Reading aloud helps your children develop the language skills—speaking, listening and reading—they will use in school and throughout their lives. Children who grow up listening to stories and poems learn to read more easily than children who don't. Reading aloud also introduces children to the joy of reading. The more they like to read the more they will read. Start when children are infants and continue long after they can read themselves. To make sure you read regularly, try setting a special time for it each day.

Encourage Play

Surround your children with toys, blocks, books, puppets—anything they can play with, touch, hold and talk about. Given the opportunity to play and a variety of props, children experiment, discover and learn—all by themselves. You can join them in these games or participate simply by asking questions, encouraging them to tell stories that describe their play, and admiring what they do and learn.



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Provide New Experiences

New places, faces and objects add to your children's vocabulary and can help them understand the stories you read together. You don't have to go far from home to inspire interest and curiosity. Young children can see something exciting in the most familiar things. Visit the airport, a duck pond, a construction site or a ride a bus. Pointing out details will sharpen your children's observation skills. And reading books about the things you've seen will help your children connect the stories with their own experiences.



For more information about Reading Is Fundamental, visit RIF at www.rif.org. Reading Is Fundamental, Inc., 1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20009

This information is made available by NEA's Read Across America campaign and Reading Is Fundamental so that educators, parents, caregivers, and volunteers have the resources and activities they need to motivate young readers to become lifelong learners.

