

Talking



Your child learns language by listening you (his parents) and caregivers (grandparents, daycare workers, babysitters, etc.) talk. Encourage your child to join in conversations.

Talking, telling stories and stretching conversations help children learn new words, learn to express themselves and learn how to have a conversation.

Infants and young children need to hear the language they will eventually speak in order to learn it — so if you speak two languages at home, it is beneficial to speak both languages to your child.

How does talking with children help them get ready to read?

- Vocabulary The more words your child hears in conversation, the larger his vocabulary will be when they go to school. That large vocabulary makes it easier for them to recognize words when they see them for the first time in print. They will understand more of what they read and be less frustrated as beginning readers.
- Print Motivation The more books children read, and the more adults talk to children about the story, characters, and ideas in books, the more children can make connections between the books they read and their own lives. Children enjoy recognizing themselves in print and that pleasure motivates them to read more and discover more connections.
- Narrative Skills When adults tell stories to children, it helps children learn that stories have a specific structure: they have a beginning, middle, and end. Stories have characters who take action and encounter conflict before resolving a problem. When children understand **how stories work**, they can carry that framework to their reading, where it can support them as they try to determine the meaning of the text.
- Phonological Awareness Studies have shown that kids who participate in a lot of conversations and have a rich oral language environment have great phonological awareness skills. There's so much to learn about the sounds of our language, that the more information the brain receives, the better it can start to sort,
- Letter Knowledge We know that children need to know three things about letters: the names of the letters, the shapes of the letters, and the sound or sounds that are associated with those letters.

classify, and understand the way those sounds work.

- Most children build what they know about the letters through **conversations**. Naming letters on signs, pointing out letter shapes in buildings, and voicing letter sounds while reading alphabet books are all ways these conversations help make these connections.
- Print Awareness A recent study showed that you can have an impact on your child's reading readiness by adding a few activities to your reading. Draw your children's attention to print by pointing to the words in the title of a book and by underlining the words with your finger as you read. Point out to your child the difference between uppercase and lowercase letters on the page. Children who received this type of guided reading showed greater achievements than children who didn't two years later.

Why should I talk to my child?

"Children from low income families hear about 600 words per hour. Working-class children hear 1,200 words per hour, and children from professional families hear 2,100 words."

By age 3, a poor child would have heard 30 million fewer words in his home environment than a child from a professional family.

The greater the number of words children heard from their parents or caregivers before they were 3, the higher their IQ and the better they did in school. TV talk not only didn't help, it was detrimental.

("Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children" Study 1995)





Talking



Very young children can **understand** spoken words long before they can **speak** any of them — so talk to them and you will be amazed at how your child responds.

Talking to your child about many different events, ideas and stories helps them develop the general knowledge they need to understand the content of what they will read in books when they are older.

Picture Books build vocabulary because they have more "rare" words than our casual conversation. Ask your child questions about what is happening in the book. The more we talk with our children, the larger their vocabularies will be. *Talk to your baby and toddler all the time - even before they can answer you!*

Narrative Skills (Tell Stories): Being able to describe things and events, and tell stories

Tell your child stories about your family. Narrate your day; talk about what you're doing, while you're doing it.

Letter Knowledge (Know Letters): Knowing the names, sounds, and shapes of the letters

Learning shapes is a precursor to learning letters. Talk to your child about the shapes of things. Discuss how their ball is round, but their books is square. Talk to them about what is the same and different. As they get older point our letters in different fonts. Show them how the D on a Disney video looks different then a D in the picture books. Talk to your child about how letters can look different, but are still the same.

Print Motivation (Enjoy Reading) & Letter Knowledge

Children learn better when they are interested in something. Start with the first letter in your child's name, and point out words with that letter in it. Expand to other things your child likes. If your child loves princesses talk about the letter P. If you have Batman fans at home, draw the letter B for them on a piece of paper.

Vocabulary (Learn New Words): Knowing the names of things

Reading books together is a great way to expand your child's vocabulary since children's picture books have more 'rare' words in them than regular conversation. When you're talking with your preschooler, look for opportunities to use different words to help build their vocabulary.

When you are reading with your child do not skip over or change words that you think they do not know. Give your child a simple definition of the word. As your child gets older, pick simple non-fiction books to expose them to more new words.

Print Awareness (Use Books): *Knowing how to handle books, noticing print all around us*Be silly! Sometimes when you read with your child, hold the book upside down or backward and see if your child notices. If your child does not know the proper way to hold a book or turn the pages, say "I was being silly. This is the right way to read a book!" Continue to do this occasionally until your child notices the right way to use a book.

