

## ***Parenting Pointers***

### ***Parenting Tips on Helping Young Children get ready to Read!***

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Parents often wonder at what age their children should begin to learn to read. Is there a magic age that we should begin to "teach" reading skills? The truth is that children are born learning and teaching children to love reading is something parents do everyday - without even thinking about it! When we sing a lullaby to our baby, or say a silly rhyme to our toddler, or read a favorite bedtime story to a preschooler, we are doing the important work of preparing our children for a lifetime love of reading. Children who grow up being read to, learn to love reading, and it is never too early to start. A child's natural desire to learn to read can grow into a healthy habit, especially when children are read to on a regular basis. Here are some tips to help children get ready to read:

- Consider all the reading "tools" available to you. From newspapers, to magazines, to books, cards, and letters, parents can gather all sorts of reading materials from just around the house. Creating a special "place" for reading, comfortable and away from distractions is important.
- Encourage your child's interest in reading by talking in adult language to babies, singing the ABC's and other fun songs, talking about pictures in books, going to library story times and visiting bookstores. Expose children to books and magazines about families and cultures, animals, counting and the alphabet.
- Act as a role model. Let your child observe you reading daily. Children imitate parents' habits. Set the example for your child by reading yourself, and be sure to make a variety of reading materials easily available to children.
- Talk with your child. Engage in conversations about life, family, feelings, events, and stories you've read. Conversing with your child increases vocabulary, listening skills and expressive language abilities. It also strengthens the bond between parent and child and creates memories.
- Encourage your child to write. Writing is key to strengthening reading skills. Very young children's scribbles are early forms of writing. Encouraging your older child to write words, phrases and sentences

- will help them excel in reading. Make writing and drawing tools readily accessible to your child and offer genuine praise for their creative masterpieces.
- Connect reading to the real world. Reading goes beyond books. Sharing with children recipes, street signs, newspapers, maps, toy assembly instructions, and food packaging demonstrates that reading is an essential activity in our everyday lives.
  - Make reading an everyday practice. Studies show that children who read at least 30 minutes a day are more successful readers, better students and enjoy reading more. Establish routines for everyday reading such as after dinner or before bedtime.
  - Make it fun to read! Read, write, sing and play with your child - and don't worry! Young children learn at very different rates. Your child will want to read and write if it is fun and a natural part of what you do each day!

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