Children Soar on Word Power

Children who enjoy books and get good support from home tend to “take off” academically when they get to school. It’s never too early to start encouraging their love of reading.

In this guide, you’ll find tips for helping children get the most out of reading, pointers on working with schools and teachers, great ideas for using your public library, computer tips, valuable Web site addresses, and more.

This Family Guide was developed as a companion to the Reading Rockets literacy project. Reading Rockets includes videos, print guides, and our comprehensive Web sites — www.ReadingRockets.org and www.pbs.org/launchingreaders — which offer detailed information about teaching reading and helping children who fall behind. Please visit us on the Web and let us know what you think.
It’s Never Too Soon to Start!

Preschoolers, even babies, learn a lot when you read to them. Here’s how to make the most of your time with your kids:

**Read, read, read.** The sooner you start and the more often you do it, the better. Even a six-month-old can enjoy picture books (which taste great at this age, too).

**Be active.** Ask questions, point things out, and talk about the story. Use different voices. Ham it up! Your audience will love you.

**Take time to rhyme.** Kids love rhyming books like *Mother Goose* and *Dr. Seuss*. Rhymes also help kids learn to recognize the different sounds of words.

**Talk with your child.** Talk about trains or pets or what she's wearing today or anything else. Children need to express themselves and to hear from you.

**Get help if your child is struggling.** If your child seems to be having problems expressing himself, understanding you, or following a story, please contact a pediatrician, a reading specialist, or a speech pathologist to have your child assessed. Early intervention can make a big difference in your child's ability to succeed in school and in life.
Give School-Age Readers More Word Power

There are many ways to strengthen a kindergarten or grade-school child’s interest in reading and writing. Here are a few:

- **Enrich your life with books.** Keep good books in different rooms of your home. Set up a reading corner or bookcase in your child’s room and show your kids how much fun reading is by reading yourself.

- **Read it again.** Re-reading favorite books and poems may help children understand the meaning and read with even more accuracy.

- **Make waiting time reading time.** Be sure to keep a couple of books in the car for kids to read as you drive, and always bring some along to read while you wait for the doctor or dentist.

- **Put it in writing.** Encourage kids to write, whether it’s just their name, a shopping list, or a journal. They can write their own stories by telling them to you and letting you “publish” them with their illustrations. Always keep pencils, crayons, and paper on hand.
If your child is struggling, get involved:
Ask your school for access to a reading specialist or guidance counselor who can help your child. And have your child evaluated by a pediatrician or speech pathologist.

If you are struggling to read, get help:
Look into free or low-cost community tutoring programs. For help finding one, ask your local librarian or go to the Web and sign on to www.nifl.gov.

Readers Take Off at School
Reading and writing are the keys to success in school. But your involvement in the school is important, too.

Talk with the teacher, early and often. Your child’s teacher will be able to shed light on your child’s progress and suggest things you can do to help.

Become involved. Attend PTA meetings, school open houses, and events where teachers are available to talk with parents.

Ask if the school provides parents with access to computers, so you can take advantage of the resources on the Web.

If your child is struggling, get involved:
Ask your school for access to a reading specialist or guidance counselor who can help your child. And have your child evaluated by a pediatrician or speech pathologist.

If you are struggling to read, get help:
Look into free or low-cost community tutoring programs. For help finding one, ask your local librarian or go to the Web and sign on to www.nifl.gov.

Be sure to celebrate your children’s successes and encourage their efforts. If you care about how your child does in school, he or she will, too.
Discover Your Library

The public library is like a huge treasure chest, chock-full of books, magazines, videos, programs, and services — all available with a free library card. Here are just a few of the things you might find:

- Librarians who can help you find books about topics that interest your child and are at the right reading level.
- Story times, offered both during the day and evenings. Children love them, and you might enjoy listening with your preschooler.
- Colorful, fun, kid-friendly sections designed just for children.
- Computers that you and your child can use for free.
Find the Gold Mine Online

One of the highlights of Reading Rockets is the wealth of information, tips, and resources for parents available online. If you haven't learned to “surf” the Web, don't worry. Free computer classes are available at many community centers, and free computer time is available at most libraries and schools. Don't be afraid to ask for help — from a friend, the librarian, or even an older child.

These Web sites offer especially useful information for parents and fun activities for kids:

On www.ReadingRockets.org, you can

- Find the right book for your child — more than 100 top children's books are listed for pre-readers (ages 0–3), beginning readers (ages 3-6), and independent readers (ages 6–9).
- Get tips from other parents and caregivers on the Reading with Your Child forum.
- Look for local resources in your state.
- And much more.

On www.pbskids.org, you'll find

- Links to Between the Lions, Arthur, Sesame Street, and all your children's favorite PBS kids' shows.
- And more for kids: games, stories, music sheets, and coloring sheets.
Learn More

Watch our PBS series, 
Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers.

Order videos at 800-228-4630 or online at 
www.gpn.unl.edu.

For more information, contact us:
By phone: 703-998-2001
By e-mail: info@ReadingRockets.org
On the Web: www.ReadingRockets.org
By mail: Reading Rockets, WETA, 2775 S. Quincy St., Arlington, VA 22206

Reading Rockets Advisory Panel
Dr. Lynn Fuchs, Vanderbilt University
Dr. Edward J. Kame‘enui, University of Oregon
Dr. Louisa Moats, Former Director, NICHD Early Interventions Project
Dr. Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar, University of Michigan
Dr. Louise Spear-Swerling, Southern Connecticut State University
Dr. Lee Swanson, University of California-Riverside
Dr. Joanna Williams, Columbia University, Teachers College

Gov neeg tawm tswv yim rau Reading Rockets yog:
Doctora Lynn Fuchs, Vanderbilt University
Doctor Edward J. Kame‘enui, University of Oregon
Doctora Louisa Moats, Ex Directora,
NICHD Early Interventions Project
Doctora Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar, University of Michigan
Doctora Louise Spear-Swerling,
Southern Connecticut State University
Doctor Lee Swanson, University of California-Riverside
Doctora Joanna Williams, Columbia University, Teachers College

Nhiav ntxiv
Saib peb hauv PBS txuas ntxiv,
Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers.

Yuav yeeb yaj duab (video) hu tau rau tus xov tooj
800-343-5540 los sis hauv www.ReadingRockets.org/store

Yog xav paub ntau ntxiv:
Hu rau tus xov tooj: 703-998-2001
Sau e-mail: info@ReadingRockets.org
Hauv vej (Web):
www.ReadingRockets.org
Sau ntaww rau:
Reading Rockets,
WETA, 2775 S. Quincy St.,
Arlington, VA 22206