

Explore Books!

How can so much fun get my child ready for school?

Books, books, and more books! If there is one thing that will help children get ready for kindergarten and a lifetime of learning, it might just be reading books with them. Good reading skills start with building children's language and vocabulary. Add pictures and a good conversation in which you and your child share your thoughts and feelings, and you've got magic!

Try these at home!

- **Examine a book.** Let your child hold the book you're about to read. Show him how to turn the pages gently and from the middle of the outside edge so the pages don't tear. Ask about the title and the image on the cover. What does your child think the book is about? Point out the start of the story, and later on ask how he thinks it will end. Talk about the author and the illustrator of the book.
- **Set up a reading corner.** Even very young children enjoy handling books. Start with board books (hard covers and pages), which your child might hold upside down at first (it's really OK!). Your child may just look at the pictures or pretend to read. She might read to her stuffed toys or imagine that she's the teacher in a classroom. Put a comfy pillow in any corner and a few books on a shelf or in a small box where your child can see the choices.
- **Make room for writing.** Recycle plain paper that children can use for writing. Keep lots of pencils, pens, and markers handy so that children can reach them if they want to draw or write. Remember, scribbles are the beginning of letters. All scribbles count!



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Things to say

- “What do you think happens next?” Ask your child to make a prediction.
- “Can you tell me about that?” Open-ended questions about the story may draw surprising responses.
- “You choose your bedtime story.” Children often have favorite stories that they want you to read over and over and over again. Let your child decide!

Read all about it!

- **For infants and toddlers:** *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown. A little bunny says good night to all of the familiar things in his room. There’s something calming and gentle about the story that makes it a perfect book before nodding off to sleep.
- **For preschoolers:** *Wild About Books* by Judy Sierra. When a librarian mistakenly drives her bookmobile to the zoo, the animals go “wild” over the books—with some hilarious results!
- **For preschoolers getting ready for kindergarten:** *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come! / Preparete, kindergarten! Alla voy!* by Nancy Carlson. A family prepares for kindergarten. Henry is excited but also a bit nervous about the new experience.



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