

POINTERS FOR PARENTS

*Helping Your
Child Get Ready
For Reading*



Pointers for Parents

The Early Years

You are your child's first teacher. Your home is his or her first school.

TALK TO YOUR CHILD

Reading and writing are part of language. Teach your child language by talking to him or her. Children must be able to speak in whole sentences if they are to be competent in reading and writing.

Children learn by copying. Be a role model. Speak clearly and pronounce words carefully. Talk to your child about what you see when you are together.

Teach the names of the days of the week and the months of the year. Explain how things work. Find out yourself if you don't know (no parent can know everything). Stimulate your child's mind and develop thinking with simple family games, word games, guessing games, riddles and rhyming words.

Watching too much television may prevent your child from developing the important ability to make pictures in his or her mind's eye while reading. Television also does not give children the chance to speak and express themselves clearly and thoughtfully.

READ TO YOUR CHILD

Reading to your child helps him or her to learn language. Choose books your child enjoys. When you read to him or her, talk about the pictures in the book. Don't read books which frighten. If your child wants you to read the same book over and over, that is all right. Eventually he or she will move on to other books.

TEACHING YOUR CHILD

You want your child to feel he or she can learn.

- Teach him or her simple things yourself.
- Teach only one thing at a time.

- Teach only what is easy for your child.
- Teach for only a few minutes. Then stop teaching for awhile.
- If your child has difficulty, stop teaching and try again another time.
- When your child learns what you have taught, give him or her praise.
- Don't be concerned if your child forgets what you have taught. Teach it again and eventually your child will remember.

LETTERS HAVE SOUNDS

Teach that the letters have sounds and that when you put the sounds together, you make words. While your child needs to know the names of the letters and the sequence of the alphabet, this will not help him or her learn to read. The *sounds* of the letters will help.

Do only a little bit of this teaching at a time, and don't push the teaching if your child seems puzzled or restless. Different children are ready for this idea at different ages.

WHEN YOUR CHILD WANTS TO LEARN TO READ

Success is important for your child's self-esteem. Don't ask your child to do things that you know are too difficult. Instead, plan the task step-by-step, teaching the easiest things first, slowly and thoroughly.

TEACH THE SOUNDS OF THE LETTERS IN THIS ORDER:

a, t, m, s, l, c, d, i, g

As soon as your child has learned two or three sounds, have him or her put the sounds together for spelling and reading:

For example, with *a, t,* and *m* you and your child can spell and read the following words:
at, am, mat.

After teaching **a** (as in apple), teach seven or eight consonants before teaching another vowel. Teach confusing consonants far apart: **(g-q)**, **(b-d)** or **(m-n)**.

Teach short **e** last.

TEACH THE MOST USEFUL SOUNDS OF THE LETTERS FIRST:

Here are the sounds which will help your child learn to read:

a (as in apple)	n (as in nail)
b (as in ball)	o (as in octopus)
c (as in comb)	p (as in pencil)
d (as in dog)	q (as in queen)
e (as in elephant)	r (as in ring)
f (as in fork)	s (as in soap)
g (as in gold)	t (as in table)
h (as in hat)	u (as in umbrella)
i (as in igloo)	v (as in violin)
j (as in jeep)	w (as in watch)
k (as in key)	-x (as at end of box)
l (as in lemon)	y (as in yarn)
m (as in monkey)	z (as in zipper)

SUMMARY

If you talk and read to your child when he or she is young, you will be helping your child learn language. If you teach that letters have sounds and that these sounds combine to make words, you will be teaching the most important thing your child needs to know in order to learn reading. He or she will be well on the way to success in reading.