

Early Literacy Tips for Preschoolers

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At Home

- **Talking.** As you are preparing a meal, invite your child to help. Talk about what you are doing, how you are doing it or the food you are preparing (name, color, texture, taste or where it comes from).
- **Singing.** Singing is a great way to learn new vocabulary and help children understand sentence structure by slowing the language down. Try to sing songs about everyday routines such as getting dressed, washing hands or making breakfast.
- **Reading.** Encourage your child to choose books she is interested in, even if you feel that the story is too long for her attention span or bedtime. Try going on a "picture walk" through the story where you discuss what you see going on in the illustrations; you can even make up your own story about what is happening in the pictures you see.
- **Writing.** When coloring or scribbling, encourage your child to write as much as he can about what he is drawing. This will help him understand that written words stand for spoken language.
- **Playing.** Dress-up is a fun and inexpensive way to introduce your child to storytelling. Provide her with old clothes and other household props to help her act out favorite stories – or make up her own! Encourage her to think about how a story progresses through the beginning, middle and end.

Early literacy is what kids know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write.

You are your child's first teacher and preparing him or her to read can be easy and fun - whether you're at home or on the go!

Five of the best ways to prepare your child to read are talking, singing, reading, writing and playing.

On the Go

- **Talking.** Engage your child in conversation while in the car. Talk about where you are headed, what you did last time you were there if it's a familiar place, or what new and exciting things you will do if it's somewhere your child has never been.
- **Singing.** Keep a CD or playlist of your child's favorite songs in the car. Sing along with them (or sing made-up songs!) to help your child hear syllables, word sounds and new vocabulary.
- **Reading.** Words are all around us! Point out letters or simple words that your child may recognize, such as ones that start with the same letter as his name or easy rhyming words.
- **Writing.** While waiting in line or at the doctor's office, do a simple finger play or rhyme that gets her hands moving, like "Itsy, Bitsy Spider" or "Open Them, Shut Them." Moving and stretching her fingers will help her build the fine motor skills she'll need to write and draw.
- **Playing.** Play a game of "I Spy" while in the car. Take this opportunity to work on building your child's vocabulary by picking things he may be unfamiliar with or by using very descriptive language to help him guess the item you see.

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