

# Reading Readiness Activities

*...for the pre and emergent reader*



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So much goes into preparing the framework for your child to begin reading. Two important ways we can help get our children ready is to:

1. Help foster critical brain connections between the right and left hemispheres that are a necessary pre-cursor to progressing into smooth, easy phonetic reading. Movement is a key way that this wiring occurs which is why we need to jealously guard our children's free time and encourage them to play outdoors.
2. Build vocabulary. Vocabulary acquisition cannot be underestimated. It is considered the largest predictor of school success and will also either feed or frustrate reading skills. Again, vocabulary is best built in the context of meaningful, relational interactions and play!

Below are listed some ideas to help you as parents prime the pump and prepare your children for the process of becoming a life-long, successful reader.

## **BRAIN BUILDERS:**

- I. Large Motor Coordination** – *accomplished through PLAY!*
  - a. Crawl, run, gallop, skip. (Each of these is important. The first and last ones are signs that bilateral integration is taking place!)
  - b. Walking a balance beam or walking sideways and backwards.
  - c. Somersaults, cartwheels, rolling down a hill.
  - d. Monkey bars – brachiates (hand over hand) Another skill that indicates bilateral integration between the hemispheres of the brain, an important precursor to being able to read.
  - e. Kicking a ball without stopping it first. Playing soccer!
  - f. Helpful Resource: *The Ultimate Guide to Brain Breaks* is full of activities that incorporate strategic large-motor moves specifically designed to wire the brain to learn & focus in a playful way!
- II. Small Motor Coordination** (eye-hand coordination) – *accomplished through PLAY!*
  - a. Sorting games – sort the socks, beads (by size and color), etc...
  - b. Manual dexterity games
    - i. Lacing card
    - ii. Stringing beads
    - iii. Lego's/Duplo's
    - iv. Play dough
    - v. Finger plays
    - vi. Pinching
    - vii. Cleaning silver/mirrors/windows
    - viii. Pouring rice/water (tea party, anyone?) This encourages pincer grasp, a pre-writing skill.

- c. Drawing Letters - It is important to introduce handwriting in a large, hands-on format first before asking them to try and use the super fine-motor skills of using a pencil.
  - i. In cake pan filled with rice, salt, cornmeal, etc or outside in the sandbox.
  - ii. Form letters with play dough
  - iii. Form letters with whole body.
  - iv. Trace sandpaper letters.
  - v. Trace letter on the child's back, child traces on adults back and while the other guesses.

## VOCABULARY BUILDERS:

### I. Experiences/Enriching Activities – building VOCABULARY!

- a) Go to real places – stores, the zoo, historic sites, symphony, museums, visit real people.
- b) Do real things – climb a tree, go on a boat, pet animals, garden, collect rocks, go camping.
- c) Talk about it – dialogue with child as you go and do. Talk about what you are doing and where you are.
- d) Dramatize –
  - i. Re-enact with Little People, etc.
  - ii. Play “Who Am I” as you dramatize animals, etc.

### II. Language

- a) Talk and listen
  - i. No baby talk, use correct big words.
  - ii. Answer questions, ask questions.
  - iii. Speak clearly
  - iv. Play word games
    - 1. What is it? (i.e. “In this room is something red, round and shiny...”)
    - 2. Alike and Different (Have child describe how two objects such as an apple and banana are alike and different.)
- b) Rich language
  - i. Teach nursery rhymes, poetry and finger plays.
  - ii. Read richly written stories (Beatrix Potter, A.A. Milne, McClosky, etc)
  - iii. Use rich, descriptive vocabulary when talking with your child. i.e. name the noun such as cottonwood rather than just tree; use precise verbs such as amble, scamper, sprint or scuttle, instead of just run; use nuanced adjectives like delectable, mouthwatering, scrumptious, succulent, rather than just good.
  - iv. Play with rhyming.
  - v. Play with syllables – clapping out the number of syllables in a word.
- c) Alphabet
  - i. Sounds – whether a child knows the names of the letters or not is irrelevant. An understanding of what sounds correlate to which letters is of far greater worth in preparing a child to read.
  - ii. Lower case magnetic letters
  - iii. Identify starting sounds in words.

Resources from Cultivated Learning that facilitate Reading Readiness:

*GO GLOBAL: A Literature-Heavy, Movement-Rich Learning Adventure* - For ages 5-8 year olds and younger siblings

*Preschool Finger Play and Song Cards* – utilizing the magic of movement and song to solidify basic preschool skills!

*The Ultimate Guide to Brain Breaks* – How movement wires the brain to learn & a system for utilize 60 brain break activities for focus & wiring the brain to learn.