



Strengthen Early Literacy Skills and Generate a Love of Reading in Young Children

by Kelly Faulkenberry Cheek, MSP, CCC-SLP
& Keri Spielvogle, MCD, CCC-SLP



Do you have or work with children who are just beginning to read? As a parent or teacher, you can strengthen these early literacy skills by becoming an active participant in this learning process. Spending time reading with your children not only encourages them to be good readers, but also helps to develop a love of reading that could last a lifetime!

► Piece Your Way to Great Reading Skills

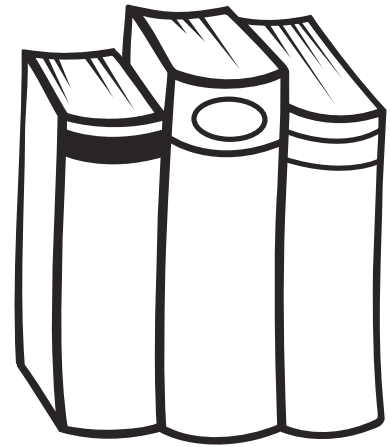
Putting puzzles together with your children is a great pre-reading activity. As children work to make the pieces fit, they learn what **relationships** make the pieces go together. Helping them talk about and describe what kind of piece they are looking for helps introduce such pre-reading **concepts** such as big/small, straight/round, middle/end, among others. Say things to your children to encourage this such as, “Does it need round edges or straight edges?”; “Is the piece big or small?”; or “Is the piece near the middle or the end?”

Strengthen the learning of **adjectives, colors, and listening skills** by providing your children with clues such as, “I think you need a piece with **BLUE** on it,” or “I’ll bet it is the piece with the **BABY** cat or kitten on it.” Be creative and talk with them to help figure out the correct answers. Children will have to listen to your clue and look for the matching piece.

► Talk and Read to Children to Strengthen Early Literacy Skills

Reading and talking with your children provides wonderful opportunities to develop reading readiness skills such as **awareness of sounds, letters, and numbers**. When you are reading a book with your children, point out words that start with the same sound to develop an understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds. Increase recognition and awareness of numbers by pointing to and naming each page number.

When talking with your children, help them notice words that rhyme such as “shoe,” “blue,” “to,” and “moo.” Ask them to try to think of another word that sounds the same (or rhymes). If they are old enough, help your children start to copy and write their name and numbers. When children are able to connect sounds they hear with letters they see, they are building literacy skills. The more you practice these skills together, the more success your child will have when learning to read.



► **Teaching a Child to Care for Books
Could Start a Life-Long Love of Reading**

Knowing how to use and take care of a book is an important skill for preschoolers and older children. Teach them to treat a book carefully, so they can enjoy it forever. Pick a “special” place in your child’s room or the classroom to keep books where they will be safe, stacked neatly, and easy to find. Talk with children about what a book might be about just from looking at the front picture, and show your child how to turn the pages carefully so they don’t tear. Teaching your child to respect and love books could build a love of reading that lasts a lifetime!