



# Learning & Growing Together

An online newsletter for parents!

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## Pre-reading Skills in Young Children

Creating an appreciation of books and an enjoyment of reading is critical for your child's healthy learning development. Children who enter school with limited exposure to oral language interactions and little prior understanding of concepts related to the sounds of our language, letter knowledge, print awareness, and general verbal skills often start school less prepared than their peers.

Experts speculate that television's negative impact on reading stems from displacement. Time spent watching television robs children of time they might otherwise spend being read to or exploring books. By turning off the TV, we can give children a boost in learning to read and a real leg up in the long run. Surveys have shown that the average American

school child watches an average of nearly three hours of TV daily.

Over the course of a year that amounts to more hours in front of the TV set than in the classroom. This amount of TV is simply unhealthy for developing bodies and minds and has negative consequences for families.

The most important thing that parents can do is talk and read to your child. Starting at birth, it is critical

to provide your child with many different language and reading experiences that are playful and fun.

Include nursery rhymes and rhyming games to expose your child to the sounds of language

*(Continued on page 3)*



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## Share a Happy Story!

*Here are some stories about being happy or finding happiness to help make the most of your read aloud experiences with your child. The single most important way to help your child become a good reader later on is to read to him often in her early years.*

*Happy to You*

Caron Lee Cohen

*When You Are Happy*

Eileen Spinelli

*If You're Happy and You Know It*

Jane Cabrera

*Feelings*

Aliki

*I Like Me!*

Nancy Carlson

*Incredible Me!*

Kathi Appelt

*Tell Me Something*

*Happy Before I Go to Sleep*

Joyce Dunbar

*Jane, Wishing*

Tobi Tobias

*The Little Brute Family*

Russell Hoban

*Monster Mary, Mischief Maker*

Kazuko Taniguchi



*One Smile*

Cindy  
McKinley

*The Rich Man and the Shoemaker*

Bernadette  
Watts

*Today I Feel Silly*

*and Other Moods That Make My Day*

Jamie Lee Curtis

*Weird Parents*

Audrey Wood

*What's the Matter with Carruthers?*

James Marshall

## Poems to Learn to Say Together!

### THE SNOWMAN

*By: Paula R. Westeren*

One day I made a snowman  
So very tall and round  
I worked to make him look  
just so  
Of my work I was most proud  
It got a little warm that day  
And much to my dismay  
My very handsome snowman  
Slowly began to melt away

### MITTEN WEATHER

*Author unknown*

Thumbs in the thumb place,

Fingers all together.  
This is the song  
We sing in mitten weather.

It doesn't matter whether  
They're made of wool or  
leather.

Thumbs in the thumb place,  
Fingers all together.

This is the song  
We sing in mitten weather.

### WINTER

*By: Paula R. Westeren*

In winter time it's cold outside,  
It's rainy and sometimes dreary.

We can't often go out to play  
We'll stay where it is cheery.

### WINTER

*By: Emma, a 4th grader*

We'll race  
outside and  
Into the snow.

Not minding  
how cold our  
Toes will get.

Evening is time  
for us to

Run inside for a big mug of hot  
cocoa.



## Pre-reading Skills in Young Children *continued*

(Continued from page 1)

and the joy of story time with you.

It is also critical that your child observe the adults in your home reading and learn why reading is so important in our lives.

Remember, however, to make all of the language and literacy interactions positive and enjoyable experiences. Children



who view reading as a positive recreational activity will perform better in school later on.

With your help, your child can get a head start on the road to reading, even if they cannot yet read themselves. Here are a few techniques to get started:

- First and foremost, read aloud to your child, no matter how young. Infants love to hear their parent's voice. Reading to your child not only

provides a valuable learning experience, it can become a treasured and memorable activity.

- Be a role model. Parents can set a good example by showing that they enjoy and benefit from reading, too.
- Before reading a particular book to your child, be sure to read it through once to yourself. This way, you can identify areas you might want to concentrate on later when you read it aloud.

## Songs to Learn to Sing Together

*Singing songs with children is also a way to promote healthy brain development. Singing, listening to music, and doing rhythmic activities all help in making connections in the part of the brain that will later be used for math and science.*

### SNOW IS FALLING

Sung to: *Frere Jacques*  
By: Paula R. Westeren

Snow is falling, snow is falling  
All around, all around  
Soft and silent snowflakes

Soft and silent snowflakes  
Not a sound, not a sound

### LOVELY SNOWFLAKES

Sung to: *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*  
By: Paula R. Westeren

Some are big and some are small  
It is nice to watch them fall.  
Stay indoors where it is warm.  
Drink hot cocoa while it storms.  
Snowflakes big, snowflakes small  
Catch them, catch them, catch them all!

### SNOWFLAKES

Sung to: *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*  
by: Jean Warren

Snowflakes, snowflakes  
Dance around  
Snowflakes, snowflakes  
Touch the ground  
Snowflakes, snowflakes  
In the air  
Snowflakes, snowflakes  
Everywhere.





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## Start Great Habits Early ~ Read with Your Infant

*Research indicates when a baby or child experiences new things, new brain cell connections grow and develop. Every time you read a story, nursery rhyme, or sing a lullaby, thousands of connections in your baby's brain are formed or strengthened.*



*Fostering a love of reading will help your baby's healthy development. It is important to remember is that*

*it is never too early to begin reading to your baby!*

Here are some other great reasons to read to your baby:

- ☆ Your baby associates your voice with warmth, comfort, and security.
- ☆ Reading has a calming effect when your baby is restless.
- ☆ Your baby is entertained by stories, nursery rhymes, and songs.
- ☆ Holding your baby while reading to her creates a close, loving bond.

- ☆ Your baby makes an association between reading and being held.
- ☆ The pleasure of being held transfers to the desire to be read to.
- ☆ Your baby will learn to listen and will grow up ready to read.
- ☆ Your baby will begin imitating sounds and words.
- ☆ Your baby must *hear* language in order to learn to *speak* the language.
- ☆ It's fun reading to your baby and spending quality time together!