



Singing

Singing slows down language. It helps children hear the smaller sounds in words. There is also a different note for each syllable so they hear words broken down in to parts, supporting phonological awareness. This helps children later sound out words. Some songs have interesting words that we would not hear in normal conversation with young children, so they are also building vocabulary.

As you sing with children, you have the opportunity to support their pre-reading skills in little ways that add up to make a difference by the time children enter school. Using the five practices (Talking, Singing, Reading, Writing and Playing) to support the early literacy skills in enjoyable ways is the best way to help children enter school ready to learn to read.

Discover some ideas at DaybyDayVa.org.

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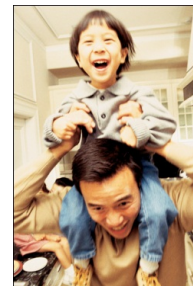
 **Talking**

 **Singing**

 **Reading**

 **Writing**

 **Playing**[®]



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The early literacy environment matters.

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Talking

Children start to learn language by hearing people talk. This is oral language! When you talk with your baby, your baby is hearing the sounds of the languages you speak, learning what words mean as you point to and label things. Babies will start to babble and their babble uses the sounds they have heard. As children get older they follow directions, repeat your words, respond to what you say with words, phrases, and then whole sentences. Listening to children while they speak is as important as talking to them. Young children need more time than adults do to figure out what to say and how to say it. Having your children talk, tell and retell stories, and tell you what they know all helps them to later understand what they read.

When you add new words and information to conversations with your children, you are developing their vocabulary and background knowledge. When you talk with them about signs and logos, you are developing their print awareness. When you talk with them about shapes and observe what is alike and different, or point out letters, you are developing their letter knowledge.

As you talk with children, you have the opportunity to support their pre-reading skills in little ways that add up to make a difference by the time children enter school. Using the five practices (Talking, Singing, Reading, Writing and Playing) to support the early literacy skills in enjoyable ways is the best way to help children enter school ready to learn to read.

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Discover some things to talk about
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Reading



Shared reading is the single most important activity that you can do to help children get ready to read, even from birth! Remember to keep the interaction around the book a positive one. When children have positive experiences around books and reading they are more likely to stick with learning to read when they get to school, even if it is difficult.

Books have different words than the words of conversation so children learn more words when you read books to them. Some board books for babies actually do not have many words, so you would add some to those on the page. In this way you are developing your children's vocabulary.

Reading books helps develop children's background knowledge. When you read story books, they learn the structure of story so that when they are asked to write a story in school they know what to do. When you read factual books with young children you respond to their curiosity and help them learn about the world.

When pointing to the words in the title or a repeated phrase you support print awareness. You can point out letters in any book or share alphabet books to support letter knowledge. Many books for young children include the sounds of animals and have rhymes, both of which support phonological awareness.

As you read with children, you have the opportunity to support their pre-reading skills in little ways that add up to make a difference by the time children enter school. Visit your public library for books your librarian is knowledgeable and delighted to help. Using the five practices (Talking, Singing, Reading, Writing and Playing) to support the early literacy skills in enjoyable ways is the best way to help children enter school ready to learn to read.

You might also share the book from Tumblebooks library or the book of the day on DaybyDayva.org.

Discover some ideas at DaybyDayVa.org.

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Writing

Reading and writing go together. Both are ways to represent the spoken word. Writing goes through stages from light markings to letter like forms to drawing letters to forming them. Writing helps children understand that print has meaning. When children scribble and then say what it means, they are understanding that what they have written or drawn means something. The beginning of writing for very young children is learning how to use their hands and fingers so that later they will hold crayons and pencils.

As you write with children, you have the opportunity to support their pre-reading skills in little ways that add up to make a difference by the time children enter school. Using the five practices (Talking, Singing, Reading, Writing and Playing) to support the early literacy skills in enjoyable ways is the best way to help children enter school ready to learn to read.

Discover some craft/writing ideas
at DaybyDayVa.org.

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Playing

Play, in addition to being fun, helps children to think symbolically. One item represents another—a block might represent a telephone. This kind of symbolic thinking is the same kind of thinking that is used for reading. Pictures and letters represent real things. Dramatic play, when children act out stories, helps them build background knowledge—how stories work. As you play with children, you have the opportunity to support their pre-reading skills in little ways that add up to make a difference by the time children enter school. Using the five practices (Talking, Singing, Reading, Writing and Playing) to support the early literacy skills in enjoyable ways is the best way to help children enter school ready to learn to read.

Several libraries in Virginia have Early Literacy Activity Centers or places for children to develop early literacy skills through play.

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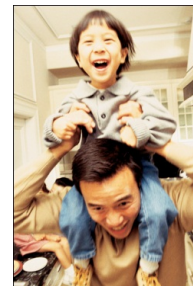
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