

The Best Books for Supporting Literacy Development: Preschool Age Children AGES 3+



The best thing you can do to foster literacy skills in preschool age children is establish regular reading routines.



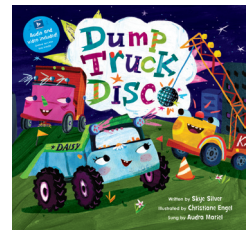
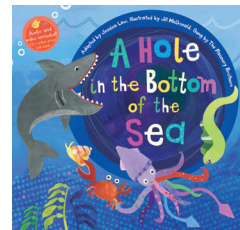
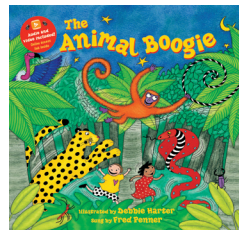
Research shows that it's helpful to keep a wide variety of books on hand and to allow children to choose what they read!

TIP!

Ask open-ended questions when reading. The best kind of questions require children to think about why something happened or predict what might happen next. (“Why do you think the girl is sad?” “What do you think will happen next?”) As a guide, ask questions that start with “what”, “how”, “why” and “when.”

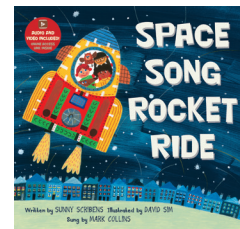
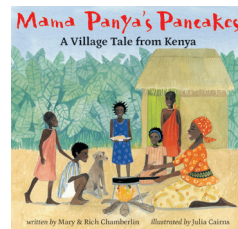
Singalongs

Singalongs incorporate reading, singing and playing all in one book! The catchy lyrics and music in singalong books capture children’s attention and keep them interested for longer than they might be otherwise. Plus, moving along to singalongs helps develop gross motor skills!



Rhyming Books and Books with Repeated Text

These types of books give children the chance to “read” along with you! Pause when reading a rhyming story and allow children to complete the rhyme (“There was a mouse who lived in a . . .”). When reading a book with repeated text, stop to let children fill in the blanks. Reading along with you gives children confidence as “readers” and helps them build the connection between spoken language and printed words.



Wordless Books & Story Cards

Wordless books and story cards give children great practice with “reading” pictures and using language to express ideas. Additionally, studies show that adults use more sophisticated vocabulary when creating words to go along with wordless books.



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English Language Learners are more successful with English language and literacy skills when mastery of their first language(s) is also being nurtured.



Research shows that caregivers' back-and-forth conversations with each individual child are critical for language and literacy development.

TIP!

Activate children's "prior knowledge" about a book's topic by asking what they already know or have experienced. This helps improve reading comprehension.

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Diverse, Inclusive & Global Books

Books in this category serve as "mirrors and windows" for children, reflecting their own experiences and developing an understanding of others.



Nonfiction Books

Nonfiction titles build children's factual knowledge, introduce new vocabulary and spark curiosity. Alphabet books often fall in this category too!



Early Literacy Resources

- [Barefoot Books](#)
- [Reading Rockets](#)
- [Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy](#)
- [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#)
- [Nemours Reading Bright Start](#)
- [Make Way for Books](#)
- [Every Child Ready to Read](#)



Barefoot Books

step inside a story

www.barefootbooks.com

To find all these books and many more,
please visit www.barefootbooks.com



The 5 Daily Literacy Activities

1. Talking

Talking with children helps them learn oral language, one of the most critical early literacy skills. Children learn language and other early literacy skills by listening to adults talk. As children listen to spoken language, they learn new words and what they mean while gaining important general knowledge about the world around them. This knowledge will help children understand the meaning of what they read.

2. Singing

Songs help children develop listening skills and pay attention to rhymes and rhythms. Singing also slows down language so children can hear the different sounds that make up words. This helps children when they begin to read.

3. Reading

Shared reading is the best way to help children get ready to read. Reading together and talking about what you read helps children increase their vocabulary and background knowledge, learn how books work, but also helps children develop a love of reading.

4. Writing

Both reading and writing are ways to represent spoken words and to tell stories or communicate. When children are given a chance to explore making marks, scribbling, drawing pictures, and telling stories, they are practicing reading skills. Children become aware that printed letters stand for spoken words as they see print used in their daily lives.

5. Playing

Through play, especially pretend and dramatic play, children learn about language. When children pretend, they're thinking symbolically, which helps them to understand that spoken and written words can stand for real objects and experiences. Play also helps children to express themselves and put thoughts into words and practice narrative skills like sequencing.

Adapted from www.clel.org (Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy) /
American Library Association's *Every Child Ready to Read*®



The 6 Essential Literacy Skills

Six basic skills comprise early literacy and help determine whether a child will be ready to learn to read and write.

1 Love of reading

(“Print Motivation”)

Why is it important?

Kids who enjoy books and reading will be curious about reading and motivated to learn to read for themselves. Motivation is important because learning to read is HARD WORK!

It’s important that we make sure our children start reading and listening to books from day one and that they have a good time with books.

What can you do to help build this skill?

- Have fun!
- Read books you both like
- Stop (or shift gears) when it is no longer fun. Length of time is not important; enjoyment is!

2 Understanding why to read and how to handle books

(“Print Awareness”)

Why is it important?

Children have to be aware of words before they can read them. They need to know how books work — the front cover, what’s upside down, which page to start on, how to look from left to right.

When kids are comfortable with books, from knowing how to open a book to understanding what those black squiggles are, they can concentrate on starting to read the words.

What can you do to help build this skill?

- Read board books that your child can handle on his/her own; let him/her turn the pages as you read together
- Sometimes point to the words as you read
- Talk about print even when you are not reading together. Look for letters and words on signs, labels and lists

3 Knowing alphabet letter names and sounds

(“Letter Knowledge”)

Why is it important?

To read words, children have to understand that a word is made up of individual letters.

What can you do to help build this skill?

- Look at and talk about different shapes (letters are based on shapes)
- Play “same and different” type games
- Look at “I Spy” type books
- Notice different types of letters (“a” or “A”) on signs and in books
- Read ABC books
- Talk about and draw the letters of a child’s own name

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The 6 Essential Literacy Skills

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4 Knowing a lot of different kinds of words

(“Vocabulary”)

Why is it important?

It’s much easier to read a word when it’s a word you already know. Children with bigger vocabularies have an easier time when they start to read, since it’s much easier for them to make sense of what they’re sounding out.

What can you do to help build this skill?

- Encourage children to learn their native or home language first; this makes learning another language (speaking and reading) easier later
- Talk with children in positive and conversational ways; commands and “no’s” do not encourage language development
- Carry on lots of conversations with children
- Explain the meanings of new words
- Read books! Picture books use a different vocabulary than casual spoken conversation

5 Hearing and playing with the smaller sounds of words

(“Phonological Awareness”)

Why is it important?

Children who can hear how words “come apart” into separate sounds will be more successful at “sounding out” words when they start to read.

What can you do to help build this skill?

- Sing songs; most break words up into one syllable per note. Reading works with syllables also
- Recite rhymes; rhymes depend upon ending sounds
- Play with tongue twisters
- Pick a sound for the day. Notice it at the beginning of words and at the end of words

6 Telling stories, making predictions, describing events

(“Narrative skills”)

Why is it important?

When children can describe something or retell stories, it shows that they are comprehending what they are reading. Understanding what they’re reading is crucial to helping them stay motivated to keep reading.

What can you do to help build this skill?

- Ask open-ended questions that encourage conversations rather than yes/no or right/wrong answers
- Talk about your day and its series of events
- Mix up the events in a story; make it silly!
- Guess what comes next — or come up with a different ending
- Read stories without words; they really help focus on this skill
- Name objects, feelings and events





Barefoot Books

Literacy Experiences Planner

Title of Book: _____

Daily Activities	✓
Talking	
Singing	
Reading	
Writing	
Playing	

Essential Skills	✓
Print Motivation	
Print Awareness	
Letter Knowledge	
Vocabulary	
Phonological Awareness	
Narrative Skills	

Supplementary Activities	
Missing Activities or Skills	Plan for Incorporating Activity or Skill

