

Visit With the Utays

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School Psychology and Education Specialists



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15 Ways to Turbo Boost Young Children's Reading

"My preschooler and my kindergartner show no interest in learning to read. Especially important in our competitive community, better reading skills means better grades. How can I motivate them to want to learn to read?" –A parent who values reading

We are very impressed that you are forward-thinking enough to not, "Wait and see how they do later" as too many well-meaning people suggest. Rather than external motivation like, "Read this book and earn a prize," which might be useful later, we suggest developing reading competence which usually leads to internal motivation to read. Our first 5 recommendations relate more to your preschooler (becoming proficient with the sounds of our language) but all 15 focus directly on specific ways to enhance and support your children's early reading skill development.

1. Encourage your child to listen to then repeat sounds.
2. Help your child discriminate between two sounds as "same" or "different."
3. Teach and practice how to rhyme words.
4. Blending sounds together while listening is a skill needed before blending sounds together on a page. Ask your child to figure out a word made by sounds you make, such as /d/ - /o/ - /g/ (dog).
5. After listening skills, move on to playing with the shapes of letters.
6. Reading to your children at least 15 minutes every day is the single most important activity you can do to prepare them for reading.

7. Point to each word as you read. Reread a favorite story leaving out key words your child must fill in.
8. Ask what is happening in the story based on the pictures and what might happen next.
9. Make going to your public library a special event for your children by getting them a library card and allowing them to choose books to check out. Have them participate in the children's story hour.
10. Read based on your child's interests using a variety of sources such as story books, picture books, comics, magazines, and both fiction and nonfiction books.
11. Encourage your child to "read" with you books with repeated lines like ABC books, nursery rhymes, and Dr. Seuss books. Ask them to read some of the words with you.
12. Let your child turn the pages to help reinforce that pages are read from left to right and point out how print goes from left to right as well.
13. Ask your children what they liked and did not like about a story to begin the important ability to read critically.
14. Connect the meaning of new words with old already known meanings.
15. Be very clear that you expect your child to learn to read (and later read to learn). Demonstrate this value by reading in front of your children.

For more information about this or any other topic related to your child's success, including professional assessment of strengths and needs, or a free TLC report: How to Make the Best Use of Your Child's Summer, contact Total Learning Centers at 724-940-1090 (Wexford, Fox Chapel, and Murrysville areas).

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