

The role of fathers in their child's literacy development

Dads: Did you know that reading with your preschool child can lead to better school performance later on? Studies show that when fathers participate in learning, children receive higher marks, enjoy school more, and are less likely to repeat a grade. Reading time creates a bond between you and your child that will stay with you both forever.

What should I read?

Children will respond to your enthusiasm. You can select nonfiction – books about famous people, places, or how things work, or fiction. The important part is that you are enthusiastic about the book. Stop by the children's room at your local library for more ideas.

What if I'm not with my child every day?

If you don't see your child each day, try arranging a regular time to read books over the phone, or create your own podcast! Your child will look forward to this individual time with you, and you will also be modeling behavior that will keep your child on a path toward learning.

What if I don't like reading?

Even if you're not a reader yourself, your participation in literacy activities at home can have a profound impact on your child's academic achievement. You just have to send the message that reading is important! Here are some other simple ways to incorporate literacy into your everyday routine with your child:

- Tell stories about when you were young
- Recite nursery rhymes or jingles
- Read environmental print (e.g., road signs or brand names on food containers)
- Ask your child about his day. Conversation with adults helps children learn new words and practice creating a narrative – both linked to better reading skills.
- Check out books of photography or art and talk about the pictures
- When you are doing household projects, describe what you are doing to your child
- Involve your child in everyday writing tasks like shopping lists or paying bills
- Create games that use letters, words, or problem solving

Use the language you are most comfortable speaking! Reading skills transfer between languages, and you will be better at playing with words and language in your native tongue.

Walk the walk

Your child learns from what you do. Make sure the messages you are sending about reading reinforce that knowledge and literacy are valuable, achievable, and powerful.

For more information about early literacy development, visit:
www.ReadingRockets.org/article/c442

