Getting Ready to Read at Home

Places to Talk
Talking with your child is one of the best ways to help develop language and other early literacy skills. Conversations help a child express thoughts, learn what words mean, and gain new information about the world. Any place is a good place to talk with your child. All you need is to take the time and ignore any distractions. Listen to what your child says, answer questions, add new information, and listen some more! Ten chances to chat during the day include:

- Morning routines
- Doing household chores
- In the car
- At the store
- Waiting in a line
- During bath time
- Before a nap
- Before bedtime
- During meals
- Out on a walk

Places to Sing
Singing helps children hear the distinct sounds that make up words. This is an important early literacy skill. Songs also teach new vocabulary and introduce new ideas and concepts.

Sing with your children any chance you have: at home, in the car, during a walk. You don’t need a perfect voice, just some enthusiasm. Play music that was written especially for children. Check out music CDs from the library or listen to family-friendly music online from sites such as www.freesongsforkids.com or www.speakaboos.com/songs.

Move to the music. Children develop motor skills as they clap, jump, twirl, and spin to music. Make simple musical instruments and play them as you sing. Fill a plastic bottle with cereal or use a pie-tin and wooden spoon as percussion instruments. Need more ideas for what to make? Find help at the library.

You also can sing nursery rhymes or sing instead of reading a book. Find a book that is based on a song (ask your librarian for help) or make up a simple tune for one of your child’s favorite books.
Places to Read

Shared reading—or reading books together—is the single best way to help children develop early literacy skills. Read together every day and talk about the books you read.

Create a special space for your children to look at books. Have a comfortable chair or pillows and a small shelf or basket for favorite books. Make sure there's room for you and your child to sit together and that your child can reach books without needing help. Encourage your child to pretend to read a book to a favorite stuffed animal.

Have a special spot for library books. Keep a list of favorite books to check out and the names of authors you especially enjoy. Write down questions your child asks. On your next visit to the library, look for books related to your child's interests.

Show your child that reading is important by letting him or her see you read.

Places to Write

Reading and writing go together. Writing activities help children learn letter names and sound out new words. Writing also helps children understand that written words represent ideas, places, and events.

Make it easy for your child to write throughout the day. Set up a space where your child can go on his or her own and use writing materials. Provide pencils, crayons, or markers of different sizes so your child can write with what is most comfortable. Use unlined paper. When your child is ready to write letters, begin with uppercase letters. Try writing favorite words first, such as your child's name or "Mom" and "Dad."

Show examples of your writing: lists, letters, thank you notes, instructions, etc. Write your child a note and leave it in the writing area. Display your child's writing for the entire family to see. Save what your child writes in a box or basket.

Places to Play

Children learn how to express themselves, the meaning of words, and other early literacy skills by playing. Play requires a little space, simple props, and some imagination and encouragement. You don't need special toys or expensive electronics. Provide inexpensive props like large boxes, old clothes or costumes for dress up, empty food containers, paper shopping bags, and empty paper towel rolls. Make sock puppets; create a puppet stage using a sheet draped over two chairs and act out a favorite story.

Encourage your child to create stories by imagining he or she is in another place or pretending to be someone else. Play comes naturally to young children and is one of the primary ways they learn. Provide plenty of opportunities for your child to play.
Talking to Get Every Child Ready to Read
Books That Invite Participation

Young readers will learn about animals and color in this fun book where different animals introduce each other by using clever rhymes.

Ned gets into all sorts of misadventures as his luck turns from good to bad to good again.

A little gorilla steals the zookeeper’s keys, unlocks the cages of the other animals, and the whole group follows the zookeeper to his house.

A rhyming text that follows Lloyd the young llama on his quest to find out who else might have a llama for a Mama.

This fun rhyming story about a day in the life of Jesse Bear contains bright, colorful illustrations.

A frog trying to capture a fly suddenly finds himself held captive and must jump in order to escape imminent danger.

In this rollicking rendition of the classic tale, the hardworking little red hen tries to get her friends to help with her chores.

A magical hat, leaving a trail of sparkles and glitter, turns the townspeople into fun-loving animals. Guessing which animal the next person turns into captivates and engages young readers.

An enchanting tale of a very old man who goes off in search of the prettiest cat in the world for his wife and returns with millions of cats from which to choose.

Children will enjoy reading along to this expanded version of the popular street rhyming chant (Miss Polly has a dolly who is sick, sick, sick).

My Little Sister Ate One Hare written by Bill Grossman; illustrated by Kevin Hawkes. Dragonfly Books, 1996.
Entertaining counting/rhyming story about a young magician who cheerfully consumes just about anything.

A grandmother, child, and various pets all share a bed and take a nap together, until they are joined by a wakeful flea that causes a huge commotion.

A group of rhyming dust bunnies encounter resistance from a fourth dust bunny, only to learn that he is trying to warn them of impending danger from the broom and vacuum cleaner.

A book about the layers of clothes that we put on and take off, told in appealing rhymes.

The 40th anniversary of this book is a pop-up adventure that makes the story of the caterpillar’s transformation into a butterfly even more intriguing.

Every Child Ready to Read® is a project of the Association for Library Service to Children and the Public Library Association, divisions of the American Library Association (www.everychildreadytoread.org).

Every Child Ready to Read® 2nd Edition
Section V—15
Talking to Get Every Child Ready to Read
Wordless Books That Make You the Storyteller

These books tell stories through pictures. Wordless picture books give children the opportunity to tell the stories themselves. In telling their stories, children develop language skills and also get a sense of sequence of events in stories.

A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog by Mercer Mayer. Dial Press, 2003. Pictures tell the story of a boy and a dog as they try to catch a frog.

Carl's Masquerade by Alexandra Day. Farrar, 1992. Carl the dog is responsible for watching the baby while its parents attend a masquerade. Instead, Carl and his young ward decide to crash the party.


Dinosaur! by Peter Sis. HarperCollins, 2000. A small boy taking a bath with his dinosaur toy is soon surrounded by real dinosaurs and transported to an ancient prehistoric pond.


Flotsam by David Wiesner. Clarion Books, 2006. Vivid watercolors illustrate the story of an inquisitive boy who finds a camera on the beach. When the film is developed a surprising marine world is revealed.


I See a Song by Eric Carle. Scholastic, 1996. Vibrant illustrations accompany this tale of a musician and his violin bringing music to life through shapes and color.

The Lion & The Mouse by Jerry Pinkney. Little, Brown, 2009. When a lion spares a mouse's life, they both learn a valuable lesson about the importance of kindness in this beautifully illustrated adaption of the famous Aesop's Fable.


Time Flies by Eric Rohmann. Crown, 1994. The simple story of a bird who travels through time and ends up in the prehistoric era is transformed by beautiful and dramatic illustrations.

Truck by Donald Crews. Greenwillow Books, 1980. Readers follow a big red truck on its journey from loading a shipment to traveling and delivering the goods.


Welcome to the Zoo by Alison Jay. Dial Press, 2008. Animals and visitors interact through fun activities in this imaginary zoo where there are no cages for the animals.

Window by Jeannie Baker. Greenwillow Books, 1991. Uses multimedia collages to illustrate the effect human beings have on the environment. Readers follow Sam as he watches the world change from his window over the years.

---

Every Child Ready to Read® is a project of the Association for Library Service to Children and the Public Library Association, divisions of the American Library Association (www.everychildreadytoread.org).
Singing to Get Every Child Ready to Read
Books with Rhyme and Poetry

Animal Trunk: Silly Poems to Read Aloud written by Charles Ghigna; illustrated by Gabriel, H. N. Abrams, 1999. Simple poems about the animal kingdom are enhanced by beautiful illustrations by Belgian artist Gabriel.

Be Glad Your Nose Is on Your Face and Other Poems written by Jack Prelutsky; illustrated by Brandon Dorman. Greenwillow Books, 2008. This analogy of U.S. Children's Poet Laureate Jack Prelutsky's poems includes fifteen new poems paired with beautiful illustrations that add an additional layer to the other crafty, witty poems.


Down by the Station written and illustrated by Will Hillenbrand. Harcourt, 1999. Beautiful illustrations accompany this familiar song about a group of baby animals on their way to the zoo. Music on the last page encourages children to sing-along and participate.

Green Eggs and Ham written and illustrated by Dr. Seuss. Random House, 1988. The classic story follows Sam I Am as he tries to convince a young friend that green eggs and ham are great and should be eaten everywhere.


Magic Hat written by Mem Fox; illustrated by Tricia Tusa. Harcourt, 2002. A magical hat, leaving a trail of sparkles and glitter, turns the townpeople into fun-loving animals, and readers are drawn into the mystery of what animal the next person will turn into.

Miss Polly Has a Dolly written by Pamela Duncan Edwards; illustrated by Elcia Castaldi. Putnam, 2003. Children will enjoy reading along to this expanded version of the popular street rhyming chant (Miss Polly has a dolly who is sick, sick, sick).

Rhyming Dust Bunnies written and illustrated by Jan Thomas. Beach Lane Books, 2009. A group of rhyming dust bunnies encounter resistance from a fourth dust bunny, only to learn that he is trying to warn them of impending danger from the broom and vacuum cleaner.


Such a Silly Baby! written by Richard and Steffanie Lorig; illustrated by Amanda Shepherd. Chronicle Books, 2007. Fun rhyming book about a mother who can't keep up with her bustling baby. The baby gets switched with a chimpanzee but ends up having a great time at the zoo.


Toes Have Wiggles, Kids Have Giggles written by Harriet Ziefert; illustrated by Rebecca Doughty. Putnam, 2002. Whimsical and fun book that uses great illustrations to provide a different look at everyday objects and experiences.


For more ideas see www.songsforteaching.com.
Singing to Get Every Child Ready to Read
Books That You Can Sing

*Down by the Station* written and illustrated by Will Hillenbrand. Harcourt, 1999.
Beautiful illustrations accompany this familiar song about a group of baby animals on their way to the zoo.

Mother Duck begins to lose her ducklings one by one, so she sets out to find them. The whole song ends happily as the family reunites.

A little gorilla steals the zookeeper's keys, unlocks the cages of the other animals, and the whole group follows the zookeeper to his house.

Long reworks this classic nursery song with the mother bunny showing her baby the wonders of the world, instead of buying things as in the typical version of this song.

Based on the song “I Ain’t Gonna Rain No More,” this zany story follows a boy who paints everything including his body. Vibrant illustrations add to the fun and the rhythmic text can be read or sung.

*Little White Duck* written by Walt Whippo; music by Bernard Zaritzky; illustrated by Joan Paley. Little, Brown, 2002.
Imaginative and vibrant illustrations accompany this silly song that includes the sounds of animals having a good time in the water (until a snake comes along).

Playful extension of the classic nursery rhyme, this continuation of Mary’s saga adds additional layers to her friendship with the lamb.

*Old MacDonald Had a Woodshop* written by Lisa M. Schulman; illustrated by Ashley Wolff. Putnam, 2002.
In this book Old MacDonald is a sheep who enlists the help of his animal friends to build a farm.

Pete the Cat goes walking down the street wearing his brand-new white shoes. Along the way, his shoes change from white to red to blue to brown to wet as he steps in piles of strawberries, blueberries, and other big messes.

An easy-to-handle board book about a little boy who befriends a group of farm animals after they make a huge mess while his parents are gone.

Set to the tune of “The Wheels on the Bus,” the author adds many different animals to this fun bus adventure.

This quirky book uses a die-cut hole to show the contents of the old lady’s stomach and also all the funny things that she swallowed. A Caldecott Honor Book.

A family of five goes on a hunt for a bear across rivers, grass, and mud, only to be chased back to their home by the bear.

A fun expansion on the Yankee Doodle song, this musical book adds additional characters, imaginative scenery, and the opening of a restaurant, Yankee Doodle’s Noodles.

For more Ideas see
Reading to Help Every Child Get Ready to Read
Books with Rich Language

An Alphabet of Dinosaurs written by Peter Dodson; illustrated by Wayne D. Barlowe. Scholastic, 1995. This beautifully illustrated book features twenty-six dinosaurs, one for every letter of the alphabet. Illustrations are accompanied by facts about these monsters of the Mesozoic.

Big Plans written by Bob Shea; illustrated by Lane Smith. Hyperion, 2008. Delightful illustrations accompany this amusing tale of a little boy and his plan for world domination, though right now he is stuck in a time-out corner.

Bubble Trouble written by Margaret Mahy; illustrated by Polly Dunbar. Clarion Books, 2009. Baby is trapped in a bubble blown by older sister Mabel and floats across the neighborhood. Everybody comes together to form a human ladder to rescue the baby.


Chrysanthemum written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow Books, 1991. Chrysanthemum used to love her name, but became weary of it when she started school and her name became a joke amongst her classmates. With the support of her family, and a surprise from a teacher, Chrysanthemum and her classmates learn to love and accept her special name.

First to Fly: How Wilbur and Orville Wright Invented the Airplane written by Peter Busby; illustrated by David Craig. Crown, 2002. Gorgeous illustrations are paired with informative text about the work of the Wright brothers. Includes archival photographs and diagrams.


Make Way for Ducklings written and illustrated by Robert McCloskey. Viking, 1941. In this classic and well-loved tale, Mr. and Mrs. Mallard search for a home for their duckling family. With help from a policeman named Michael, they are able to navigate the busy city streets.

On Noah’s Ark written and illustrated by Jan Brett. Putnam, 2003. The familiar story of Noah’s ark is told from his granddaughter’s point of view, as she helps her grandfather calm the animals and keep them comfortable.

Otis written and illustrated by Loren Long. Philomel Books, 2009. Otis the tractor lives a happy life on the farm with his little calf friend, until a new yellow tractor replaces him. Surprisingly it is only Otis who can come to the rescue when the little calf gets into trouble.


Something from Nothing: Adapted from a Jewish Folktale written and illustrated by Phoebe Gilman. Scholastic, 1993. This modern adaptation of a Jewish folktale describes how the blanket Grandfather made for young Joseph is transformed over the years into a jacket, a button, and, ultimately, a story.


Reading to Get Every Child Ready to Read
Books About Science and Math

Provides interesting facts about air, along with photographs and experiments that will help readers understand the power and force of air.

Illustrated with cut paper collages, this book is an appealing introduction to the ‘world records’ held by 14 animals with unique characteristics—the anaconda, which can swallow a whole goat or the Etruscan shrew, a mammal so small it can sleep in a teaspoon.

Informational text and beautiful photography explores the lives of fourteen types of cottontail rabbits and their environments. Includes additional information about rabbits from around the world.

Count Down to Fall written by Fran Haw; illustrated by Sherry Neidigh. Sylvan Dell, 2009.
Vibrant and detailed illustrations accompany rhyming verse to explore the season, the trees, the leaves, and the woodland animals, all while counting down from ten to one.

Wonderfully illustrated introduction to eggs for young readers; includes an array of facts on 60 types of eggs.

H.A. Rey, the author and illustrator behind the Curious George books, provides an enjoyable and informative guide to the constellations and stargazing.

A teacher brings in a variety of pumpkins and has her students guess the number of seeds in the pumpkins. Charlie, who is the smallest boy in the class, feels frustrated when he has to guess last but is surprised when they crack open the pumpkins.

Irresistible illustrations and simple facts combine to teach young readers the properties of air. The book also includes instructions for easy experiments that will excite and interest budding scientists.

Includes 52 fun, interactive activities to help children engage with the outdoors. From the city to the wide-open meadows of the country—each activity is meant to promote exploration, stimulate imagination, and heighten a child’s sense of wonder.

This fun, activity-driven book introduces children to four scientific arenas: physical science, nature, bugs, and the human body.

In this delightful book about counting, readers are introduced to counting by finding hidden numbers and counting spots on the back of ladybugs.

Ms. Fizzle, an unorthodox teacher, takes her class on a magical trip inside the body of one of the students in order to teach them about the workings of the human body.

Realistic photographs accompany this informative resource on spiders. Includes plenty of interesting facts that will have readers wanting to read more about arachnids.

Continued on next page
Reading to Get Every Child Ready to Read
Books About Science and Math, cont.

Clever gummy bear-themed rhyming/counting book that also teaches color recognition, basic shapes, and adding/subtracting.

T-Math is a fun-loving dinosaur who also happens to be a math whiz. His advanced skills in math become invaluable when his sister encounters danger and needs help.

A captivating overview of winged creatures including insects, bats, and birds, this fascinating book also includes a glossary and recommended works.

This easy-to-follow alphabet book presents facts about the weather in a fun and engaging way and introduces readers to weather-related terms.

Dramatic photographs accompany this informative look at whales and their habits and habitats.

A great tool for teaching young children about the five senses, this whimsical yet accurate book provides information on the eyes, fingers, ears, nose, and mouth.

You Can’t Use Your Brain If You’re a Jellyfish written by Fred Ehrlich; illustrated by Amanda Haley. Blue Apple Books, 2005.
This book explores the disparity between brains, teaching readers about small animals with small brains, large animals with large brains, primates, and the biggest primate brain of all—the human brain.

For more math ideas check out http://mixinginmath.terc.edu/
Writing to Get Every Child Ready to Read
Books for Fun with Letters

Using fun animal characters, Boynton introduces the alphabet to young children in this board book.

From the author of I Like Me! comes a book about a group of animal friends who encourage themselves and each other by using words from each letter of the alphabet.

T-Rex expresses his love for the alphabet as he eats his way through the letters in various settings.

A creative look at the alphabet where an A can become an Ark or a C becomes the smile of a Clown.


Bright and bold pictures illustrate the story of the little letters of the alphabet and their big adventure.

A mouse starts up the big construction project of building the alphabet and uses all sorts of fun methods like airbrushing, buttoning, and carving until all the letters are done.

This richly illustrated book explores a circus theme, with each page featuring an animal name and an adjective (adoring alligators, charming camels).

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom written by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault; illustrated by Lois Ehlert. Little Simon, 2006.
Fun rhyming book in which the whole alphabet family decides to climb up a coconut tree.

Zuckerman uses his gorgeous animal photography to introduce the alphabet.

The Man With the Yellow Hat shows Curious George how to read the letters of the alphabet.

Readers are introduced to fruits and vegetables in this bright, bold alphabet book.

Into the A, B, Sea; An Ocean Alphabet Book written by Deborah Lee Rose; illustrated by Steve Jenkins. Scholastic, 2000.
This beautiful book of collages captures curiosities of the sea and using a rhyming text, introduces various sea creatures in alphabetical order.

Playful puppy Kipper and his pig friend, Arnold, go on an adventure to collect items from every letter of the alphabet.

An old black fly gets into all sorts of trouble while encountering things in alphabetical order, causing a fuss until he meets his fate in the hands of a fly swatter.

Continued on next page
Writing to Get Every Child Ready to Read
Books for Fun with Letters, cont.


Read Anything Good Lately? written by Susan Allen and Jane Lindaman; illustrated by Vicky Enright. Milbrook Press, 2003. Readers will relate to the protagonist as she tries to get her hands on reading materials because she loves to read. Everything is listed in alphabetical order, from atlas and biographies to the zodiac.

The Turn-Around, Upside-Down Alphabet Book written and illustrated by Lisa Campbell Ernst. Simon & Schuster, 2004. This innovative alphabet book encourages readers to examine each letter very closely, as the letters transform into different objects depending on how the book is held.

For more ideas check out www.preschoolorainbow.org/alphabet.htm.
Playing to Help Every Child Get Ready to Read
Books with Movement, Props, or Puppets

A small boy longs to be like his father, and they end up playing a game where they switch roles.

Brother and sister bunnies, Max and Ruby, want to bake cakes for their grandma’s birthday. The grocer cannot read their list until Max turns it into easy-to-understand drawings for the grocer.

Children will enjoy this retelling of the classic tale and will find hilarious and nonsensical details in the amusing illustrations.

A group of multilingual friends dance and play to an adorable rhyme that will get readers moving as well.

This fun question and answer book leads readers through various exercise routines by following the movements of various animals.

A little girl, warns to never to go into the jungle, encounters the Gunnikwift when she gets lost in her search for flowers.

Jungle animals come to life in a playground and encourage a little boy and his older sister to express their happiness through voice and movement.

When Strega Nona hires Big Anthony to help with her chores she warns him never to touch her enchanted pasta pot which produces pasta at the command of a spell. When she leaves to visit Strega Amelia, Big Anthony gets into trouble with the pasta pot.

Tacky the penguin, an unconventionally loud and scheming penguin disliked by his peers, ends up being the hero when he comes up with plans against hunters that threaten his group’s survival.

In this beautifully illustrated version of the beloved rhyme “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear” readers will follow a teddy bear’s adventures trying to get home.

An old couple bakes a gingerbread boy because they are childless, but the gingerbread boy runs away and escapes from various hungry predators. In the end, however, the gingerbread boy is unable to escape his fate when he meets the wily fox.

The familiar story of the three bears and Goldilocks is enhanced by beautiful illustrations as well as the use of different font types.

Galdone adds appealing illustrations to the classic story of three billy goat brothers that must confront a scary troll.

An adaptation of the story of the three little pigs, this story focuses on three little rigs who try to save their newly built garages against a big, bad wrecking ball.

A family of five goes on a hunt for a bear across rivers, grass, and mud, only to be chased back to their home by the bear.

Every Child Ready to Read® is a project of the Association for Library Service to Children and the Public Library Association, divisions of the American Library Association (www.everychildreadytoread.org).