

Tips for Reading Aloud With Preschoolers

Read aloud so preschoolers can:

- Continue to associate reading with warm, pleasant feelings; learn about words and language; and expand listening skills.
- Pay attention to the language of books and begin to notice how it differs from spoken language.
- Listen to the sounds in words and notice how some are the same and some are different.
- Build their vocabularies with words they understand and can use.
- Gain background knowledge about a variety of topics.
- Talk about the characters, settings, and plot and relate them to their own lives.
- Learn more about print concepts, such as, print is spoken words written down, the letters in words are written in a certain order, and written words are separated by spaces.

Choose books that preschoolers like:

- Preschoolers feel good about their growing skills and accomplishments. As they learn new concepts and self-help skills, read stories about young children who have similar experiences.
- Preschoolers have good memories. Read stories with simple plots children can retell in their own words (to themselves, a stuffed animal, or a friend) and pattern books with repetitive and predictable rhymes, phrases, and story lines that let children participate.
- Preschoolers are building their listening skills and attention spans. Read longer picture books and begin chapter books that last for several sessions.
- Preschoolers are curious. Read information books with facts, explanations, and new people, places, and things.
- Preschoolers know a lot about their own world. Read books that let them use their knowledge to understand books that introduce new topics, facts, and ideas.
- Preschoolers have vivid imaginations. Read folk tales and books with animal characters that think and talk like humans.
- Preschoolers are learning about the sounds of letters and words. Read books with rhymes and alliteration.

Try these read-aloud tips:

- Introduce the book: read the title, author, and illustrator; look at the cover; talk about what the book might be about; suggest things to look and listen for.
- Run your finger under the text, while reading.
- Answer questions related to the book; save other questions for later.
- Talk about the story during and after a read-aloud session.
- Use information and reference books to answer children's questions.
- Ask children to look closely at the pictures to help them understand the story and make predictions about what might happen next.
- Repeat interesting words and rhymes while reading a book and at a later time.
- Pause and wait so children can say the word that ends a repetitive or predictable phrase.
- Stop to ask thinking questions: "What might happen next? Where did he go? Why did she do that?"
- Follow up on the story. Invite a child to talk; draw or paint; pretend to be one of the characters; and so on.