



You are your child's
first teacher.

**PRE-READERS—
4 AND 5 YEAR OLDS**

Children learn best by doing things—and they love doing things with you. At this age it is a good idea to start to spell and write out your child's name. Write down words your child says to show they can be written out. Encourage your child to tell you stories, and share stories that you know.

Above all, at this age, be sure to engage in activities that allow your child to be physically active, be creative and have fun. With increasing motor skills and their love of moving around, 4 and 5 year olds are able to join in with fingerplays and dances. Remember that you know your child better than anyone else does. Your influence on your child's life will last forever.

Here are ways you can help your toddler get ready to read!

WORDS Vocabulary

- Talk with your child about what is going on around you. Discuss how things work, feelings and ideas.
- When your child talks to you, add more detail to what she says.
- Speak in the language most comfortable for you.
- Read together every day. When you talk about the story and pictures, your child learns more words.
- Learn together by reading some nonfiction books on subjects your child likes.

LOVING BOOKS Print Motivation

- Make book sharing a meaningful time—make your child feel loved and special.
- Let your child see you reading.
- Visit our library often.
- Children who enjoy books will want to learn how to read!

USING BOOKS Print Awareness

- Read aloud all types of print—labels, signs, lists, menus. Print is everywhere!
- Point to some of the words as you say them, especially words that are repeated.
- Let your child turn the pages.
- Let your child hold the book, and read or tell the story.
- Hold the book upside down to see if your child turns it around.

STORYTELLING Narrative Skills

- Listen to your child carefully when he talks.
- Ask your child to tell you about something that happened. Let him tell you about a picture he drew.
- Stories help children understand the concept of “order”: First, next, last.
- Read a book together that your child already knows. Switch roles, so that you are the listener and your child tells the story.
- Ask “What” questions, such as pointing to a picture and saying, “What’s that?” or “What’s happening here?”
- Help your child relate to what is happening in the story to a real-life experience.
- Encourage interaction—this lets your child become an active participant in the story. Do this by asking open-ended questions, such as, “What do you think is happening in this picture?”

SOUNDS Phonological Awareness

- Say rhymes, and ask whether two words rhyme or not. Make up your own silly, nonsense rhymes together.
- Say words with chunks left out: “What word would we have if you took the ‘hot’ away from ‘hotdog’?” Do the reverse: “What word would we have if we put ‘cow’ and ‘boy’ together?”
- Say words with sounds left out: “What word would we have if we took the ‘buh’ sound away from ‘bat’?”
- Sing songs. Songs have different notes for each syllable in a word.
- Read poetry together, and make up short poems together.

ABCs Letter Knowledge

- Write your child’s name
- Make letters from clay or use magnetic letters.
- Point out letters when reading alphabet books, signs, or labels.
- Show your child that the same letter can look different.
- Write words that interest your child (like “dinosaur” or “truck”) using crayons, magnetic letters or pencil and paper.

DID YOU KNOW...? ...That children who are read to have larger vocabulary, higher achievement and better language skills when they enter kindergarten? The earlier a child learns pre-reading skills, the easier she will learn to read when school begins—which leads to success as a learner and reader!

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