

Greetings!

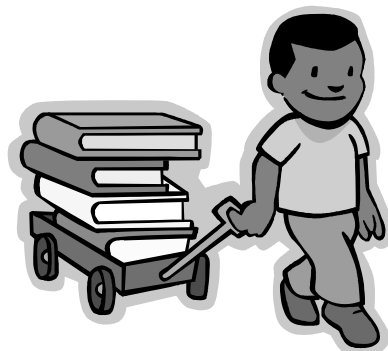
Some of the best gifts you can give your children are the skills needed to do well in school. As a parent, you can help your child succeed in school. There are many games and activities you can do right at home to build your child's language, math, and artistic skills.



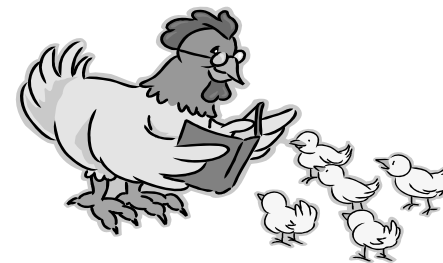
This is the first in a series of four bulletins for parents of children aged three to six. Each bulletin will focus on a particular area: language/reading, math, science, and art. The bulletins offer general advice on how you can help your child develop skills in these important areas. The bulletins will also give you ideas for fun and skill-building activities to try with your child.



This first bulletin focuses on helping your child develop language and reading skills. Learning to read is one of the most important things for your child to accomplish. Having good language and reading skills will help your child do better in all school subjects. Here are some ways you can help your child build language skills:



- First of all, you can help your child build language skills simply by talking to him/her.
 - Include your child in family talks and talk to your child in the car, at home, at the store, etc.
 - When you go places, describe what you see (cars, trees, flowers, dogs, etc.), and ask your child to do the same.
 - Encourage your child to use words to tell you how she feels.
- Second, you can help your child develop reading skills by reading aloud. Reading aloud is one of the best things you can do to help your child learn to read and love books.



- Read aloud to your child regularly—at least 20 minutes every day is best.
 - Don't just read—talk about the books you read with your child. Ask your child to tell you what he/she liked about a story, and tell him/her what you liked.
- Third, play language games with your child.
 - Play “Let's find everything in the house that starts with the letter *M*” (or any other letter you choose).
 - Recite poems, sing songs, and make up silly rhymes with your child.
 - Leave notes for your child to discover and read on the refrigerator or in a lunch bag.



To work on language skills at home, try this fun activity:

Make a Rolling Story-Book!¹

Materials you need: 4 paper-towel tubes; 1 narrow cardboard box; roll of brown paper; washable paint, markers, glue, and masking tape; adult-size scissors and utility knife; child safety scissors; ruler; old magazines

What to do together: First, create the “case” for your moving picture book. Make holes on each side of the cardboard box, about 4 inches from the top. The holes should be large enough for the paper-towel tubes to fit through. Fit one tube through each hole. Leave about 1.5 inches of the tube sticking out on each side of the box.

Remove the bottom tube, and help your child measure the brown paper so it fits the width of the tube. Cut a long strip of paper, and help your child to cut out pictures from the magazine to paste on the paper. You can also draw pictures if you want to. Next, encourage your child to write down what is happening in each picture. Tape the end of the story to the bottom paper tube. Ask your child to turn the end of the tube and roll up the story. Tape the top of the story to the top tube. Now your child is ready to roll and read! Your child can paint and decorate the outside of the story box, too.

¹This activity was adapted from the Scholastic website: <http://www.scholastic.com>

Reading tips adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics: Reading Checkup Guide <http://www.aap.org/family/readmeastory.htm>

For more information about reading, see *Reading Wizards* program at <http://agexted.cas.psu.edu/fcs/dp/Wizard.html>

Ready, Set, Go ...:

Ready, Set, Go ... Getting Children Ready for School is a series of four educational bulletins about school readiness for parents of children aged three to six. The purpose of the bulletins is to help parents prepare their young child to enter school. The bulletins focus on four areas: language/reading, math, science, and art. The bulletins offer general advice on how parents can help their child develop skills in these important areas through fun activities.

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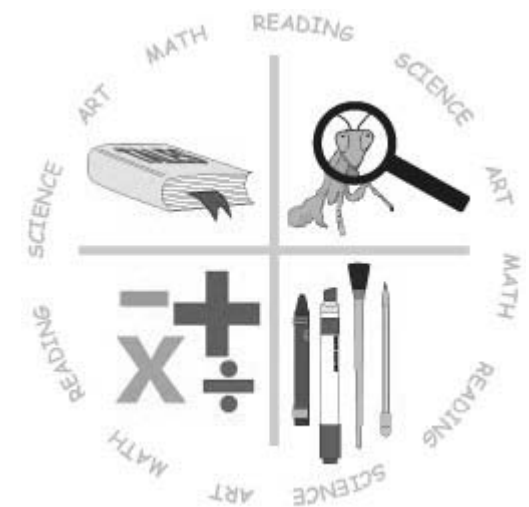
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