BUILDING READERS®

How Families Can Help Children Get Ready to Read

Alva Public Schools
Title I

Audiobooks boost language, imagination, listening and comprehension



Audiobooks do more than sharpen young children's language skills. They also expand imagination and strengthen listening and comprehension skills.

The next time you listen to an audiobook with your preschooler:

- **Visualize.** Ask your child to describe how the people and places look in the story.
- **Pause.** Every few minutes, pause to see if your child is paying attention to the details. Say, "The bear lost the balloon. Do you think the bear sounds sad, angry or scared?" If your child is unsure, go back and listen to that part of the story again.
- **Review.** When the story ends, ask your child to retell it. This will demonstrate how well your child comprehended the story.

Focus on five reading readiness skills

When preschool teachers want to make sure children are on track for reading success, they typically assess these five critical skills:

1. **Print awareness,** the understanding that the print on a page represents words that have meaning.
2. **Letter knowledge,** the ability to recognize the letters of the alphabet and to say the names and sounds of each.
3. **Phonemic awareness,** the ability to hear and identify the various sounds in spoken words.
4. **Comprehension,** the ability to understand the meaning of words and to relate to them in some way.
5. **Motivation to read,** a child's eagerness and willingness to enjoy reading activities.

When do grammar skills develop?

Children develop grammar skills at different rates, but there are some general milestones that can help you gauge your child's progress.



By the time children are four years old, they'll likely be able to understand and use:

- **Pronouns** (*he*, *she* and *they*)
- **Prepositions** (*over*, *in* and *under*)
- **Past-tense verbs** ("I *went* to school." "We *walked* to the park.")

Track your child's reading progress on a tree

To celebrate the books you read with your child, make a reading tree together:

1. **Cut the shape of a tree trunk** out of brown paper.
2. **Add a leaf to the tree** for every new book you read together. Write the name of the book on the leaf.
3. **Vary the leaf shape or color** each month.

Sharpen thinking skills with easy-to-do activities

Solid cognitive skills can turn your child into a stronger reader and a deeper thinker. To hone those skills in a relaxed way:



- **Describe an object** that's in the refrigerator and have your child find it for you. For example, "It's round, red and has a stem."
- **Test your child's memory.** Before going to bed, ask your child to recap everything that happened that day.

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Boost language learning with rhymes

Rhymes are terrific tools for boosting your preschooler's language learning. Carve out some "rhyme time" daily to play games like:



- **Change the Name.** Rattle off the names of everyone in your family, and then help your child invent silly rhymes for each one. You might invent new nicknames for each other!
- **What Do I See?** Think of an object in the room and give your child rhyming clues about it, even if they're nonsense words. If you want your child to guess the word *table*, you might say "I see a *nable* ... a *wable* ... ."
- **Roses Are Red.** Use the classic verse as a jumping-off point for creating new rhymes together. "Roses are red, violets are blue ... ." Instead of ending the rhyme with, "Sugar is sweet, and so are you," challenge your child to think of new endings!

Create a love of reading by reading aloud

Reading aloud to your child is one of the most important things you can do to stimulate a love of reading. When you read aloud together, your preschooler:



- **Feels connected** to you, which leads to an overall sense of well-being.
- **Develops vocabulary.** Books introduce your child to a variety of new words and phrases.
- **Learns how spoken words** can vary from written text.
- **Gains knowledge** about a variety of topics, which makes it easier to comprehend new reading material.
- **Learns that reading** is a wonderful thing that brings enjoyment!



Q: I printed out a stack of ABC worksheets, but my preschooler is not interested in them. Should I force the issue?

A: No! At this age, learning to read should involve play, not work. Instead of planning lessons for your child, simply explore and enjoy language together. Where to start? Flip those worksheets over so your preschooler can scribble and color letters on the back.

It's OK to move around during reading time



Just because some children may not enjoy sitting still to read books together doesn't mean that you shouldn't read to them!

During reading time:

- **Allow your child** to walk around as you read.
- **Act out** the stories you're reading with your child.
- **Break up** your daily reading time into smaller chunks of time.

Books to delight your early reader



- ***Goldilocks and Just One Bear*** by Leigh Hodgkinson. When a bear is taking a walk, he gets lost. All of a sudden he is in the big city! See where the bear ends up when he finds just the right place to have a snack and take a nap.
- ***Grumpy Gloria*** by Anna Dewdney. Gloria the dog is in a horrible mood. Her owners try everything they can think of to cheer up their pouting pup.
- ***A Squiggly Story*** by Andrew Larsen. A boy wants to write a story—but he doesn't know where to start! He looks to his sister for help, and she tells him that each story starts with a single letter.

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