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# PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR READING



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# Take the stress out of teaching your child to read.

We see you, mommy. How you worry about whether you're doing enough to help your child learn to read. How your parenting may have been judged by others because your child "isn't reading yet".

But teaching your child to read shouldn't involve stress, tears or battles. And we're appalled at how parents are judged over this! When reading is taught at the right time, in the right way, it will be a fun learning adventure for you and your child.

That's why it's our mission to support you as you teach your child to read. Use the ideas in this guide to help your child build reading readiness the fun way. These activities may seem simple, but they'll go a long way towards making formal reading instruction easier later on.

We're excited to be with you as you build your child's lifelong love for reading and learning!

*Tasha & Victoria*

*I CREATED THIS WITH READING SPECIALIST TEACHER TASHA MENDOZA.  
TOGETHER, WE CREATED MOM TEACHES READING.*

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## TALK WITH YOUR CHILD.

Try these fun and easy activities today. You'll be happy to learn that by doing these, you're setting the stage for building your child's reading skills!

### 1 HAVE CONVERSATIONS

Talk with your child about things that are meaningful and interesting to him.

### 2 ASK QUESTIONS

Ask questions throughout the day - during meals, while doing chores together, or during reading time..

### 3 PLAY WORD GAMES

You can do these anytime, even while you're in the car or when taking a walk. You don't need any preparation or equipment to play these fun games. They're sure to make your child laugh!

- Think of as many words as possible that rhyme with your child's name.
- Name objects with the different letters of the alphabet.
- Use words that rhyme in the same sentence. For example, "This pot is hot!" or "I sat on the mat." Do this with a big smile, so your child learns to appreciate the rhyme.

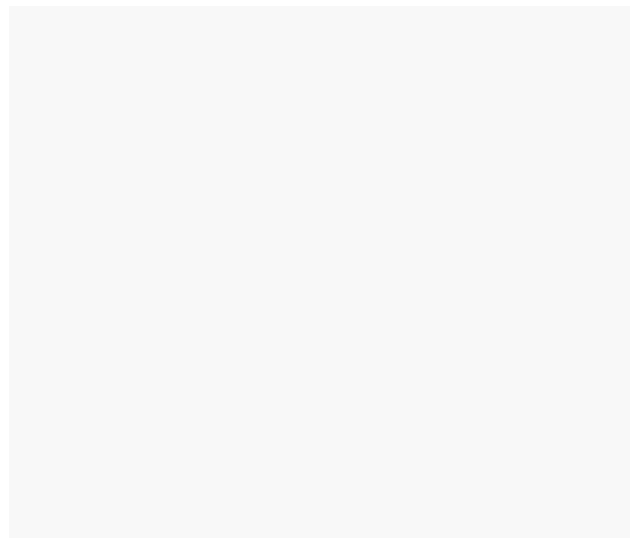
### 4 TELL A STORY

Talk with your child about something interesting that happened during the day. Try making up an exaggerated story together too!

### 5 PLAY "BRING ME"

This fun game helps build vocabulary and gives your child practice in following directions. Try including items your child hasn't discovered yet. It may surprise you how she's able to follow your instructions!

### YOUR IDEAS HERE



## **READ BOOKS TOGETHER.**

Reading to your child will help her build important lifelong skills, such as language, social, emotional, and behavioral skills. It also prepares her learn to read - and to enjoy reading too.

### **6 CHOOSE PRINT BOOKS OVER E-BOOKS.**

Kids learn best when they engage as many senses as possible. They need the sensory experience that comes with holding and turning the pages of a print book (or even smelling it!).

### **7 START BY SHOWING THEM THE PICTURES IN A PAGE.**

Before reading the words on a page, show your child the pictures. Give him a moment to observe the pictures first, so he's not distracted by them when you start to read.

### **8 MAKE IT INTERACTIVE.**

While you're reading, pause and ask questions. Allow your child a chance to respond. What does she see? Does she like it? Ask your child to point to different objects in the pictures. She may or may not be able to respond or "get the answer right," but it's the interaction between you, your child, and the book that matters here.

### **9 DON'T STRESS ABOUT IT.**

Don't feel pressured to make your child sit for a reading session for a long time. Even five minutes a day is enough. Let your child see that reading together is enjoyable.

### **10 IT'S OKAY TO READ THE SAME BOOK OVER AND OVER AGAIN!**

Yes, we understand how it feels to read *Dear Zoo* for the 127th time. :) But when your child asks for the same book over and over again, it's a sign of how much he enjoys it. You'll also discover how creative your child can get - whether it's the questions he asks, how he acts out parts of the story or even makes up different endings.

## **INTRODUCE THE ALPHABET THROUGH PLAY.**

Try not to feel stressed about teaching your child the alphabet. Don't rush to introduce the 26 letters of the alphabet all at once. The goal for these activities is not for your child to memorize the alphabet, but to expose her to these symbols in a fun way.

And remember, learning the alphabet is just one skill in the reading process. More than rote memory of the alphabet, the benefits of play such as creativity, language use, and the connection with you are more important in building a stronger reading foundation. So any time you or your child seems to be stressed about this, feel free to stop. There's completely no pressure here.

Your child learns best through play. Don't hurry this along by making them learn in an academic way from an early age. This stage of learning through play actually builds your child's readiness for formal reading and phonics instruction.

### **11 POINT OUT LETTERS TO YOUR CHILD.**

- Point to your child the letters of his name.
- During your reading time, point to the letters of the book title.
- You can also point to letters in everyday situations, such the signs when you're outside, or letters in cereal boxes, and other interesting things you encounter everyday.

### **12 USE SIMPLE TOYS TO SHOW YOUR CHILD THE ALPHABET.**

Instead of using academic tasks such as worksheets, let your child play with and handle toys such as alphabet blocks or foam letters. It's not about the letters themselves, but just let your child do free play. Don't go overboard with this, however. There's no need to fill every inch of your child's play area with alphabet toys. Better to have just a few simple toys.

*WE WANT YOU TO KNOW THIS - YOU ROCK! APPRECIATE YOUR ROLE IN YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING.*

Who's the best person to teach your child to read? To support your child during these early years in building literacy? It's YOU! Here's why.

 YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD BEST.

Teaching reading needs to be a responsive process. You know your child. You can respond to his cues better than any other teacher.

 YOU ARE THE BEST PERSON TO HELP BUILD A READING CULTURE AT HOME.

Reading begins at home. It's not just something a child does to meet a school requirement. The most successful readers are those who truly enjoy reading and develop a lifelong love for reading and learning. To achieve this, make reading a part of your everyday life at home.

 DON'T COMPARE.

A lot of our stress as parents comes from comparing our kids with others. But learning to read is not a race. Successful reading development does not depend on how early a child learns to read compared to others.

 YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD IS YOUR PRIORITY.

Yes, you are your child's first teacher. But you're still a parent first and foremost. If you're doing learning activities and your child throws a tantrum, it's okay to stop. This will not "breed bad habits". In fact, tantrums are a sign that your child may not be ready for that activity. This stage of parenting is challenging enough. Don't make it even harder for yourself by trying to do something your child isn't ready for.

Don't sacrifice your relationship over the completion of a task. Instead, stop and take the time to just be with your child. Talk with her and listen to what she says too. Give a hug and show affection.

## **BONUS: CHOOSING A GOOD READING PROGRAM.**

Are you feeling overwhelmed by all the programs out there that promise to help your child learn to read? Use this list to help you.

1

**DOES IT DEVELOP LISTENING COMPREHENSION, ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS, AND VOCABULARY?**

Reading isn't just about learning the alphabet and word recognition. You can't just isolate one aspect and neglect the others. A good program should address the other skills too.

2

**DOES IT TEACH PHONEMIC AWARENESS?**

Before kids learn to read, they should be able to recognize and pronounce the sounds that are the building blocks of words.

3

**DOES IT INCLUDE ACTIVITIES THAT DEVELOP PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS?**

These activities include rhymes, songs, and poems. They help your child learn to appreciate sound patterns.

4

**ARE THERE READ ALOUD ACTIVITIES?**

A good reading program should include exposure to good books with amazing stories. These build your child's imagination, vocabulary, language skills - and teach your child that reading is a delightful experience.

5

**ARE THE ACTIVITIES DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE?**

Reading programs must consider whether a child is ready. Beware of programs that promise you can teach a child "no matter how young" or "even if they can't talk yet".

6

**DOES THE PROGRAM ALLOW FOR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES?**

Beware of programs that promise you can "teach your child to read in 7 days" or even "30 days", because teaching reading should be individualized. Each child will be ready to read in their own time.



# Next Steps

At Mom Teaches Reading, we're passionate about empowering parents to understand how kids really learn to read. We want you to feel the joy of experiencing this wonderful skill with your child.

There are so many misconceptions out there that make teaching reading so stressful for parents and for kids too. But if we stick to what the science of reading and the research on child development really says, then you'll not only be more successful, but you'll also enjoy the process more.

We're here to help you sort through all the noise that's out there about teaching your child to read, so you don't waste your time and effort trying things that don't work, or that can even be harmful in the long run.

We're relaunching our course on helping young kids learn to read - so stay tuned! I'd love to know too your experiences using this guide. Email me at [victoria@discerningparenting.com](mailto:victoria@discerningparenting.com).

# Who We Are

The Mom Teaches Reading team is made up of:

- Teacher Tasha Mendoza, a mom of four and a reading intervention specialist with nearly a decade of experience helping kids of all ages and with a variety of reading problems. She is the director of the Center for Reading Assessment and Intervention. She holds a master's degree in education and is also currently completing her doctorate in education.
- Dr. Victoria Nolasco, a mom of a preschooler and a developmental and behavioral pediatrician. She has spent the past decade helping families with their kids' learning and development.