

## 10 Ways to Raise a Reader

**10** - Point out alphabet letters to your child all through the day. "Look at the big K on that store! You have a K in your name." "Can you find the letter S on the cereal box?" "Look at this envelope, it has my name on it!" "See, \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ spells my name." Children who enter kindergarten being able to name all or most letters of the alphabet tend to learn to read easier than children who can't point to letters and name them.

**9** - When reading to your child, teach the meaning of the unusual words by adding to words your child already knows. If the book says "The dog can eat enormous amounts of food", you can say "The dog can eat enormous, very large or huge, amounts of food." How many words your child can understand and use correctly is a great predictor of how well kids will do in school.

**8** - Sing songs together and make up new songs using familiar tunes. Songs typically included rhyming words, and rhyming is another "listening to the sounds in words" skill that helps kids be better readers.

**7** - When giving your child directions, try to say them just one time and then follow through to help him or her do them. If you keep repeating yourself, your child will learn that he or she doesn't have to listen carefully, plus you'll drive yourself nuts! Listening carefully helps kids pay attention to words and their meanings.

**6** - Play games like "Guess My Word" that help your child to listen to the sounds in words. Children who can hear the sounds /m/ /a/ /n/ (when you see / /, you say the SOUND, not the letter name) and blend them together into the word "man" have a much easier time learning to read than children who cannot. Try it with words that only have a few sounds like shoe (/sh/ /oe/), and words with many sounds, like tractor (/t/ /r/ /a/ /ck/ /t/ /or/) and vacation (/v/ /a/ /c/ /a/ /ti/ /o/ /n/)

**5** - When reading to your child, point out the kind of book it is. Some books are stories, other books are information books. When you choose books from the library or to purchase for your child, try to find a variety of topics and book types. Many parents and teachers avoid non-fiction or informative books because they are sometimes longer to read. Keep in mind that you can read just a page or two at a time. Read to your child EVERY DAY, from books that are too challenging for them to read independently, and discuss what you're reading.

**4** - Help your child to write the letters of the alphabet, his or her name, the names of family members, and words of interest on scrap paper, junk mail, Magna Doodle, dry erase boards, recycled phone books, special tablets of paper, and with magnetic letters on the fridge. Help them write foods they are wishing for on a grocery list.

**3** - Show your child how important reading is in the real world. Tell him or her that you need a few minutes to read the newspaper so that you know what is happening around us. Show your child the directions for a recipe you are trying. Point out road signs, billboards, store names, and window signs as you run your errands. Often children's attitudes about reading are directly influenced by their families. Make sure your child learns through your words and actions that reading is a valuable and enjoyable skill.

**2** - Use big words when talking to your child. Instead of saying to look under the table for the ball, say "Your ball is below the table." You have so many opportunities to teach your child new words! Conversations with loving adults are proven to help kids learn new words.

**1** - Keep involved in your child's education. Parents who are involved tend to have students who value learning!