



## Getting Them Ready to Read!

Activities to Promote Early Literacy

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## Grow Up Reading: Babies



- At birth, a baby's brain contains all the neurons necessary for a lifetime of learning - 100 to 200 billion brain cells.
- A baby is born ready to learn.
- However, brain development and a baby's capacity for learning is heavily dependent on early life experiences.

<http://www.growupreading.org/babies/index.php?section=110>

## Babies

- Connections, called pathways, need to be formed between a baby's neurons.
- A child's capacity to learn is directly related to the number of pathways that are formed and strengthened.
- Talking and reading to babies helps brain neurons to connect.

<http://www.growupreading.org/babies/index.php?section=110>

## Grow Up Reading: Toddlers

- Toddlers love activity and the chance to practice their growing language skills.
- Involve toddlers in the reading experience by asking them questions and having them expand on the stories you read to them.
- Toddlers who talk about the illustrations, characters, setting, actions and other aspects of books step up the development of their reading skills.



## Preschoolers




- A child's success at reading is closely related to his or her ability to hear sounds.
- Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and recognize different sound units in words and to understand that words are made from smaller sound units.

## Preschoolers

- Understanding that words are made up of smaller sounds helps children break the code between written language (words) and spoken language (sounds).
- Research indicates that this is the best predictor of the ease of early reading success - better even than IQ, vocabulary or listening comprehension.

## Promoting Reading



- Letter Knowledge
  - Letter knowledge includes understanding that letters are different from each other and that each letter has a name and its own sound.

## Promoting Reading

- Print Knowledge
  - Encourage newly discovered abilities and emphasize all the different things they already know about books and reading
    - including holding a book correctly
    - turning the pages correctly
    - understanding that the book has a title, a beginning and an ending.


## Promoting Reading

- Comprehension
  - When reading ask them to make predictions based on the cover and title of the book.
  - Revise these predictions as you gather more information while reading.
  - Use clues from the illustrations to make sense of the story.
  - Ask questions about the illustrations and the story such as, "What are the ducks doing?"

## Alphabet Activities

## Crawling to the ABCs


(Savvy Source - A is for Alphabet)



- [Crawling to the ABCs](#)
- **ages 0-3**
- **Supplies**
- Alphabet stencils, clear contact paper, scissors
- **Activity Detail**
- Go to an educational store or other store that sells alphabet stencils. Then place the alphabet stencils on a tile floor in your home. Place them randomly so that the child will learn the letters individually. Then cover the stencils with clear contact paper. Watch as they discover the fun of crawling over the letters. As they approach or crawl over a letter you tell them what it is. It's a clever and fun way to introduce babies to the world of letters.

## Clothespin Names

(Savvy Source - A is for Alphabet)



- Clothes Pin Names
- **ages 2-6**
- **Supplies**
- A clothes pin for each letter in your child's name, paper.
- **Activity Detail**
- Write each letter of a child's name on a separate clothes pin. On a piece of paper, write a child's name. Mix up the clothes pins and have your child find each letter in their name, match it to the letter on the paper, and clip it on the paper. For an added challenge, add extra letters on clothes pins that the child will have to eliminate from the pile. This activity is a great way for kids to learn to identify the letters in their names.

## Rhyme Time

(Savvy Source - A is for Alphabet)



- Rhyme Time
- **ages 3-6**
- **Supplies**
- Just your imagination!
- **Activity Detail**
- When you're waiting with children anywhere where you need to 'kill' a few minutes, you can play this easy rhyming game. The teacher starts by saying, 'I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with \_\_\_\_\_ and it starts with \_\_\_\_'. For example, you could say 'I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with BED and it starts with H'. The child would then yell out 'HEAD'. For older kids, you don't have to provide the starting letter.

## Hopscotch Spelling

(Savvy Source - A is for Alphabet)

- Hopscotch Spelling
- **ages 3-6**
- **Supplies**
- Sidewalk chalk or foam interlocking letters
- **Activity Detail**
- A great way to improve spelling skills while having fun! Using either sidewalk chalk or foam interlocking-letter squares (you can find them at Right Start or Ross), list the alphabet. Say a word and have your kid(s) spell out the word hopping on the letters. Younger kids can play by just finding a letter and then progressing to finding the letter that sounds like "ssss."



## Super Letter Hunt

(Savvy Source - A is for Alphabet)



- Super Letter Hunt
- **ages 2-6**
- **Supplies**
- Paper and pen
- **Activity Detail**
- Play a hidden alphabet game with your child. Write each letter of your child's name on a separate piece of paper. Then hide the letters throughout your house and send your child on a letter treasure hunt. When she has found them, help her put the letters in order to spell her name. When she has mastered this, try it with other words. Another variation would be to write the whole alphabet on 26 pieces of paper and then have your child place them in order after finding them all.

## Read the Room

(Savvy Source - A is for Alphabet)

- Read the Room
- **ages 3-6**
- **Supplies**
- Blank 3x5 cards, long pointers, room with everyday items (e.g. living room, kitchen, bedroom, even outside!)
- **Activity Detail**
- I used to use this activity in my Kindergarten and Preschool classes, and the kids loved it! Turn a room in your house into a readable classroom by labeling things in it on blank 3x5 cards. Clearly print words like: couch, clock, rug, television, door, etc. and tape words to each item. It is best to use all lower case letters. Using something as a pointer (a yardstick or dowel with something on the end so it isn't dangerous), the kids can "read" the cards you have taped around the room. It reinforces the concept of letters making words, and words representing an object.



## YouTube - Paper Plate Letters

(2:29)



## Activities to Promote Small Motor Skills



<http://www.krayonsacademy.com/Krayons%20Kids.jpg>

## Creating Snacklaces

(Savvy Source-All by myself)



- Creating Snacklaces
- **ages 2-6**
- **Supplies**
- Yarn or string, pretzels or Cheerios
- **Activity Detail**
- This is a slightly more nutritious variation of candy jewelry. Cut yarn or string in different lengths for your child to wear as a necklace or bracelet. Let your child decorate it by stringing on Cheerios or small pretzels. Make extras - they're fun to carry around for your child to nibble on!

## Using Tongs

(Savvy Source-All by myself)

- Using Tongs
- **ages 3-6**
- **Supplies**
- Cotton balls, small tongs, small bowl.
- **Activity Detail**
- Set a pile of cotton balls on the table. Have your child use tongs (small ones) to pick up the cotton balls and place them in a small bowl. This activity is a wonderful way to build up the hand muscles that your child will use when he or she holds a pencil or crayon. You can also use this activity as a way to practice basic math skills -- counting, addition, and subtraction.



[http://www.handsonlearning4all.com/images/pinching\\_puffballs.jpg](http://www.handsonlearning4all.com/images/pinching_puffballs.jpg)

## Chalk the Walk

(Savvy Source - Holding a Pencil)



- [Chalk the Walk](#)
- **ages 1-6**
- **Supplies**
- Colored Sidewalk Chalk- preferably the large ones for little hands.
- **Activity Detail**
- Mark off an area of your driveway, sidewalk or any other washable surface and let your kids go to town with Sidewalk Chalk. You can ask them to draw shapes, letters or numbers, or just let the little ones doodle. I'll draw objects or animals and then ask my son to run and jump on them, which adds a little physical activity. My son loves to finish up the chalk play by leaving daddy a welcome home message on the driveway!

## Tracing Shapes

(Savvy Source - Holding a Pencil)



- Tracing Shapes
- **ages 3-5**
- **Supplies**
- Tracing paper, colored pencils, heavy black marker
- **Activity Detail**
- Before starting this activity, take a half sheet paper and draw with a heavy black marker several simple shapes (heart, moon, star, flower, car, face, etc...) onto the paper. Then, give your child several half sheets of tracing paper and colored pencils. Have your child use a piece of tracing paper and colored pencil to trace different shapes and then create a setting around them. For instance, he or she can trace a moon and stars and then draw the rest of the night sky.

<http://teachers.greenville.k12.sc.us/sites/mhiller/September%20classroom%20activities/tracing%20shapes.JPG>

## Q-tip painting

(Savvy Source - Holding a Pencil)

- Q-Tip Painting
- **ages 4-6**
- **Supplies**
- Tempera paints, cotton swabs, construction paper
- **Activity Detail**
- Draw a simple picture on a piece of construction paper. For example, a large tree. Then show your child how to fill in the picture by using just the tip of a cotton swab. This will create "dots" of color that blend together to make a whole. It is fun to watch your child try to fill up all the white spaces without using a brush stroke.



<http://www.makemeasaint.blogspot.com>

## Straw Beading

(Savvy Source - Holding a Pencil)

- Straw Beading
- **ages 2-5**
- **Supplies**
- Coffee Stirrer straws or pipe cleaners, craft beads (pony beads), hot glue gun, bead container.
- **Activity Detail**
- For many kids, stringing beads on a string can be frustrating. You can make it easier if you let them string beads on a coffee stirrer or pipe cleaner. You can hot glue a bead on one end of a straw or bend the end of the pipe cleaner to act as the "stopper" bead, then let your little artist go to work! They can make a multicolored creation, a solid one, or a pattern of alternating colors. You can save their creation by hot gluing the last bead in their design or if they're not sentimental, dump the beads back into the container and start all over again!



<http://www.kaboose.com/imageLibrary/hecklbtn.gif>

## Tweezer Sort

(Savvy Source - Holding a Pencil)

- Tweezer Sort
- **ages 3-6**
- **Supplies**
- Ice cube tray, craft (pony) beads, hot glue gun, tweezers, storage bag.
- **Activity Detail**
- Tweezers are great for strengthening and refining fine motor skills. Use an old ice cube tray and hot glue a different color craft bead (these are sometimes called pony beads) to the bottom of each section of the tray. Put a pair of tweezers (they can be blunt metal or plastic) in a bag with an assortment of beads of all colors. Your child can tweeze as many of each color as he or she would like into the section of the tray where the same color is glued. Then you can count how many of each color as they tweeze them back into the bag!



## YouTube - Fine Motor Skills Activity

(2:44)



## More Pre-Reading Activities

## What's Different

(Savvy Source – As Silly As Can Be)

- [What's Different?](#)
- **ages 3-6**
- **Supplies**
- Just the clothes on your back
- **Activity Detail**
- This is a great game to play with a group. My daughter plays it at her preschool and it always gets everyone laughing, adults too! Have everyone sit in a circle. One person is chosen to leave the room (they'll need an adult to help). That person then changes as much as they can about their appearance - the zanier you make it the better. Untuck their shirt or turn it inside out, tie their sweater around their leg, put a sock on their hand, put a little girl's hair in a crazy-looking ponytail, etc. They then re-enter the room and stand in the middle of the circle while the rest of the group takes turns guessing what's different. When everything has been guessed, it's another child's turn.



## Indoor Hopscotch

(Savvy Source – One Two Buckle My Shoe)

- Indoor Hopscotch
- **ages 3-6**
- **Supplies**
- You can get creative about the way you make the squares, but the most traditional would be from construction paper, scissors and tape or just use white printer paper and markers. You can also buy the foam puzzles that lay on the floor that already have the letters and number on them.
- **Activity Detail**
- This is a twist on the traditional hopscotch for little ones learning their ABC's and 123's. First start by making squares or rectangles with letters and numbers on them. Then lay them out all over the floor. Have your child start at one end of the room and see if they can cross the room jumping from square to square. They must identify the letter or number they are going to jump to next. You can also call out the number or letter for them and tell them to find it and jump on it next. Your kids can also call our letters and numbers for you to jump on. This helps the younger kids to learn their letters and numbers, and gives everyone some indoor exercise. This activity can also be done with shapes, colors, animals, etc.



## 4 Hugs and 3 Jumps

(Savvy Source – One Two Buckle My Shoe)

- 4 Hugs and 3 Jumps
- **ages 2-5**
- **Supplies**
- Index cards and a pen
- **Activity Detail**
- Get a stack of 20 index cards. On half of them, write the numbers 1 through 10; on the rest, write action words like jump, kiss, and hug. Have your child draw a number card and an action card, then help him put the two together: "Jump 2 times" or "Hug your teddy bear 6 times." This activity is great for older and younger children -- helping the younger ones learn to count and the older ones learn to read!



## 2 Rhymes, 1 Doesn't

(Grow Up Reading-Toddlers)

- Say three words to your toddler - two that rhyme and one that doesn't. Ask him to say what word doesn't sound like the other two. Playing this game helps your toddler hear same and different sounds and prepares him for reading success.



[http://openclipart.org/people/xeolhades/xeolhades\\_mouth.png](http://openclipart.org/people/xeolhades/xeolhades_mouth.png)

## Don't forget Action Songs & Finger Plays...

### The Ants Go Marching

*Traditional action song*

- The ants go marching one by one,  
Hurrah, hurrah.  
The ants go marching one by one,  
Hurrah, hurrah.  
The ants go marching one by one,  
The little one stops to suck his thumb,  
And they all go marching down  
Into the ground to get out of the rain,  
BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

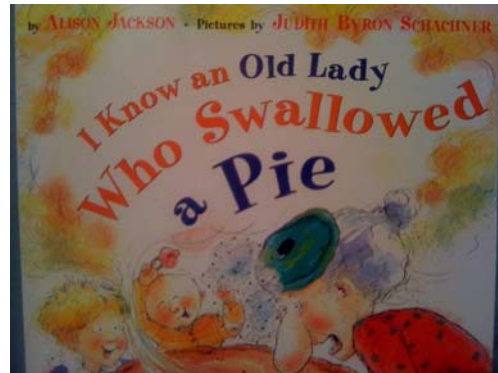
- Two...tie his shoe...  
Three...climb a tree...  
Four...shut the door...  
Five...take a dive...  
Six...pick up sticks...  
Seven...pray to heaven...  
Eight...shut the gate...  
Nine...check the time...  
Ten...say "THE END"



<http://www.millymoney.com/pages/Fin-Ants.htm>

## Repetition, Chanting & Repeatable Phrases...

- Babies, toddlers & preschoolers love to hear repeatable phrases in stories because it gives them the rhythm and flow of the language.
- Encourage toddlers and preschoolers to chant along with you.
- [YouTube - Five Green Peas - Children's Music by Beat Boppers](#)



## Webliography

All images, unless otherwise noted are from the sites below:

- <http://www.growupreading.org>
- <http://www.savvysource.com>
- [http://www.growingupgreen.co.uk/preschool\\_room.htm](http://www.growingupgreen.co.uk/preschool_room.htm) - cover image
- Paper Plate Letters  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqde5F9oWjI>
- Fine Motor Activity  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbITInDrh8>
- Five Green Peas  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVINClOCKug>