Reading is an essential skill for learning in all subjects. The ability to read well leads to success in school and life. As the parent or caregiver, your involvement really helps your child become a confident student and lifelong reader. It’s okay to explore the joy of reading together! The “So You’re Parenting...” tipsheets for grades PreK-3 give you helpful activities and ideas to prepare your child for Ohio’s Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

Reading in Kindergarten: Here’s What to Expect

Four sets of skills are especially important for beginning readers in kindergarten:

**Print concepts**, which are the basic features of letters and words. Here are some examples:
- Your child will learn that words in English go from left to right and top to bottom.
- Your child will understand that spoken words are related to printed words.
- Your child will recognize and name all the letters of the alphabet in uppercase (“A”) and lowercase (“a”).

**Phonological awareness**, which is learning and understanding sounds. Here are some examples:
- Your child will recognize and come up with rhyming words, such as “cat,” “mat,” and “hat.”
- Your child will be able to pronounce each sound that makes up a short word, such as the “c” sound, the short “a” sound, and the “t” sound that make up “cat.”

**Phonics** (which is connecting sounds with letters) and **word recognition**. Here are some examples:
- Your child will learn to read many common short words, such as “the,” “you,” and “she,” just by looking at them.
- Your child will be able to tell the difference between words that look similar, such as “hat” and “hot,” by recognizing the sounds of the different letters.

**Fluency**, which is the ability to understand what is being read, and to read with flow. Your child will be able to read kindergarten level material aloud and to understand what he is reading.
Reading on the Go

Reading can happen anywhere, anytime. You can do simple activities with your child at the grocery store or on a walk around the neighborhood.

In the car, point out road signs to your child, read the words, and talk about their meaning.

At the grocery store, have your child find his favorite cereal and look for familiar letters on the box, or count the number of words on the box.

In a restaurant, have your child look at the pictures on the menu and find the word(s) that name the food, or have her tell you about the picture.

In an office, have your child find words on door signs, nametags, or on magazines or books.

On the sports field, have your child read the numbers on the back of players’ shirts, or in the sports program, look for familiar letters or find sport-specific words such as bat, strike, touchdown, and goal.

Reading for a Purpose

Reading can happen at home or in your local library, whether for fun or to find information. Here are some reading tips:

Ask your child about a favorite subject - dance, football, animals - and find books about it in your local library or bookstore.

Set a special reading time every day - after dinner, before bed - and hold each other to the time. Ask your child questions about characters and events in the story.

As you read, point to the letters from left to right, or have your child point to the letters he recognizes.

Read the words aloud, especially in rhyming books, and encourage your child to repeat them.

Using your TV, select closed captioning and have your child identify words or letters. Using your phone or tablet, download apps or bookmark reading websites so that your child can read anywhere, anytime.

Using your computer, spend time with your child on her favorite website and have her point to words that she recognizes, or ask her to read the words aloud.

Reading on the Screen

Handheld devices, televisions, and computers can be part of the reading experience for your child with these activities:

Help your child click the pages of an eBook that can be found in the K-5 section of the INFOhio website (www.infohio.org). Contact your child’s teacher or school librarian for more information. Bookflix and World Book Early Learning include books that are appropriate for children at all reading levels.

Using your TV, select closed captioning and have your child identify words or letters. Using your phone or tablet, download apps or bookmark reading websites so that your child can read anywhere, anytime.

Using your computer, spend time with your child on her favorite website and have her point to words that she recognizes, or ask her to read the words aloud.

Community Support for Your Child’s Reading

As your child grows, create relationships with supportive community members who know a lot about reading:

- The public librarian will help you find enjoyable, easy books and can recommend strategies to help make reading a fun, healthy part of your everyday life.
- The school librarian will be your hero, as he or she will recommend great books and fun series that will keep your child involved in reading.
- The school’s PTA will help you connect with an active network of parents who care about education. Don’t be timid about talking with other parents and swapping ideas about age-appropriate reading activities that have worked for them.

Don’t let reading slide in the summer! Participate in your public library’s summer reading program, or just hang out at the library with your child and enjoy the books and activities that are free for your use.

So You’re Parenting a Kindergartener

Activities to do with your child to build reading skills

“Reading ‘Round the Clock” is a service of the Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA), the Ohio PTA, INFOhio, and the State Library of Ohio.

For more information: www.infohio.org/goto/RRtC