

Some ABC's for Raising a Reader

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Parents are their child's first teachers, and it's never too soon to introduce your child to books. By reading aloud to your child, you provide the sounds of written language, demonstrate book handling skills, develop your child's expectation that the print and pictures carry a message, and build positive attitudes toward reading. Here are some more ways that you can encourage a love of reading and make reading fun as well as educational for your child.



A Active involvement during read aloud time is a goal. Read, sing, and act out the story with your child.

B Bedtime stories need to be a regular family event. Even older children will enjoy reading aloud if the right books are selected.

C Create a positive and fun atmosphere when reading to your child. Let your child know that you think books are important.

D Don't stop reading to children when they learn to read. Reading aloud to school-aged children involves them in the language of literature.

E Encourage risk-taking in your child's first attempts. Reading and writing develop over time, and you can help develop a sense of confidence.

F Find low shelves and other areas in your home to keep books and reading materials so your child can reach them easily.

G Give books as gifts. Ask your librarian for ideas or inquire at your bookstore.

H Hold the book so your child can see the print as you are reading.

I Include family members and friends in your read-aloud sessions. Take turns reading different story characters.

J Join your local library. Get a library card for your child so that you can discover new worlds together through books.

K Know your child's favorite storybooks, and choose familiar or predictable reading materials to help your child gain confidence.

L Listening to stories expands your child's vocabulary and exposes your child to the patterns of "book language."

M Model reading for your child. Even when you read a newspaper or favorite novel, you're giving your child the idea that grownups value reading.

N Notice the print around you as you run errands. Read signs to your child.

O Owning books is important. Start with a few books and let your child build a personal library.

V Value your child's writing. Treat early writing efforts as an important part of literacy learning.

P Pattern books repeat the same phrase on every page and make it easier for your child to join in.

W Writing opportunities for your child should be plentiful. Give writing paper and colorful pencils as gifts.

Q Questions about the story that do not require "right" answers allow your child to think about the story. Invite your child to give reasons for his or her answers or thoughts.

X 'X'amine print on cereal boxes, tubes of toothpaste or other products at home. Point out print in stores or on signs when you are in the car.

R Read at least 15 minutes a day! Reading aloud needs to be a top priority.

Y Young readers like to share in the reading act. The easier the book, the bigger chunks they read. The more difficult the book, the more you read.

S Strive to make reading experiences so pleasurable that you and your child look forward to your reading time together.

Z Zero in on your child's interests. Some children like fairytales or stories; others like funny books; others like fact books. Your librarian can help you take home some books that you and your child will enjoy reading aloud.

T Talk about what you read before, during, and after reading. Your child's language and thinking develop when there's a chance to talk about the stories you read.

U Understand that your child may want you to read favorite books again and again. A child may still enjoy the same books even after you think the child has outgrown them.

