

READING: Preparing Your Child for Kindergarten

Babies are born to learn. When they become toddlers, preschoolers are so naturally and intensely curious that they often seem like sponges, soaking up everything that they see and hear. Their innate drive to learn about the world around them is a good reminder of what youngsters need to get ready for school: abundant opportunities to explore their world, and to be exposed to language. It is never too early to speak to your children. In fact, babies begin learning the sounds and rhythms of language while still in the womb! Talking to babies, toddlers, and young children is an essential component of their later cognitive development: the

more language children hear, the stronger thinkers and readers they will become, and the more likely they will be ready to handle school-related tasks. For healthy development, young children need lots of time for free play every day, and plenty of time to interact with others. In many ways then, preparing children for kindergarten should be a very natural process, one where caregivers engage with their youngsters, allow them to explore their environments, and expose them to language at every opportunity.

Bruce Marlowe, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Education
University of South Carolina Beaufort



READY FOR SCHOOL South Carolina's Profile of the Reading-Ready Kindergartner

Early Reading

- Shows interest in books and reading
- Holds books upright, turning pages one at a time from front to back
- Knows that printed words have meaning
- Uses pictures in a book to tell and retell the story
- Recognizes and names/reads familiar signs and logos
- Listens to a story being read aloud
- Makes predictions about what will happen next in a story being read aloud
- Begins to follow text from left to right as it is read aloud
- Recognizes and names rhyming words
- Recognizes that letters represent spoken sounds
- Recognizes some upper and lower case letters and their sounds
- Recognizes that spoken words can be represented in written language
- Recognizes written name as well as other familiar words
- Begins to use pictures and text read aloud to learn the meaning of unfamiliar words

Listening, Speaking and Understanding

- Converses with others, taking turns speaking and listening
- Speaks clearly, expressing ideas and questions
- Uses words to seek help, answer questions and solve problems
- Speaks in complete sentences of at least six to eight words
- Listens to stories and retells them
- Begins to ask questions about stories that are read aloud
- Follows directions and completes tasks that require multiple steps
- Asks and answers "how" and "why" questions

Early Writing

- Draws pictures and tells their story
- Writes using a combination of letters, letter-like shapes and scribbles
- Uses drawing and writing during play
- Writes name independently or using an example



You are your baby's first teacher!

*When you open a book with your baby
you are opening the world.*



Birth - 3 months

Your baby learns to understand language by hearing you use it. Talk to your baby as much as you can.

Talk:

- Say your baby's name.
- Talk while changing, bathing, and feeding your child.
- Say the names of things that you use.
- Use the same words often.

Sing:

- Sing songs while you rock baby.
- Say nursery rhymes with action, such as Pat-a-Cake.

Read:

- Read Cloth or Board books to baby.
- Point to and identify pictures in books.

Play:

- Play touching games, pat baby, gently rub baby's arms and legs.
- Play simple touching games "Where are your toes?" "Here are your toes."
- Use mobiles over cribs at this age.

3 months - 2 years

- Identify colors.
- Count items.
- Introduce animal sounds.
"The doggie says woof -woof."
- Expand on single words your baby uses
"Here is Mama, Mama loves you."
- Read to baby. Point to pictures and ask,
"What's this?"
- Choose books that are sturdy and have large colorful pictures that are not detailed.

2 years - 4 years

Talk, Read, Play and Sing:

- Keep reading to your child. Reread favorite books.
- Read predictable books so that your child will begin to recognize repeated words and phrases.
- Teach the alphabet song.
- Put magnetic letters on your refrigerator. Ask your child to name letters as he plays.
- Play games using the alphabet in books, traffic signs, billboards, and stores.

*Compliments of the Greater Island Council
of Hilton Head Island & Bluffton*