



Reading Tips

- Using different voices for different characters really does make a difference. You will see kids become more engaged in the story almost immediately.
- Pay attention to how your child reacts to the book you are reading. Stop if your child isn't enjoying the story and try another book or another time.
- Every time you read the same book, your child gets something new out of it. Repetition is necessary and good.
- Want your children to read? Let them see YOU reading!
- Keep books everywhere, because you never know when you will be stuck in line or in traffic; books are a great way to keep your children entertained.
- Parents, show your excitement about picture books! Use different voices and read with expression and enjoyment, making this a special time with your child.
- The very best book to read with your child is the one that she or he chooses.
- Bring home a non-fiction book on a topic of interest to your child. These books have colorful pictures, build vocabulary skills, and are an excellent inclusion in reading time.
- Share a book together, and remember that you don't have to read every word.
- Never skip "hard" words when reading a book out loud. Instead, buy a dictionary and play "let's explore the word" to find the meaning of the word together. This is a great vocabulary builder.
- Reading is the single best thing you can do to help your child be a lifelong learner!
- Reading books with basic shapes and patterns helps children develop early mathematical reasoning skills that will be helpful when children attend school.
- Start reading a book upside down or backwards. See if your child notices. This helps them learn how a book works.
- Try reading books with various punctuation marks, like "Moo" and then really emphasize how to use them when you read the book.





Writing Tips

- Fingerplays like "The Itsy Bitsy Spider" help babies to build the dexterity necessary to learn to write.
- Try writing in various media: the air, with water, in sand. All of these movements help build the gross and fine motor skills needed for writing.
- Scribbles may not look like much, but using writing and drawing tools to form lines and shapes on paper helps children begin to understand how writing works. It helps to build letter recognition!
- Fingerplays help children build up their hand muscles in order to get them ready to hold writing implements.
- When your child finds a favorite story or character, encourage him/her to draw a picture of the character and "write" his/her own story about the character.
- Play "I Spy" on a walk around the neighborhood. Finding small differences visually helps your child build the skills to find small differences when he/she is writing or drawing.
- Make letters out of playdough. Your child is building fine motor skills and learning to create letters at the same time.
- Outline large letters on a page with your finger and then let a toddler do the same. It helps them learn their ABCs.
- Suggest drawing a story. This can be as simple as three pictures: one for the beginning, one for the middle, and one for the end of the story. Have your child dictate the story to you and create captions for the pictures.





Talking Tips

- Talking to children from birth is crucial to their development of language. Use the language with which you are the most comfortable!
- Talking about shapes helps young children recognize letters.
- Play with sounds by making up silly rhymes. Let your child add new rhymes. Hearing sounds inside words is a vital component of learning to read.
- Imitate sounds throughout the day. Activities like these will help your child hear and play with smaller sounds in words which will help when he or she is sounding out words in the future.
- Prepare your kids for what is coming next in the day by talking about it. This also helps them understand how to tell a story.
- Talking about shapes that are the same and different is a great skill that will help your child learn letter shapes, too.
- Repetition encourages children to predict, which develops their ability to tell stories. Rhythm/rhyming and singing help children not only to hear and learn the sounds in language, but also to develop a sense of the flow and cadence of oral language.
- When your babies babble at you, they love for you to answer them because, as far as they're concerned, they're talking to you! Baby goos and gaas are building blocks of spoken language.
- Nonsense noises and animal noises are fantastic for baby's budding language skills. These sounds are easier to say than most words, more fun, and therefore more likely to be imitated by little ones.
- Don't just read a story to your child - make the child a participant. Ask questions like "What happens next?" "Look at his/her expression - what is he/she thinking?"
- When out and about, ask your child to look out for a specific word in a sign. Anytime he or she points it out, celebrate!
- Talk to your childing to your child throughout the day, even when they're too young to really respond, is so important to their language growth and development.
- Children learn language by listening to their parents and others talk. When children hear words spoken, they learn what they mean. This helps them understand what they are reading.
- Talk about the pictures in a book or things you see on a walk. Ask questions about what your child sees. By listening, your child learns words, ideas, and how language works.





Singing Tips

- Sing to your child when doing everyday activities, and sing about the activity.
- Singing with your child is great for brain development and, more importantly, is an intimate activity that strengthens the bond between the two of you.
- Use shaker eggs when reciting nursery rhymes. Each nursery rhyme has a great beat that children can follow using the shaker egg.
- When kids are losing attention, try singing a song with finger actions.
- Freeze songs are a great way for little guys to practice control. Yes, freeze songs are really exciting and often result in a lot of laughter, but they also teaches kids to listen, focus, react, and control their bodies!
- Singing is a great way to bond with your child and build vocabulary. Sing fun songs together every day!
- Sing while changing a diaper! you've got a captive audience - and it helps squirmy babies settle down.
- Sing away - kids don't care what kind of voice you have, but how much fun you're having. Playful "lessons" are remembered longer than others.
- You don't have to be musical to sing with your kids. They love to hear your voice, and singing helps them learn new ideas and hear the smaller sounds that make up words.
- Music encourages children to express themselves through movement and play. Physical play stimulates the part of the brain that regulates emotions. Overall, music plays a vital role in the growth and development of early childhood learners.
- Singing slows down words so that babies and toddlers can hear that words are made of different sounds.
- Musical activities such as singing, dancing, and/or playing an instrument requires children to listen attentively and hold patterns in their memory. This improves memory and attention.
- Clap out, tap on a drum, or sing your child's name. This allows them to hear words slowed down so that they can make out the parts of words, or syllables.
- Find books that go with a song or can be sung to a familiar tune.
- Children don't care if you're a good singer--they love to sing with you!





Playing Tips

- Play "I Spy" in the car using descriptive words to give clues.
- Play a game of "can you...?" by asking a series of questions like, "can you find something red?" Playing games like this is fun when you are on the go and helps improve concentration and memory.
- Make a dress up trunk with lightly used clothes for dramatic play. Dramatic play and pretend play help to build narrative skills along with encouraging social and emotional development.
- Make a puppet out of any stuffed animal!
- Use a multi-sensory approach when playing; books, music, soft toys, hard toys etc.
- Blowing bubbles is great for developing visual tracking skills in small babies, hand-eye coordination in older babies, and for strengthening lips and mouths in toddlers to form word sounds. All of which will strengthen their reading and writing skills later in life. Bet you didn't know bubbles could be so educational! Plus, they are cheap and fun!
- Fingerplays like Itsy Bitsy Spider, playing with playdough, squishing bubbles, scribbling - all of these are great activities for children to prepare them for writing.
- Use everyday things to make learning fun! Tissue boxes and paper towel rolls make great building materials. Go outside and explore. The more you see and do together, the more your child learns.
- Play is how children learn about their world. Studies have shown that children really benefit from time to play on their own and the ability to use their imaginations.
- Jumping the ABCs is a great way to hear all the letters of the alphabet. One jump for every letter of the alphabet, especially L-M-N-O-P because they get crammed together.
- Encourage children to lead their own storytime at home with stuffed animals or family members as the audience.
- Use simple props such as a puppet or a stuffed animal to tell a story. Use silly voices for different characters and ask your child to join in.
- Going to the park or anywhere outside is a great opportunity for your child to explore his/her limits, learn about the outside world, and try new things.
- Using a picture frame on a magnet wall with faces depicting various emotions helps children understand how they are feeling that day.
- Play is such an important part of early literacy! Recent research has also suggested that unstructured play is tied to better goal-setting abilities in children. Giving your child time to explore and play on his/her own allows him/her to practice being self-directed and build imagination.
- Kids love getting a little messy sometimes, and doing so is a great learning experience. Things like painting and sculpting with playdough let your child's imagination run wild, allow him/her to practice fine motor skills, and stimulate great conversations about what he/she is building or painting—all of which build early literacy skills.

