

6 Skills Are Needed Before Learning To Read

Print Motivation: having an interest in and an enjoyment of books.

- Read your child's favorite book again and again. Sometimes as you read, pause and ask your child about what is going on in the story.

Sound Awareness

- Try playing with the sounds that letters make and blending the sounds into words. "Can you guess this word? ccc-aaa-ttt" Hold each sound longer than normal.
- Rhyme words. "The cat, sat on the mat." The rat wore a hat."

Vocabulary: knowing the names of things.

- Talk to your baby all the time
- Read to your baby and children as much as possible.

Narrative Skills: the ability to describe things and to tell stories.

- Talk about events you have shared together such as a trip to the zoo or going to grandma's house.
- Write a story together. Help your child start by giving a clue. "A frog is swimming in the lake." Then ask, "What color is the frog?" "What is he doing?" "Who are his friends?" etc.

Print Awareness: noticing print in the environment, knowing how to handle a book. Understanding that pages turn and how to follow words on a page...left to right...top to bottom.

- Allow your baby to handle cloth books and board books
- Use your finger to follow the words as you read aloud to your child.
- Let your child trace the lines of print.

Letter Knowledge: Knowing that letters are different from each other, that each letter has a name and is related to specific sounds.

- Try saying silly tongue twisters, these help kids become sensitive to the sounds in words.
- Use your child's name to show a link between letters and sounds. Say, "John, the word *jump* begins with the same sound as your name. *John. Jump.* And they both begin with the same letter 'j'.
- Play a game: "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound "mmmmmmmm."
- Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Do this on paper, in sand, with soap bubbles in the bathtub.
- Ticklish fun: Trace a letter on your child's back and have him/her guess what it is.