

Simple Things Families Can Do to Help Their Child Become a Reader

Reading begins long before children can read on their own. This tip sheet shares simple, everyday ways families can support language and literacy development through talking, reading, playing, and exploring together, helping children build the skills and confidence they need to become successful readers.

- **Read to and with your children for 30 minutes every day.** It is very important to read out loud to your children before they start school. Help your children to read with you. Ask them to find letters and words on the page and talk with your children about the story.
- **Talk with infants and young children before they learn to read.** Talk with your children all day long, using short, simple sentences. Talking with them even before they can speak will help them later when they learn to read and write.
- **Help your children to read on their own.** Reading at home helps children do better in school. Have lots of children's books in your home and visit the library or bookstore every week. Help your children get their own library cards and let them pick out their own books.
- If your child has a developmental delay, your child may find reading frustrating. **Use technology to support reading** such as audio books on a device, audio recording yourself reading a book so your child can read along, or apps that highlight words as they read them aloud.
- **Help your child to see that reading is important.** Suggest reading as a free-time activity. Make sure your children have time in their day to read. Set a good example for your children by reading newspapers, magazines, and books in front of your child. If you are reading on a device, make it evident that you are reading.
- **Set up a reading area in your home.** Keep books that interest your children in places where they can easily reach them. As your children become better readers, make sure that you add harder books to your collection.
- **Give your children writing materials.** Children want to learn how to write and to practice writing. Help them learn by having paper, pencils, pens, or crayons for them in your home. Encourage creativity and volume of writing rather than being overly concerned about spelling or penmanship.
- **Read and write with your children in your native language.** Practicing their first language will help your children learn to read and write English.

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- **Talk with your children as you do daily activities together.** When you take your children places, talk with them about what you are doing and ask them questions.
- **Ask your children to describe events in their lives.** Talking about their experiences helps children think about them. Giving detailed descriptions and telling complete stories also helps children learn about story structure and sequencing.
- **Make screen time count.** Not all screen time is the same. Whenever possible, choose active, engaging experiences that encourage children to think, create, move, or interact with others rather than passively consuming content. Set age-appropriate limits and stay involved by knowing what your child is watching or playing.
- **Keep track of your children's progress in school.** Visit your children's classrooms to learn how your children are doing in school and how you can help your children become better students. Ask about the school's reading program and where your children need support.

Source: America Reads Challenge, U.S. Department of Education

*This tip sheet is available in other languages. Find them at **rif.org**.