

So You're Parenting a Preschooler

Tips to help your child get ready to learn to read

Reading is an essential skill for learning in all subjects. The ability to read well leads to success in school and life. As the parent or caregiver, your involvement really helps your child become a confident student and lifelong reader. It's okay to explore the joy of reading together! The series "So You're Parenting..." gives you helpful activities and tips to prepare your child for Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee.



Washington-Centerville Public Library,
Library Snapshot Day

What is the Third Grade Reading Guarantee?

In 2012, the Ohio Legislature passed a bill that says that students who do not reach a passing score on the 3rd grade state reading test will receive additional support in order to advance to the required reading level.

Although it is called the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, your child will be assessed in reading at the beginning of each grade from kindergarten to 3rd grade. If your child is not at the required reading level, your school will tell you about services your child will receive.

There are also many ways you can help your child with reading. If you need more information, see the Family Resources on the Ohio Department of Education's website:

<http://tinyurl.com/ohiotgrg>

Start helping your child before kindergarten

Your child is not expected to be able to read yet. You can help your child develop important pre-reading skills so she will be ready to begin to learn to read in kindergarten and through 3rd grade.

Research shows over and over again that children learn better in school when caregivers talk and read with them, give them books, and do activities together with words and letters from birth through kindergarten.

The National Early Literacy Panel's 2009 report, *Developing Early Literacy**, found that reading and writing skills that are developed in the years from birth to age 5 have a clear and consistently strong relationship with later literacy skills.

Activities to do with your child to build pre-reading skills

Five simple practices - talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing - will help you develop language and pre-reading skills in your child.

Talking

- Ask your child **open-ended questions** (that cannot be answered with yes/no). Ask questions that start with what, when, how, I wonder what would happen next or happen if. Encourage conversation by waiting for your child to respond.
- Build **vocabulary and background knowledge** by telling your child what you know about a variety of topics.
- Encourage your child to **describe familiar people**, places, things and experiences - this helps him build speaking, vocabulary, and narrative (sequence of events) skills.

*Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel. <http://iincs.ed.gov/earlychildhood/NELP/NELPReport.html>

Activities to do with your child to build reading skills

Singing

Sing songs together. Singing helps children hear smaller sounds in words because the words are drawn out. **Children hear each syllable** because it has a different note.

Many songs have words not heard in everyday conversation, so **singing helps to build vocabulary** (for example, "fetch" in "Jack and Jill," "twinkle" in "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star").

Use a **songbook** or printed lyric sheet to follow along, and **point out words in the chorus** or repeated lines.

Reading

When reading a book, tell your child what the **author and illustrator** do as you say their names.

After sharing a favorite story, ask your child **questions about the story**, and encourage him to identify and comment about characters and major events in the story.

Read **informational** (fact-based) books to your child, encouraging her to tell you what she knows about the topic.

Register your child for a **library card** at your public library. Ask the children's librarian for **tips on reading together** and recommendations of books and media your child will enjoy.

Community Support for Your Child's Reading

As your child grows, create relationships with supportive community members who know a lot about reading. Enjoy the public library and meet the children's librarian beginning now, and get to know the school librarian and PTA when your child starts kindergarten.

- The **public librarian** will help you find enjoyable, easy books and can recommend strategies to help make reading a fun, healthy part of your everyday life.

- The **school librarian** will be your hero, as he or she will recommend great books and fun series that will keep your child involved in reading.

- The **school's PTA** will help you connect with an active network of parents who care about education. Don't be timid about talking with other parents and swapping ideas about age-appropriate reading activities that have worked for them.

Don't let reading readiness slide in the summer! Participate in your public library's summer reading program, or just hang out at the library with your child and enjoy the books and activities that are free for your use.

Writing

Regularly give your child paper and writing instruments (pencil, crayons, markers). **"Write" letters** and words together. Your child may use a combination of drawing, scribbling, and actual letters.

Engage in pretend writing and reading with your child. Encourage your child to scribble a "story" or **"shopping list"** and then read it to you.

Show your child how to write the letters of his/her **name** and other significant words.

Pretend to go shopping together using your child's list, or bring it when you and your child go to the grocery store.

Playing

Play with blocks, puzzles, and **sorting or matching games** together. Include foam, magnet, or block letters in play.

Encourage imaginative or **"pretend" play**, which helps children make decisions, cooperate, talk about what they are doing, carry on a conversation, and explore real-world situations.

Explore World Book's **Early World of Learning** through your public library's website. The children's librarian can show you how to access this collection of books and learning games that go with each book. When your child goes to school, she will access Early World of Learning through the **INFOhio** (<http://www.infohio.org>) website.

"So You're Parenting..." is a service of the Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA), the Ohio PTA, INFOhio, and the State Library of Ohio. For more information: <http://www.infohio.org/students/parents>

