YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE
Ways to Get Your Child Ready for Reading

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Literacy is speaking, listening, writing and reading. It begins at birth with a child's first cooing. There are many ways to boost your child's abilities at every age. Here are several ways to help your child get ready for reading.

You make the difference!
NEWBORN TO 3 MONTHS

Hold your baby often for the physical contact which ALL babies need. Talk to your baby about what you are doing while holding him or her. Feeding is a great time to talk to baby. Play little games of moving an object slowly and letting baby follow it with his or her eyes. Read, play music, and sing songs and nursery rhymes to your baby. Your baby is learning to know your voice.
Start to read to your baby each day. Make this a special time for you and your baby. Begin with 5-minute sessions. Lengthen the time as your child can pay attention longer.
Point to pictures and words as you read. Talk about the colors, number of things and directions (up, down).
Make up stories to go with the picture books. Animal books are great! Make up animal noises to go with them.
Change the texture of items baby plays with (wooden spoons, fuzzy toys). Talk about how they feel.
Read to baby. Be sure that there are not too many words on a page. Make up your own stories to go along with the pictures in books. Read the same books to your child over and over again until he or she becomes familiar with them. Give your child enough time with each picture to really enjoy it. Play pat-a-cake, peek-a-boo, and finger games (such as This Little Piggy) with your baby. Your local library will have books on great games to play with babies.
1 TO 2 YEARS (TODDLERS)

Have a regular time each day to read to your child. Many families do this right before bedtime.
Let your child help you read the story by turning the pages and repeating the words and sentences when he or she can.
Use different voices for the different characters in the story. This will make it more fun for your child.
Use your baby's name often. Name other people, animals, objects and other actions as you talk with your baby. Put your child's name into the story-line of a favorite book.
Share nursery rhymes and nursery songs with your toddler often. He or she will start to enjoy games such as "Ring Around the Rosy" and "London Bridge". Great song and nursery rhyme books can be found at the library.
Let your child choose the book or books to read. Children love to hear the same stories over and over again. Start reading books that are a little longer. Make listening to a story something fun. Don't demand that a child sit and listen if he or she is not interested. Make sure that your child sees you and others reading daily. Take your child to a storytime at the public library.

- Involve your child in reading activities - books, games, books with cassettes, special stories or times with you.
- Talk with your child. Talk about stories and experiences with your child.
- Make puppets about favorite books. Look for books at your library on making all kinds of puppets.
Make reading important. Children learn to read better if their home has books, newspapers, and magazines. Books for all ages are available free from your local library. Continue reading to your child even though he or she is beginning to read on his or her own. Take turns reading to each other. Read the comic section of the newspaper together.

- Point out what the signs say when you are driving or shopping. You can make a game of learning to identify words.
- Play rhyming games with your child. Say a word and allow the child to come up with a rhyme, or vice-versa.
- Make frequent trips to your public library.
- Have patience! Learning to read is a challenge. (It is like learning a new language.)