

Building Pre-K Reading Skills



In Pre-K, children learn about letters, expand their vocabulary, and learn how to properly pronounce words. The following are just some of the things you can do with your preschooler to help build their reading readiness skills.

Read aloud to your child

Reading books together expands vocabulary, stimulates the imagination, and teaches children to listen. It also nurtures a special bond between you and your child.

As you read, talk about the story and the pictures. Ask questions, such as:

- "What do you think will happen next?"
- "What would you do?"
- "What was your favorite part?"
- "How do you think the character felt?"

Connect your child's experiences to what's happening in the story. "She has a dog just like we do. Do you think her dog is as big as our dog?"

As you read, move your finger under the words to help your child learn that words go from top to bottom and left to right.

Look for words in everyday life

Increase your child's interest in reading by showing that words are all around us.

- ▶ When driving, look for familiar words on store fronts, street signs, and billboards.
- ▶ While watching TV, playing games, or running errands, point out words your child might know.



VIDEO

For more, watch this quick video!

Building Pre-K Writing Skills



Children spend a good deal of time in Pre-K working on emerging writing skills—with a focus on learning how to properly hold a pencil and strengthening hand muscles.

Here are some things you can do to help your preschooler build his/her writing skills.

Stock up on supplies

Encourage your child to practice writing by having supplies readily available.

- ▶ Provide different kinds of paper, crayons, pencils, markers, and notepads for coloring and scribbling.
- ▶ Chalkboards and dry erase boards with various colors of chalk and markers provide a fun way for children to practice writing.

Develop hand muscles and motor skills

Young children need strong hand muscles to hold a pencil correctly, and fine motor skills to be able to use a pencil to write.

To strengthen hand muscles:

- ▶ provide play dough or clay to squeeze, pull, and manipulate into shapes.
- ▶ crumple up pieces of newspaper and throw them into a wastebasket.

To help develop fine motor skills:

- ▶ help your child put a puzzle together, string beads, and build with blocks.
- ▶ let your child cut up magazines using child-safe scissors.



VIDEO

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Building Pre-K Math Skills



In Pre-K, children build math readiness skills—skills that will help them do more complicated math in the years to come.

Pre-K math activities

Here are some of the skills your child is likely to work on in Pre-K.

- ▶ counting (including understanding what "how many" means)
- ▶ sorting items by color or shape
- ▶ comparing objects using terms like *bigger*, *smaller*, *more*, and *less*
- ▶ identifying and creating shapes

Look for numbers in everyday life

Throughout the day, look for opportunities to count items, compare and sort objects, and use numbers.

- ▶ As you drive around town, point out the numbers you see on buildings, billboards, street signs, and houses.
- ▶ When you see a number, ask what number comes next. "We're reading page 11. What number comes after 11?"
- ▶ Talk about the numbers you see on items such as calendars, cereal boxes, and clocks.
- ▶ Have your child count the carrots on his/her plate, the coins in your wallet, or the socks coming out of the dryer. Before eating a bag of M&Ms, count how many there are of each color.



VIDEO

For more, watch this quick video!

Building Pre-K Social Skills



Pre-K is an important time for helping your child develop the social skills needed to make friends, communicate their wants and needs, and adapt to different social situations. Below are some quick and easy tips for helping your child build valuable social skills.

Build basic skills

While children have varying levels of social skills, the following are some basic skills for you to work on with your child.

- ▶ Listen when others are talking.
- ▶ Show interest in what others are doing.
- ▶ Begin to take turns with peers.
- ▶ Initiate interactions with others.
- ▶ Begin to share toys with others.
- ▶ Remember classmates' names.
- ▶ Use good manners.
- ▶ Feel empathy for children who are sad or upset.

Create and monitor social opportunities

Provide opportunities for your child to play and interact with others. Start with short periods of time, and provide adult supervision.

- ▶ Set up play dates with classmates, and look for social opportunities with family and friends.
- ▶ Try to let children settle their own differences, but stay within earshot so that you can model problem-solving behavior if needed.



For more, watch this quick video!

VIDEO

Building Pre-K Life Skills



By teaching your child some basic life skills, you can help your little one be more confident and independent, and more successful in the years ahead.

Teach self-care skills

It might be easier and quicker for you to put your child's jacket on yourself, but taking a few extra minutes to teach self-help skills will encourage independence and build self confidence.

Take some time to help your child learn how to do the following:

- ▶ use the restroom
- ▶ wash his/her hands
- ▶ use eating utensils
- ▶ drink from a cup or juice box
- ▶ put on a coat and hat
- ▶ button, snap, and zip
- ▶ cover his/her mouth when sneezing or coughing
- ▶ take shoes off and put them back on

Give your child choices

Making choices at home will help your child be able to make good choices and decisions at school and on the playground. As part of your daily routine, ask questions like these:

"Do you want to wear your blue or your green shirt?"

"Should we have grilled cheese or tacos for lunch?"

"What game do you want to play?"



For more, watch this quick video!

VIDEO

Building Pre-K Motor Skills



Developing motor skills will help your child be more confident and successful, both in and out of the classroom.

Gross motor skills

Gross motor skills involve movement of the muscles in the arms, legs, and torso. Gross motor skills are used on the playground, in sports, and in other physical activities.

By the age of 4–5 years, your child should be able to do the following:

- ▶ run, jump, and climb well
- ▶ balance and hop on one foot
- ▶ skip with alternating feet
- ▶ walk forward and backward on a balance beam
- ▶ throw a ball, and catch with two hands
- ▶ maintain momentum on a swing

Building gross motor skills

Here are some ways you can help develop your child's gross motor skills.

- ▶ Play catch in the back yard, or kick a soccer ball back and forth.
- ▶ Take your child to the park to run, swing, and climb on the playground equipment.
- ▶ Draw a hopscotch course to practice hopping and standing on one foot.
- ▶ Hike trails that involve climbing over and around obstacles.



For more, watch this quick video!

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