

Reading Tips for Parents by Age – by Reading Rockets

A child's success as a reader begins much earlier than the first day of school. Reading, and a love for reading, begins at home. Although we have divided these tips by age, many of them can be used with children at various ages and stages — we encourage you to choose the ones that work best for your child.

Literacy Tips for Children 0-3 Years Old

What to Look For:

From birth to eight months, a baby will

- react to your voice.
- laugh and babble.
- make noises to show interest and to get your attention.
- learn to understand names of common people and things.

From 8 months to 18 months (1 ½ years), a baby

- may be able to say two or three words.
- will babble in long strings that sound like sentences.
- can understand many words.
- will make noises to get help or to get your attention.
- will look at picture books with you.

Toddlers (18 months – 3 years)

- may be able to say 200 different words.
- will put words together in simple sentences.
- will know the names of many common things in the house.
- will enjoy listening to stories for short periods of time.
- will begin to play pretend games.

How Families Can Help

- Learning begins with good health. Good food and enough sleep are important.
- Spend time with your child. Play with him or her. Include your child in family activities.
- Talk to your child all the time. Sing. Whisper. Make different sounds. Play singing and clapping games.
- Let your child play with toys that have different shapes and that feel different, like teddy bears and pillows.
- Let your child see you reading and writing.
- Teach your child ideas like Up-Down or In-Out. When you swing your child in play, say, “Up we go! Down we go!”
- Look at picture books with your child. Young children like books with big, bold pictures. Point to things in the books. When your child starts to talk, ask him or her to find things in the book (“Where’s the truck?”).

What Kind of Books to Look for (Ages 0 - 3)

- Cloth or vinyl books that are easy to clean
- Books with bright, simple pictures and patterns
- Board books with thick pages
- Books with familiar objects

- Books with songs or simple stories
- Stories about things that happen in your child's life: going to bed, being a messy eater, missing mom
- Predictable books

Good Books for Children (0-3 Years Old)

Ahlberg, Janet & Ahlberg, Allan. *Peek-a-Boo*. Viking, 1981.
 Asch, Frank. *Mooncake*. Simon & Schuster, 1986.
 Aylesworth, Jim. *The Goodnight Kiss*. Atheneum, 1993.
 Brown, Marc. *Hand Rhymes*. Dutton, 1985.
 Brown, Margaret Wise. *Goodnight Moon*. HarperCollins, 1947.
 Burningham, John. *The Blanket*. Crowell, 1976.
 Choro, Kay. *Baby's Lap Book*. Dutton, 1977.
 Crews, Donald. *Freight Train*. Greenwillow, 1978.
 Daly, Niki. *Not So Fast, Songololo*. Atheneum, 1986.
 DePaola, Tomie. *Tomie DePaola's Mother Goose*. Putnam, 1985.
 Hill, Eric. *Where's Spot?* Putnam, 1980.
 Hoban, Tana. *1, 2, 3*. Greenwillow, 1985.
 Isadora, Rachel. *I See*. Greenwillow, 1985.
 Johnson, Angela. *Mama Bird, Baby Bird*. Orchard, 1994.
 Kunhardt, Dorothy. *Pat the Bunny*. Golden, 1962 (1940).
 Ople, Iona. *My Very First Mother Goose*. Candlewick Press, 1996.
 Ormerod, Helen. *Friends*. Simon & Schuster, 1981.
 Watanabe, Shifao. *How Do I Put It On?* Philomel, 1979.
 Wells, Rosemary. *Max's Bedtime*. Dial, 1985.

Literacy Tips for Children 4-6 Years Old

What to Look For

- Your child will show interest in books and ask adults to read to him or her.
- Your child may have favorite books and authors. Your child may ask for favorite books to be read again and again.
- Your child will guess about what will happen in a story. You can help by asking, "What do you think is going to happen?"
- Your child may ask questions about stories, make comments about stories, and connect stories to his or her life.
- Your child may like to retell or act out stories or parts of stories.
- Your child will pretend to read.
- Your child will learn that we read the print, not the pictures. He or she will begin to look at the print when someone reads a book your child knows.
- Your child will scribble or pretend to write. Over time, he or she will begin to use letters. By kindergarten, your child will begin to use sounds to write letters. For example, the word "ball" might be written "B" or "BL."
- Your child will begin to learn the ABCs. By the end of kindergarten, she or he will know all the letters, know some words by sight, and know how to rhyme.

How Families Can Help

- Point out print in everyday life—the back of the cereal box, toys, fast food restaurants, traffic signals. This helps children learn that print is all around them.
- Sing songs, say little poems or Mother Goose rhymes, and play rhyming word games with your child. Rhyming will become important as children learn to read.
- Tell stories to your child.
- Read aloud to your child. Point to the words on the page. Move your finger from left to right as you read.
- Ask older children to read to younger children.
- Ask your child to read to you (or to pretend-read to you). Make this reading fun. Don't worry if your child does not read all the words right. Make sure your child knows that you think he or she is a good reader.
- Go to the library together. Check out books together. The librarian can help you find good books for your child.

- Have books, magazines, and newspapers around the house. Let your child see that you like to read.
- Ask your child to write. Ask your child to read the writing to you. Praise him or her for being such a good writer. Don't worry about spelling.

What Kind of Books to Look for (Ages 4-6)

- Stories that rhyme
- Stories that repeat sentences and words
- Adventures or silly stories
- Books about giants, monsters, dinosaurs, machines, and animals acting like people
- Books with poems

Good Books for Children (4-6 Years Old)

- Bemelmans, Ludwig. *Madeline*. Viking, 1977
- Brett, Jan. *The Mitten*. Putnam, 1989.
- Brown, Marcia. *Stone Soup*. Aladdin, 1987.
- Cannon, Janell. *Stellaluna*. Harcourt Brace, 1993.
- DeRegniers, Beatrice. (Ed.). *Sing a Song of Popcorn: Every Child's Book of Poems*. Scholastic, 1988.
- Dr. Seuss. *The Cat in the Hat*. Random House, 1957.
- Eastman, P.D. *Go Dog, Go!* Random House, 1961.
- Freeman, Don. *Corduroy*. Viking, 1985.
- Hoberman, Mary Ann. *A House is a House for Me*. Viking, 1982.
- Jordon, Martin, and Jordon, Tannis. *Amazon Alphabet*. Kingfisher, 1996.
- McCloskey, Robert. *Blueberries for Sal*. Viking, 1976.
- McCloskey, Robert. *Make Way for Ducklings*. Viking, 1941.
- McDonald, Megan. *My House Has Stars*. Orchard, 1996.
- Numeroff, Laura. *If You Give a Moose a Muffin*. HarperCollins, 1991.
- Pinkney, Andrea. *Bill Pickett—Rodeo-Riding Cowboy*. Gulliver, 1996.
- Viorst, Judith. *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. Alladin, 1992.
- Williams, Vera B. *Cherries and Cherry Pits*. Greenwillow, 1986.
- Wood, Audrey. *The Napping House*. Harcourt Brace, 1991.
- Young, Ed. *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China*. Philomel, 1989.
- Zion, Gene. *Harry the Dirty Dog*. HarperCollins, 1956.