

For Families (from **The Children's Reading Foundation**)

Welcome, parents. We are here to help you raise a reader. Because you want the best for your child, we invite you to begin a parenting practice which will benefit your child the rest of his or her life—reading aloud together 20 minutes a day from birth through elementary school. Children whose parents read with them learn to read early and well. It's as simple as that!

Getting your child ready to read is getting your child ready to succeed in school. Schools deliver 85% of the curriculum using printed words in books, written words on chalkboards/white-boards and digitized words on computer screens. Reading is the most fundamental skill your child will use during his or her 12-20 years as a student. This section suggests age appropriate activities and books for your baby, toddler and preschool child. It also summarizes how your school age child learns to read. And you'll find suggestions of books to enjoy with your child during the early years of elementary school.

The ABC's of Getting Ready to Learn to Read

A. Aloud. Read aloud 20 minutes a day with your child. From birth to age five, this enjoyable activity provides 600 hours of essential pre-literacy preparation before entering school. Once in school it's essential to continue the read-aloud habit through elementary school.

B. Basic knowledge before entering kindergarten. Ideally, at age five, your child may:

☑ Listen to a book and retell the beginning, middle and end

☑ Know 12-15 upper case letters (A, B, C)

☑ Know 12-15 lower case letters (a, b, c)

☑ Know sounds of 12-15 letters

☑ Recite 6-10 nursery rhymes

☑ Know some print concepts (e.g., reading moves left to right, meaning comes from words, pictures help meaning)

☑ Speak in complete sentences

☑ Print first name using upper and lower case letters

C. Conversations. Have frequent conversations with your child. Reading is about language. Immerse your child in it. Talk often, listen and ask your child questions that require more than a one or two word response.

Children entering school with these literacy skills are on track to read well by third grade.

Please visit <http://www.readyforkindergarten.org/> for further information on kindergarten readiness skills for math and social-emotional development.

Stimulating Brain Development

Reading to your child from birth literally wires brain cells together in networks that later facilitate independent reading. Brain research shows that those linked brain cells enable a child to:

☑ Detect the different sounds in words (phonemic awareness)

☑Recognize letters and develop strategies to figure out new words (decoding)

☑Develop real-world understanding of what the words refer to (create contexts for understanding meaning)

☑Build an oral and listening vocabulary (approximately 5,000 words by kindergarten)

Bonding with Books

Reading together every day builds strong minds and strong relationships. Your child, snuggling in your lap, and enjoying your attention and laughter, is learning to love reading. As long as it is a happy experience there is no wrong way to read together. Reading aloud is practically free, you can do it anywhere, and children often beg for "just one more" story. Even parents who are not fluent readers can provide a good experience for their children by telling stories from their lives, from their imaginations, or from pictures in wordless books. It is best to read to your child early and often, but it is never too late to start opening the reading door for your child.

The Value of Literacy

Children who read succeed, in school and in life. The simple act of enjoying books together every day from birth through elementary school establishes essential reading skills while building warm relationships. Your love and time are priceless. The reading skills you nurture are worth a quarter of a million dollars. For every year you read with your child, average lifetime earnings increase by \$50,000. You make a \$250,000 gift to your child by reading aloud just 20 minutes a day!

The Children's Reading Foundation is a grassroots effort to assure every child receives the lifelong advantages of literacy. Caring community leaders sustain this simple yet enormously powerful message. They understand that we must enable every child to succeed if we, as a society, are to succeed. And in order to succeed, children must learn to read early and learn to read well.

Each community-based Children's Reading Foundation responds to the unique needs and opportunities of its region by reaching out to parents, and others who provide primary care for children, with information, resources, activities and encouragement. It establishes partnerships to promote early literacy activities and programs throughout the entire community. "Where today will someone hear the message to read with a child?" is the question that guides a relentless public awareness campaign. Reading Foundations access free and low-cost books and put them into the hands and homes of children who will cherish them.

About Us: Families and communities are the foundation of this reading effort. Our goal is to ensure all children learn to read early and well by providing education and encouragement to parents and caregivers on their important role in raising a reader.

Our Name: "Foundation" in our name does not refer to a monetary endowment but the strength and stability a strong reading foundation provides a child for success in school and life.

Activities: Each community-based Children's Reading Foundation responds to the unique needs and opportunities of its region by reaching out to parents, and others who provide primary care for children, with information, resources, activities and encouragement. It establishes partnerships to promote early literacy activities and programs throughout the entire community. "Where today will someone hear the message to read with a child?" is the question that guides a relentless public awareness campaign. The Children's Reading Foundation access free and low-cost books and puts them into the hands and homes of children who will cherish them.

Funding: Local Children's Reading Foundations are self-sustaining non-profits (501-c-3), generally operating as a public-private partnership with school district dues, grants and community donations. The Board and/or executive director facilitates local contributions (monetary and in-kind) and partnerships to implement selected programs. Volunteers are invaluable!

National Support: The Children's Reading Foundation is a network of community-based Reading Foundations that share materials and best practices, and discuss issues and solutions. The National office assists foundations in getting started, operating legally, maintaining a website and staying abreast of research.