



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Parenting the  
Preschooler



# Reading Readiness

## *Tips to Raise a Reader*

- Read together every day and everywhere. Ask children to bring a book or two when heading to the park.
- Think “outside the book” and read out loud. When grocery shopping, read signs and labels. Read a recipe together. Go on a scavenger hunt for sounds and letters.
- Send positive messages about the joy of reading. Make a trip to the library an adventure.
- Reread favorites. Children love to hear their favorite stories over and over again. Capture the child’s attention by pointing to words and pictures as you read.
- Expose children to “mirror” and “window” books where they see themselves represented and also learn about different cultures and experiences.
- Talk, talk, talk. A child’s vocabulary grows through rich conversations with others. They are really listening to you.

## *Why Read to Children?*

Reading out loud is the most important thing you can do to prepare children to read. Building pre-literacy skills in young children helps them achieve greater success in school. Throughout the day, read what you see around you: signs, labels, recipes, or words from a text message.



Photo by Josh Applegate on Unsplash

## Read, Read, Read

What preschoolers know before kindergarten is strongly related to how easily they learn to read. A child is ready to read when they are able to recognize and name letters of the alphabet, are aware of sounds in words, can rhyme, and know how to hold a book and turn the pages.



Photo by cottonbro from Pexels

## Make It Fun!

Preschoolers can tell stories, have a conversation, and scribble their name. Research suggests some children may not have the early learning experiences they need to become successful readers. Many activities can support early reading and writing skills.

Of all these activities, reading out loud is the most important. This can be as easy as five minutes at a time. Little snippets of reading turn into 20 minutes before you know it. Use activities and play that are of interest to the child. Are they into toy cars? If so, how about reading the car ads together? Don't worry if your young child becomes distracted when you're reading or if you don't get through a whole book. Follow the child's lead—encourage, and stop when the child's attention shifts.

Experiment with different types of reading materials to see what is of interest. The process of learning to read involves many different complex skills. Preschoolers learn best when they are doing something that is important and fun to them.