OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH BABIES

- Sing songs! You can make up your own, or find lots of fun songs at your library or online.
- Do fingerplays or lap bounces with your child. You can find nursery rhymes as well as active rhymes at your library or online.
- Babble back with your baby, and model conversation and turn-taking with them. Encourage their first tries at communication and using language.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

You can learn more about how to help your child’s early literacy skills by talking with your local public librarian! You can also visit ready2readmontana.org for more resources on books, songs, fingerplays, and other fun things to do with your child.
Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write. Research shows that children get ready to read years before they start school. You can help your child learn important skills now so they can become good readers later. The five skills to practice with your child are Reading, Singing, Talking, Playing, and Writing. Developing these skills now will give your child a strong foundation for future learning and growing!

**EARLY LITERACY SKILLS**

You are your child’s first teacher — children learn best by doing things, and they love doing things with you! As someone who knows your child best, you are in a great position to help your child learn these skills that become building blocks for reading, writing, and learning about the world!

**YOUR BABY @ 0 - 3 MONTHS**
- Prefers books with high-contrast colors and patterned designs.
- Looks at the pictures but might not want to touch the book.
- Gazes at you when you sing songs or share nursery rhymes.

**YOUR BABY @ 4 - 6 MONTHS**
- Prefers books with high-contrast colors and patterned designs.
- Turns pages and looks at books independently.
- May look at a book briefly and then switch to another book or activity.
- Uses his index finger to point at the illustrations.

**YOUR BABY @ 6 - 12 MONTHS**
- Explores books by putting them in her mouth.
- Investigates books by patting, grabbing, and pulling pages.
- May coo and babble at you when you read.

**YOUR BABY @ 12 - 18 MONTHS**
- Can hold or carry books without help.
- Turns pages and looks at books independently.
- May look at a book briefly and then switch to another book or activity.
- May coo and babble at you when you read.

**BABIES!**

Reading together helps your child learn new stories, ideas, and situations. You can develop your child’s love of learning through stories, even if it is just a few pages at a time!

**WRITE**

When children use a pen or pencil, it helps develop those fine motor skills they will need later on. Drawing shapes, scribbles, and doodling are all important parts of preparing to learn how to write, and can help them get used to controlling their pencil.

**TALK**

Conversations can help your child learn new words, develop speaking and storytelling skills, and help them understand what they are reading or experiencing.

**SING**

Singing breaks words into smaller pieces and helps your child hear the differences in language. Singing also encourages children to have fun with words, learn about rhyming, and express themselves creatively! Share songs with your child, and help them create their own!

**PLAY**

Playing is how children learn and make sense of the world. Imaginative pretend play, building with blocks, indoor and outdoor games, interacting with others — all build important cognitive and social skills.
OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH TODDLERS

- Have your child help you choose which books and stories to read at the library – they can even help to hold the book and turn pages while you are reading the book together!
- Ask questions that invite more conversation than a yes/no answer – “What is this thing called?” “I wonder how they feel about that?” “What do you think she is doing now?”
- Encourage your child to tell a story back to you, especially a well-loved one that you have read together many times!
- Make sure you have lots of books available in the car, in the bathroom, in the kitchen, etc. You can read for a few minutes here and there, wherever you have time!

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

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Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write. Research shows that children get ready to read years before they start school. You can help your child learn important skills now so they can become good readers later. The five skills to practice with your child are Reading, Singing, Talking, Playing, and Writing. Developing these skills now will give your child a strong foundation for future learning and growing!

Toddler’s EARLY LITERACY SKILLS

You are your child’s first teacher – children learn best by doing things, and they love doing things with you! As someone who knows your child best, you are in a great position to help your child practice these skills that become building blocks for reading, writing, and learning about the world!

YOUR CHILD @ 2-3 YEARS

• Learns to handle books with paper pages.
• Names objects in the pictures with your encouragement.
• Can talk about books with your help.
• Relates events in the story to her own experiences.

YOUR CHILD @ 18-24 MONTHS

• May say some of the words and phrases in familiar books.
• May want to hear a favorite story over and over again for fun and comfort.
• May like to carry favorite books around when on the go.

While every child is different, here is what toddlers may like to do with books, and how you can help them enjoy stories you share with them.

READ
Reading together helps your child learn new stories, ideas, and situations. You can develop your child’s love of learning through stories, even if it is just a few pages at a time!

WRITE
When children use a pen or pencil, it helps develop those fine motor skills they will need later on. Drawing shapes, scribbles, and doodling are all important parts of preparing to learn how to write, and can help them get used to controlling their pencil.

TALK
Conversations can help your child learn new words, develop speaking and storytelling skills, and help them understand what they are reading or experiencing.

SING
Singing breaks words into smaller pieces and helps your child hear the differences in language. Singing also encourages children to have fun with words, learn about rhyming, and express themselves creatively! Share songs with your child, and help them create their own!

PLAY
Playing is how children learn and make sense of the world. Imaginative pretend play, building with blocks, indoor and outdoor games, interacting with others – all build important cognitive and social skills that children practice during play!

What is Early Literacy?
OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH PRESCHOOLERS

- Have your child help you choose which books and stories to read at the library, and have them practice retelling the story in their own words.
- Talk about the pictures, characters, and events in the story as you are reading – have your child make predictions, or use their imagination to make up other stories with the same characters.
- Point out some of the letters in the book. “There is a ‘K’. Your name starts with a ‘K’ too.” You can run your finger below the text as you read aloud.
- Connect the story with your child’s life. “That truck looks like the one we saw yesterday, doesn’t it?”

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

You can learn more about how to help your child’s early literacy skills by talking with your local public librarian! You can also visit ready2readmontana.org for more resources on books, songs, fingerplays, and other fun things to do with your child.
Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write. Research shows that children get ready to read years before they start school. You can help your child learn important skills now so they can become good readers later. The five skills to practice with your child are Reading, Singing, Talking, Playing, and Writing. Developing these skills now will give your child a strong foundation for future learning and growing!

Preschooler’s EARLY LITERACY SKILLS

You are your child’s first teacher – children learn best by doing things, and they love doing things with you! As someone who knows your child best, you are in a great position to help your child practice these skills that become building blocks for reading, writing, and learning about the world!

READ

Reading together helps your child learn new stories, ideas, and situations. You can develop your child’s love of learning through stories, even if it is just a few pages at a time!

WRITE

When children use a pen or pencil, it helps develop those fine motor skills they will need later on. Drawing shapes, scribbles, and doodling are all important parts of preparing to learn how to write, and can help them get used to controlling their pencil.

TALK

Conversations can help your child learn new words, develop speaking and storytelling skills, and help them understand what they are reading or experiencing.

SING

Singing breaks words into smaller pieces and helps your child hear the differences in language. Singing also encourages children to have fun with words, learn about rhyming, and express themselves creatively! Share songs with your child, and help them create their own!

PLAY

Playing is how children learn and make sense of the world. Imaginative pretend play, building with blocks, indoor and outdoor games, interacting with others – all build important cognitive and social skills that children practice during play!

YOUR CHILD @ 3 AND 4 YEARS

• Handles books and paper pages with ease.
• Understands that the words on the page mean something.
• Begins to recognize letters.
• Enjoys longer stories with characters and plot.
• Likes discussing books.

YOUR CHILD @ 5 YEARS

• Sounds like she is reading when she pretends to read.
• Begins to recognize a few words.
• Understands that print is read from left to right and top to bottom.
• Begins to recognize rhyming words and beginning letter sounds.
• Can retell simple stories.

READING MILESTONES

What is Early Literacy?