



# Early Learning

@ the Mengle Memorial Library

presented by Leslie Barr

adapted from  
Every Child Ready To Read,  
2<sup>nd</sup> edition



Children who start kindergarten with good pre-reading skills have an advantage.

They are ready to learn to read.



- Children's reading success in kindergarten and beyond begins with positive language and literacy experiences from the time they are infants.
- If children develop pre-reading skills before they start kindergarten, they can focus on learning to read once they begin school.
- Children who start kindergarten ready to learn to read have greater success throughout their school years. They are more likely to read at or above grade level by the end of 2nd grade. Children who read at or above grade level by the end of 4th grade are much more likely to graduate from high school and be successful readers and learners throughout their lives.



You are your child's first teacher.

You know your child best.

Children learn best by doing,  
and they love doing things with you.



Parents are the child's teacher from the day he or she was born. You know more about your child than anyone else. You are in the best position to help your child get ready to read because:

- Young children have shorter attention spans. You can do activities for short bits of time throughout the day.
- You can help your children learn in ways and at times that are best for them.
- Parents are tremendous role models—if your children see that you think reading is important and enjoy it, they will follow your lead.
- Children learn best by doing—and they love doing things with YOU.



To become successful readers,  
children need to:

- Learn a code
- Understand its meaning



Learning to read involves two key skills:

- Children must learn to decode print. They need to understand that the word they hear and say can be written with letters (the code). They need to learn that letters represent the sounds they hear in words.
- Children need to understand or comprehend what print says. They need to learn the meaning of individual words. They also need to understand the meaning of the books or stories they read.

Reading is learning the code.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz  
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**I Can Read.**

- The participants decoded the symbols, matched the symbols to the sounds, and read the words.

## Every Child Ready to Read 6 Early Literacies

**Vocabulary** - knowing the names of things

**Print motivation** - a child's interest in and enjoyment of books

**Print awareness** - noticing print everywhere, knowing how to handle a book and knowing how to follow the words on a page

**Narrative skills** - the ability to describe things and events and tell stories

**Letter knowledge** - knowing that letters are different from each other, and have different sounds and names

**Phonological awareness** - the ability to hear and manipulate the smaller sounds in words



## Every Child Ready to Read 5 Practices

Talking - Children learn about language by listening to parents talk and joining in the conversation

Singing - Songs are a natural way to learn about language

Reading - Reading together or share reading

Writing - Reading and writing go together

Playing - Children learn about language through different kinds of play



- These five practices are easy to do with children of all ages. They can be done at home, at the doctor's office, in the car, or anywhere a parent and child spend time together. They do not have to take a lot of time.
- Because they are fun to do, parents are more likely to use these practices on a regular basis to help their children develop pre-reading skills.

### Talking:

Children learn about language by listening to parents talk and joining in the conversation.



- Conversations between parents and children are one of the best ways to help children learn new information and new words. Make sure your child has lots of opportunities to talk with you, not just listen to you talk. Respond to what your child says, and follow his or her lead.
- One way to help children learn more from a conversation is to repeat a child's request or comment and paraphrase it. You also can expand on your child's comments and stretch out the conversation with additional explanations.
- Use new words. Good readers have a large vocabulary. Knowing lots of words helps children better understand what they read.
- Make connections. Recalling past events and connecting them to current and future activities helps children develop an understanding that language can represent events that are not happening now.

### Talking:

Answer your child's questions as completely as possible. Your explanations help your child learn more about the world.



- If your child isn't talking yet, ask a question, wait for him or her to react with a gesture or by babbling, and then give feedback, such as, "Yes, the two bunnies are chasing each other."
- Ask your toddler to tell you about something that happened to him or her today; ask for more details so your child can expand on the story.
- Ask questions that have more than a "yes" or "no" answer. This encourages your child to think about possible answers and to ask more questions. This increases comprehension skills.

### Talking:

Books are wonderful conversation starters.



A picture walk is a good example of a quality conversation. A picture walk:

- Teaches a child to take turns in order to have a conversation.
- Helps children become familiar with how books work and are organized.
- Gives parents a chance to introduce new words and what they mean. ("That's called a peach. It looks a little like an orange. A peach is also a kind of fruit.")
- Provides opportunities to rephrase what the child says so he or she can learn more language. (Child: "Me do that." Parent: "Yes, you have gone down a slide.")
- Extends conversations to help children learn more about something. (Parent: "Yes, that is a cave. A cave is like a hole in a mountain.")
- Helps a child make connections to past and future events so he or she understands that language sometimes represents events that are not happening right now.

1. **Look at the cover. Point out the title and author. Talk about the illustration; ask what your child thinks the story is about.**
2. **"Walk" through the book, page by page. Talk about the characters, and predict what might happen to them. Make a guess about how the book will end.**
3. **A picture walk is not reading the book. It's having a conversation about the story.**

Singing:  
Songs are a natural way to  
learn about language.



- Songs help children develop listening skills and pay attention to the rhythms and rhymes of spoken language.
- Most songs have a different note for each syllable. This helps children break down words so they hear individual sounds in a word.
- Singing also slows down language so children can hear different parts of words and notice how they are alike and different.
- Clapping along to rhythms helps children hear the syllables in words and helps them improve motor skills.
- Singing also helps children learn new words and adds to their general knowledge.

### Reading:

Reading together with your children is the single most important way to help them get ready to read.



- No matter what your child's age, reading together—or shared reading—is the single most important activity that you can do to help your child get ready to read.
- Shared reading is valuable because your child has your full attention, and you are enjoying the experience together.
- Shared reading helps a child develop a love of reading and an appreciation of books. Children who enjoy being read to are more likely to want to learn to read themselves.
- A child's interest in reading is an important predictor of later reading achievement.

## Reading:

Shared reading develops vocabulary and comprehension.



Reading together and talking about what you read:

- Increases children's vocabulary and background knowledge.
- Helps children learn how books work and how written language looks.
- Gives them an understanding of how stories are organized—that they have a beginning, middle, and end.
- Encourages imaginative thinking.

## Reading:

How you share books with your child is important.



Many times when books are shared, the parent reads and the child listens. But children learn best when they are actively involved. Here are ways your child can participate in shared reading.

- Point to the illustration on the book's cover and ask your child what he or she thinks the book is about.
- With predictable books like *The Little Red Hen*, stop before the end of a predictable line and let your child finish it.
- As you read have your child turn the pages. Or if your child is too young say, "Now I'm going to turn the page."
- Make observations and involve your child: "The hen is taking the wheat to the mill. What do you think will happen there?"
- Ask open-ended questions: "What do you think is going to happen next?" "What would you do if that happened to you?" "How would you feel?" "Why do you think that happened?"
- Expand on what your child says by repeating or paraphrasing, adding details, and using new words.

Writing:

Reading and writing go together.



- Children become aware that printed letters stand for spoken words as they see print used in their daily lives. They develop a knowledge of the purpose and meaning of reading through writing.
- As children scribble and draw, they practice eye-hand coordination and exercise the muscles in their fingers and hands. This helps develop the fine motor control they need to hold a pencil or crayon and to write letters and words.

## Writing:



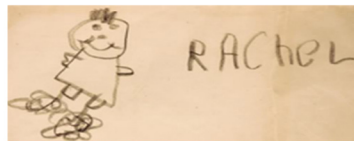
Making Marks



Drawing and Writing



Name Writing



Word Writing



- Encourage your children to “sign” their name on their drawings. Even if this begins as a scribble, children learn that they can write something that represents their name. Later your child will write the initials of his or her first and last name and then the complete name.
- Ask your child to label parts of his or her drawings. This also helps your child understand that letters and words stand for things.

## Playing:

Children learn about language through different kinds of play.



- Play is one of the best ways for children to learn language and literacy skills.
- Play helps children think symbolically: a ruler becomes a magic wand, today becomes a time when dinosaurs were alive, a playmate becomes an astronaut exploring space.
- Through play, children realize that one thing can stand for another. This also helps children understand that written words stand for real objects and experiences.

Playing:

Pretend and dramatic play  
develop language skills.



- Pretend play helps children think symbolically and develop oral language skills. As children play store or pretend to be an animal, they talk about what they're doing. They practice putting thoughts into words.
- Dramatic play helps develop narrative skills as children make up a story about what they're doing. This helps them understand that stories happen in an order: first, next, last.
- Make-believe also gives children a chance to act out real-life situations, work through worries and fears, and use their imagination to solve problems.
- Play helps children feel a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence. This motivates them to try new experiences and to not give up when something seems difficult.

# Any Questions?

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