

Ready for Reading



In addition to basic language skills and vocabulary growth there are three types of information a child needs to know to be ready to read. They are:

Print Awareness

- Knowledge that people read the text, not just look at the pictures.
- Awareness of how to read a book – right side up; starting with the front page and continuing to the end; the left page is read first and the text is read left to right.
- Understanding that words are units separated by white spaces.

Alphabet Awareness

- Being able to recognise and name all the letters.

Phonetic Awareness

- Knowing the speech sounds that correspond with the letter.

Here are some activities to help develop these skills

1. Print Awareness, visual discrimination

- Read, read, read to your child. Look for picture books that have rhyme, rhythm and repetition.
- Make your own jigsaws. To develop visual discrimination skills make jigsaws out of photocopied family photos, child's name, child's favourite topic eg. tractors. Paste pictures onto cardboard and draw jigsaw shape on back of card and cut out.
- Describe a picture. Take it in turns to say something about the picture in a book or magazine, first repeating all the statements that have been previously made. Good for memory and observation as well as language.
- Write labels for furniture and possessions eg chair, fridge teddy etc.
- Play games of "Snap" and "Memory".

- Play Charades. Have the name of an animal written on a piece of paper and keep in a box. Each child in turn picks a piece of paper and you whisper the word to them and encourage them to act out the actions of the animal.
- Picture sorts. To help sorting and classifying skills as well as critical thinking make a game of looking through a magazine and find all the food that they would like to eat and the food that they would not like to eat. You could develop it further by cutting the pictures out and making cards with the words underneath.



2. Alphabet Awareness

- Sing the alphabet song together.
- Make alphabet letters out of paper with a textured surface to introduce the shape of each letter eg. sandpaper or embossed wallpaper.
- Make words with magnetic alphabet letters on your fridge.
- Make your own alphabet scrapbook. Together select pictures from magazines and advertising brochures to paste in a scrapbook with the words printed underneath. Have a letter table or shelf. Select a letter and over a week together collect objects that start with that letter.
- Plasticine letters. Roll out some thin strips of plasticine/play dough and use them to make letters. An advanced game would be to blindfold your child and let them guess the letter.

3. Phonetic Awareness and Language Development

- Sing nursery rhymes together. It helps develop awareness of speech sounds.
- Play in which children imagine themselves in other roles and situations. Encourage them to try out new words, phrases and ways of expressing themselves. Try using puppets, a dressing up box and large cardboard boxes.
- Create a Feely box. Put household objects in a box with hand-holes cut in the side. Your child then puts his hand in the box and tries to describe what he can feel before guessing what it is.
- Tape recorded sounds: Go round the house with your child recording a variety of sounds eg running tap, clock ticking washing machine etc. Draw pictures to represent the sounds on pieces of card and match up cards when replaying the sounds.
- Play “I Spy” with rhyming clues e.g. I spy something beginning with ‘c’ sitting on the mat wearing a hat, it is a...

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