

Children need reading and writing skills to succeed in school, but learning these skills does not stop in the classroom. Becoming a good reader and writer takes practice, and parents can help their children by providing opportunities for practice at home.

1 Read with your child every day.

Create a habit of reading by reading aloud to your child, or listening to your child read out loud, on a daily basis. If you have multiple children, encourage your children to read aloud to each other.

- **Don't stop reading aloud once your child can read on their own.** Instead, move on to more difficult books.
- **Use audiobooks or podcasts.** Listening to audiobooks throughout the day (for example, during car rides) can provide more opportunities for children to learn new words and ideas. It can also build "stamina," or the ability to pay attention without being distracted.



2 Make reading fun!

Learning to read should be enjoyable, not a chore! You can make reading an pleasant experience for your child by:

- **Creating a special reading spot** or cozy reading nook in your home.
- **Varying your reading selections.** Provide your child with stories, comics, biographies, history books, or books on other topics your child is interested in. No child is too old for books with pictures — interesting visuals can make reading more engaging and enjoyable!



3 Ask questions about what your child reads.

Having conversations with your child about what they are reading can improve their comprehension and help to develop critical thinking and language skills. You can ask your child open-ended questions such as:

Non-Fiction Books

- What do you notice on this page?
- Why do you think this topic is important?
- What new things did you learn from this book?

Fiction Books

- What do you think the character is going to do?
- Why did the character do what she did?
- If you were in this story, what would you have done?



4 Reinforce what your child is learning in school.

Ask your child's teacher what they are learning in school and talk about ways to reinforce these skills at home. For young children, this may mean learning letter names and their associated sounds. For older children, this may mean discussing word meanings and practicing reading aloud for accuracy.



5 Make reading and writing a part of your everyday activities. There are a lot of different ways to integrate reading and writing skills in your day-to-day life! For example:

Reading Activities



Visit the library. Make family visits to the local library part of your routine. At the library, help your child find books or digital resources on topics that interest them, and ask a librarian for help if you can't find what you need.



Build a home library. Create a home collection of reading materials for your child to use. You don't need to purchase new books — you can borrow books from the library; start a book swap with friends or other parents; buy books inexpensively from thrift stores, used bookstores, or library sales; or ask for books for your child's birthday or other holidays.



Don't leave home without a book. Bring a book with you everywhere, and read it with your child when you are waiting somewhere (e.g., at the doctor's office or bus stop).



Point out and read aloud written words in your environment like signs, labels, and words on websites or apps

Writing Activities



Talk with your child regularly and ask a lot of questions. Conversations help develop skills like choosing words, expressing ideas, and reflecting on experiences. Instead of yes-no questions (like "Did you have a good day at school today?"), ask open-ended questions (like "What was the most interesting thing you learned today?").



Provide writing materials. Make sure your child has access to paper and pencils, crayons, markers, pens, or other writing instruments at home.



Encourage your child to write for fun. Leave notes for your child around the house or in a lunch box and ask them to write you back. Have your child write cards or letters to loved ones. Ask your child to make up a story, write it down, and read it to you (or write down your child's story yourself if they are still learning to write).



Ask your child for help with daily writing tasks. Ask your child to help you write grocery/shopping lists, to-do lists, or text messages or emails to family or friends.