

Pre-reading skills

Learning to read starts with children's language development.

Studies show that:

- every day conversations
- make-believe play
- reading activities
- daytime routines
- trips to the park
- visits to the library

all make a positive difference to children's language development.



Simple ideas for parents that support pre-reading skills in children

- Chat and play with the things that interest your child. Ask them what they want to sing, play with or read.
- Play, sing and read together.
- Name objects and offer choices to build vocabulary. When you are playing, ask your child to hand you items you ask for, e.g. teddy, book, ball.
- Talk about what you are doing together – use words for actions as well as things. Use short simple sentences.
- Encourage use of and play with sounds.
- Introduce more songs and rhymes using gestures and objects to reinforce key words.
- Share picture books with your child and help them to name the pictures. Ask them to find familiar objects in books.

Taken from: National Literacy Trust: Improving the home learning environment:



Ideas to boost your child's vocabulary when looking at books

- Talk about the things in the book that you know your child is especially interested in.
- Make comments to describe what you can see and what is happening in the book. Don't just focus on the names of things comment on what a figure is doing for e.g. running, jumping etc and describe what something is like e.g smooth, rough, shiny etc.
- You can ask questions but don't turn this into an interrogation. You will find that often just making a comment about the book is enough for your child to say something themselves. A good rule of thumb is to make 4 comments for every question you ask.
- Expand: take what your child says and add extra information e.g. if your child says "train!" say "yes, the train crashed....train crashed".
- Recast: take what your child says and repeat it back with more accuracy and information e.g. if your child says, "train go bridge", say, "Yes, the train's going over the bridge!"
- Never rush. Allow time for pauses. Time for your child to look at the pictures and time for them to think about what they are going to say.

TINY *Happy* PEOPLE

Your words build their world

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people>

Tiny Happy People is a great website for parents to help them develop their child's language skills. There are lots of simple activities and play ideas as well as videos and explanations about babies and toddlers' amazing early development.

‘Reading books with a toddler’:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/take-look-book-18-24/zk4wd6f>

This page gives advice on sharing books with toddlers

Watch the video and explore other links such as why toddlers love hearing the same stories over and over.



<https://wordsforlife.org.uk/activities/chat-play-read-interactive-activity-booklets/>

‘Words for life’ is another website worth exploring:

‘Chatting, playing and reading are all fun ways to bond with your child and help them to get better at learning. Our Start for Life chat, play and read interactive booklets are filled with great activities and links to helpful videos to try with your 0-5 year old at home.’

Using the library to support pre – reading skills

- Libraries are **FREE!** Becoming a member will cost you absolutely nothing and will open a world of opportunities for yourself and your children.
- There are 36 libraries around the county (including 6 micro-libraries and two mobile libraries), they offer safe spaces, activities and resources to support the pre-reading development of your child.
- To find out where your nearest library is, and what they offer, use the link below:

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/libraries-museums-and-archives/libraries/your-local-library/>

Most libraries provide the following activities, they are completely FREE:

- Rhyme time – an adult led lively and engaging session that introduces children to nursery rhymes through play. Great for developing familiarity with language patterns, repetitive language and early rhymes. These sessions are bespoke to the group and are usually followed by a creative activity.
- Story times – an adult led session offering children and parents the chance to engage with high-quality texts, in an informal and friendly texts. These are accompanied by visual cues to support language development. These sessions are usually followed by a creative activity.
- Craft events – adult led sessions which not only help with building vocabulary for everyday objects, but also develop fine motor skills, imagination, and creativity. These resources are accessible at all times in most of the libraries.



Your local library may be able to access the following resources to support your child's pre-reading skills:

- Early age books – share these in the safe library space or at home. Sharing books is a great way to develop language and learn pre-reading skills.
- Puppets – these can be used in the safe library space to encourage imaginative play by acting out different scenarios.
- Story sacks – these contain a book and soft toys to help you retell the story, great for developing key vocabulary.
- Craft resources – can be used to develop basic vocabulary of everyday objects and basic actions.
- Access to FREE audio and e-books to use at home – the library provides it members FREE access to various APPS that provide free reading materials.



Other ways that your library can help your child and you.

- Directing you to other services that may help you.
- Sharing the details of other community events and groups for you to take part in.
- Assist with forms and applications.
- FREE wi-fi.
- Support with developing Digital skills
- Provide a safe space to meet other families and children of the same age.