

# Activities for preschool through grade two: Moving into reading



Check out Reading Rockets' new summer website, **Start with a Book**. You'll find a treasure trove of themed children's books, parent-child activities, and other great resources for summer learning.

## Activity 8: World of words

Here are a few ways to create a home rich in words.

### What you'll need:

- Paper
- Pencils, crayons, markers
- Glue
- Newspapers, magazines
- Safety scissors

### What to do:

- Hang posters of the alphabet on the bedroom walls or make an alphabet poster with your child. Print the letters in large type. Capital letters are usually easier for young children to learn first.
- Label the things in your child's pictures. If your child draws a picture of a house, label it with "This is a house." and put it on the refrigerator.
- Have your child watch you write when you make a shopping list or a "what to do" list. Say the words aloud and carefully print each letter.
- Let your child make lists, too. Help your child form the letters and spell the words.
- Look at newspapers and magazines with your child. Find an interesting picture and show it to your child as you read the caption aloud.
- Create a scrapbook. Cut out pictures of people and places and label them.
- By exposing your child to words and letters often, your child will begin to recognize the shapes of letters. The world of words will become friendly.

## Activity 9: Write on

Writing helps a child become a better reader, and reading helps a child become a better writer.

### **What you'll need:**

- Pencils, crayons, or markers
- Paper or notebook
- Chalkboard and chalk

### **What to do:**

- Ask your child to dictate a story to you. It could include descriptions of your outings and activities, along with mementos such as fall leaves and flowers, birthday cards, and photographs. Older children can do these activities on their own.
- Use a chalkboard or a family message board as an exciting way to involve children in writing with a purpose.
- Keep supplies of paper, pencils, markers, and the like within easy reach.
- Encourage beginning and developing writers to keep journals and write stories. Ask questions that will help children organize the stories, and respond to their questions about letters and spelling. Suggest they share the activity with a smaller brother, sister, or friend.
- Respond to the content of children's writing, and don't be overly concerned with misspellings. Over time you can help your child concentrate on learning to spell correctly.
- When children begin to write, they run the risk of criticism, and it takes courage to continue. Our job as parents is to help children find the courage. We can do it by expressing our appreciation of their efforts.

## **Activity 10: Look for books**

The main thing is to find books you both love. They will shape your child's first impression of the world of reading.

### **What you'll need:**

Good books

### **What to do:**

- Ask friends, neighbors, and teachers to share the titles of their favorite books.
- Visit your local public library, and as early as possible, get your child a library card. Ask the librarian for help in selecting books. Have your child join you in browsing for books and making selections.
- Look for award-winning books. Each year the American Library Association selects children's books for the Caldecott Medal for illustrations and the Newbery Medal for writing.

- Check the book review section of the newspapers and magazines for the recommended new children's books.
- If you and your child don't enjoy reading a particular book, put it aside and pick up another one.
- Keep in mind that your child's reading level and listening level are different. When you read easy books, beginning readers will soon be reading along with you. When you read more advanced books, you instill a love of stories, and you build the motivation that transforms children into lifelong readers.

## Activity 11: Read to me

It's important to read to your child, but equally important to listen to them read to you. Children thrive on having someone appreciate their developing skills.

### What you'll need:

Books at your child's reading level

### What to do:

- Listen carefully as your child reads.
- Take turns. You read a paragraph and have your child read the next one or you read half the page and your child reads the other half. As your child becomes more at ease with reading aloud, take turns reading a full page. Keep in mind that your child may be focusing more on how to read the words than what they mean, and your reading helps to keep the story alive.
- If your child has trouble reading words, you can help him or her in several ways:
  - Ask the child to skip over the word, read the rest of the sentence, and then say what would make sense in the story for the missing word.
  - Guide the child to use what he or she knows about letter sounds.
  - Supply the correct word.
- Tell your child how proud you are of his or her efforts and skills.

Listening to your child read aloud provides opportunities for you to express appreciation of his or her new skills and for them to practice their reading. Most importantly, this is another way to enjoy reading together.

## Activity 12: Family stories

Family stories enrich the relationship between parent and child.

### What you'll need:

Time set aside for talking with your child.

### What to do:

- Tell your child stories about your parents and grandparents. You might even put these stories in a book and add old family photographs.
- Have your child tell you stories about what happened on special days, such as holidays, birthdays, and family vacations.
- Reminisce about when you were little. Describe things that happened at school involving teachers and subjects you were studying. Talk about your brothers, sisters, or friends.
- Write a trip journal with your child to create a new family story. Recording the day's events and pasting the photographs into the journal ties the family story to a written record. You can include everyday trips like going to the market or the park.
- It helps for children to know that stories come from real people and are about real events. When children listen to stories, they hear the voice of the storyteller. This helps them hear the words when they learn to read aloud or read silently.

### Activity 13: P.S. I love you

Something important happens when children receive and write letters. They realize that the printed word has a purpose.

#### **What you'll need:**

- Paper
- Pencil, crayon, or marker

#### **What to do:**

- Send your child little notes (by putting them in a pocket or lunch box, for example). When your child shows you the note, read it aloud with expression. Some children will read the notes on their own.
- When your child expresses a feeling or a thought that relates to a person, have your child write a letter. Have your child dictate the words to you if your child doesn't write yet.

For example:

Dear Grandma,  
I like it when you make ice cream. It's better than the kind we buy at the store.

Your grandson,  
Darryl

P.S. I love you

- Ask the people who receive these notes to respond. An oral response is fine – a written response is even better.
- Explain the writing process to your child: "We think of ideas and put them into words; we put the words on paper; people read the words; and people respond."

Language is speaking listening, reading, and writing. Each element supports and enriches the others. Sending letters will help children become better writers, and writing will make them better readers.

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/25-activities-reading-and-writing-fun>

By: [U.S. Department of Education](#)