

Caregiver Guide:

5 Activities to Support Literacy At Home

Encourage reading skill practice with these quick, low-prep activities.

<p>1</p> <p>What's That Sound?</p> <p>Develop phonemic awareness—hearing, identifying, and changing word sounds—by breaking up words.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials: None! Just your voice and listening ears • How to play: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Say a simple word like “cat” to your child. ◦ Show your child how to break apart the word into its individual sounds: /k/-/a/-/t/. ◦ Have your child to repeat the sounds back to you, emphasizing each phoneme. ◦ Mix it up! Say example sounds (/k/ /a/ /t/) and see if your child can tell you the word! ◦ Gradually increase the difficulty! Use more complex words as your child’s skill grows! <p><i>*Note that /k/ means “the k sound.” This is a great game for the car!</i></p>
<p>2</p> <p>Connections</p> <p>Work on phonics—associating letters with sounds—by sorting them into groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials: A variety of small objects/pictures, index cards, and markers • How to play: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Write different sounds (/b/, /m/, /s/) on the index cards. ◦ Gather objects/pictures that start with these sounds (ball, moon, sun). ◦ Ask your child to sort the items based on the <i>first</i> sound into piles under the corresponding index card. Ex: the ball goes with the “b” sound card. ◦ For more advanced practice, sort by <i>middle</i> or <i>ending</i> sounds. <p><i>*Note that when using vowels, beginning learners should start with short vowel sounds. For example, “i” would include words like igloo rather than ice cream.</i></p>
<p>3</p> <p>Echo Me</p> <p>Improve fluency—reading text correctly, quickly, and with proper expression—by mimicking (with permission this time!).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials: A reading-level appropriate book/passage • How to play: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read a sentence or short paragraph aloud to your child using proper expression and pacing. ◦ Ask your child to “echo” you by reading the same sentence or paragraph back to you, mimicking your tone, pace, and expression. ◦ Continue this process, gradually increasing the length of the passages as your child’s fluency improves. ◦ Take time to discuss any difficult words/phrases to ensure understanding and correct pronunciation.
<p>4</p> <p>See What I Did There?</p> <p>Grow vocabulary—words needed for communicating—by simply talking!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials: A jar, strips of paper, a pen, and a list of new vocabulary words • How to play: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Write new vocabulary words on strips of paper and place them in the jar. ◦ Each day, have your child draw a word from the jar. ◦ Discuss the meaning of the word and use it in a sentence together. ◦ Challenge your child to use the word in conversation throughout the day. You can offer a small reward or praise each time they use the word right! ◦ At the end of the day, review the word and ask your child to use it in a different context or sentence.
<p>5</p> <p>Say More</p> <p>Boost comprehension—creating meaning from reading—by journaling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials: A notebook journal, pen or pencil, a book or passage • How to play: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read a book or passage with your child. For younger children, you can read it aloud; older children can read independently. ◦ After reading, ask your child to write down 3-5 questions about the text in their journal. Questions can be about characters, plot, or other details. Encourage literal (“What happened when...?”) and inferential (“Why do you think...?”) questions. Younger children can include pictures as part of their comprehension journaling. ◦ Together with your child, talk about the questions and look for the answers in the reading. As they practice, decrease the amount of guidance you provide.