

# Parents and caregivers are children's first teachers.

**You are a reading role model in the development of your child's early literacy skills! These skills prepare children for learning to read and write.**

## Did you know?

- Children who enjoy books will want to learn to read.
- Being familiar with print helps children feel comfortable with books and the reading process.
- Words are made up of smaller sounds. Being able to identify the smaller sounds in a word will help children sound out text when they begin to read.
- Developing a large vocabulary helps children recognize written words and understand what they read.
- Knowing the names and sounds of letters helps children sound out written words when they begin reading.
- Being able to talk about and explain what happens in a story helps children understand the meaning of what they are reading.

## How to read a book with your child:

- Find a comfortable place to read together.
- Read slowly and naturally, and use expression in your voice.
- Keep the experience positive and enjoyable. Be aware of your child's mood and interest level, and stop before it becomes a chore.
- Pick a time of day to read when you won't be distracted by other activities.
- Reread a favourite book over and over again whenever it is requested by your child.
- Keep books in an accessible space.
- Read together every day.

## What should you look for when choosing books with your child?

- Follow your child's interests.
- Look for bright, bold, colourful pictures.
- Seek out simple text about familiar situations.
- Choose books that have rhyme or rhythm.
- Select stories with repetitive sentences, phrases or events.

## Learn More

Regina Public Library has many programs, materials and services for you and your child. Explore them at [reginapubliclibrary.ca!](http://reginapubliclibrary.ca!)



## Creating Young Readers



**Early Literacy Tips**

**The following activities will get your child on the road to becoming a lifelong reader:**

## Talking

- Provide lots of opportunities for your child to talk, not just listen to others talk. Ask questions and allow your child time to respond.
- Respond to what your child says and extend the conversation — e.g., “Yes, that dog is going for a walk. He has a big, fluffy tail.”
- Expand your child’s vocabulary. Repeat what the child says and use new words — e.g., “Yes, that’s a big machine. It’s called a bulldozer.”
- Use descriptive words and narrate what you and your child are doing throughout the day.
- Talk about and describe feelings.
- Tune into your child’s interests and experiences, and talk about them.

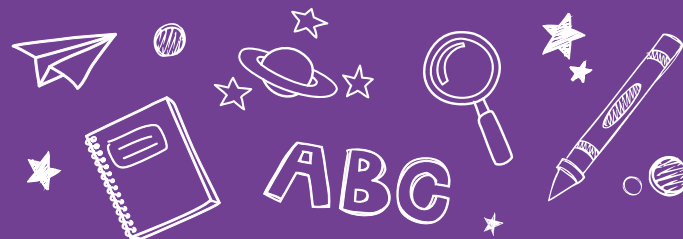


## Singing

- Sing songs that contain new words and talk about what they mean. Singing songs is a wonderful way for your child to learn new words, and to hear the sounds that make up each word.
- Sing with your child throughout the day — e.g., while walking, riding in the car, bathing, or changing diapers.
- Have fun with your child making up your own words to favourite songs.
- Encourage your child to sing and play music using simple household objects like spoons, pots, pans and boxes.
- Repeat songs again and again to help your child understand the words of the song and become familiar with the tune. Memorizing songs will also give your child a feeling of accomplishment.

## Reading

- Start a conversation about what you are reading together. Ask questions about the pictures, relate the images to your lives and guess what will happen in the story.
- Sweep your finger under words as you read. This will show your child how words are read from left to right and top to bottom.
- Emphasize rhyming words you encounter and try to think up more.
- Play a game by separating words you found in the story into syllables or beats to identify the smaller sounds.
- Point out print that is found in your home and neighborhood and explain how the print is being used.
- Identify shapes you encounter in your daily life. Learning shapes will help your child recognize how letters are formed and prepares them to learn the alphabet.



## Playing

- Give your child plenty of playtime and encourage your child to tell or create their own stories about what they are doing. Provide materials such as puppets, dress-up clothes and props.
- Play games with alphabet blocks, foam or magnetic letters. Try making simple words or your child’s name.
- Talk about the play activity to help your child make connections to prior knowledge and experiences — e.g., while playing grocery store, talk about the last time you went grocery shopping together.
- Encourage your child to use familiar objects in a pretend way — e.g., “I can pretend this cup is a phone. What else could it be?” Understanding symbolism is key to grasping that words represent something concrete.

## Writing

- Encourage scribbling and drawing, as these are the building blocks of learning to write.
- Provide materials like crayons, markers or pencils so your child can explore scribbling, drawing and writing to help develop their motor skills.
- Share your own writing, such as a shopping list. This will show your child that your writing represents real things.
- Encourage your child to draw and discuss their drawings. Write down the comments they make to show the connection between the words and the pictures.
- Write down simple stories that your child tells you. Have fun reading the stories back to your child.