

Ways to Build Reading Skills for Young Learners

1. **Read, Read, Read:** Reading is the best way to build reading skills. If your child struggles with reading, read to them! Listening to reading can help your child become successful. If they are able to read, have them read to you. Take advantage of any opportunity to make reading happen. You can take turns reading. Your child can read one page and then you can read the next page.
2. **Go to the Library:** Library cards are free! Get your child a library card. Have them pick out books that appeal to them. Children are more likely to read if it is something they are interested in. It can be a picture book, chapter book, comic book, etc.
3. **Read the Pictures:** If your child can't read the whole book. Have them tell you about the pictures on each page. You can ask questions like, "what is happening on this page?" "What will happen next?" This is a powerful way to get children involved in reading even though they may not be "reading."
4. **Read Rhyming Books:** Books that rhyme or have the same words throughout are excellent books for beginning readers. These books can help children become confident in their reading skills.
5. **Ask Questions:** As you are reading with your child, ask them questions about what is happening in the story. Start simple and then work up to more challenging questions. Some examples might be: Who are the characters? What is happening? Where is this story taking place? What will happen next? Why the characters acting this way? etc.
6. **Read Everyday Material:** Have your child read anything they can read. Road signs, recipes, magazines, menus, game directions, weather reports, etc. Even if they can't read it all, they can read what they know.
7. **Sight Word Hunt:** Have children look for sight words in reading material you have at home. They can look for words in the newspaper, a magazine, a recipe, a book, etc. See how many they can find! This is a great way for children to become confident in what they already know.

8. **Make up a Story:** Have children “write” their own story. Depending on your child’s level, they can write the words on a paper and then illustrate the pages. Then have your child read it to anyone who will listen. If they can’t write or have difficulty writing, have them dictate their story to you to write down. Then they can illustrate the pages. They will be able to “read” it once they are done even if they don’t read it word for word. Another fun activity is to make up a story, with important story elements (characters, setting, a problem/conflict, and a resolution). You make up part of the story, and then let your child continue, and alternate taking turns for a fun story!

9. **Alternate Endings:** Have your child pick their favorite story. Then have your child come up with an alternate ending to the story. They can write it down and then illustrate it. If they are not strong in writing, they can dictate to you and you can write it down for them. Your child can then tell the story with their ending to anyone who will listen.

10. **Visualize a Story:** Describe a setting to your child with as many details as you can think of. Have them draw what you are telling them. Then have them add characters to the setting and a few details of their own. Once they have a clear picture, have them make up a story to go with the picture. Again, depending on the age of the child, they can write or you can write what they dictate to you.

11. **Create a Fun Reading Place.** Create a fun, comfortable, cozy place in the house for reading. Throw pillows, a comfortable chair or sofa can help to make this a desired place to relax and read.