

# Getting Your Child Ready to Read



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## Preparing Children to Read

### ■ Conversation

Talk with your children from the first day — read their smiles, interpret and repeat their coos and babbles, let them hear the variety of tones and emotions in your voice. Let them “talk” back as their coos turn to babbles and then to words. Establishing a rhythm of turn-taking helps them learn the art of conversation.

### ■ Play with words and sounds

Share rhymes and jingles. Change the beginning and ending of words. Make new words or nonsense words by changing the beginning or ending sounds, such as “hat, fat, lat, mat, map, maf.” Make simple words or match sounds with

alphabet cereal, or magnetic letters or play other alphabet games.

Ask questions, such as what is the first letter of your name? What other words start with this letter?

### ■ Enjoy

Enjoy being together. Interact — if you’re going for a walk, point out the details, play “I spy”, comment on the weather, the smells, the scenery, people going by, the sounds, the animals, the mosquitoes. If you watch TV talk about the characters, colors, and action. When you’re riding in a car, turn off the radio and discuss what you see. Encourage word recognition on signs or ads. It’s a great way to encourage early reading.

### ■ Lap reading

Read to and with your child. Have your child sit on your lap or next to you so the child can help point out pictures, turn the pages, predict the story, or review what happened so far. It’s OK to tell rather than read the story. As they get older, let them insert the words they know or point to words as you read. Move into shared reading.

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## ■ Model

Let your child see you read and write whether it's writing a check, a grocery list, or a letter. Let them see you read the paper, a schedule, a magazine or a book. Read directions, recipes, or ads aloud. Say, "Listen to this . . .," as you read something interesting.

## ■ Encourage

Encourage your child to read by accepting their early attempts at reading. Maybe start with the big title on the cereal box or the name on the stove or refrigerator. Then move on to reading the finer print on the boxes. Encourage, but don't require, precision. It takes many words going past the brain before reading becomes automatic and easy. If your child asks for help, give the word.

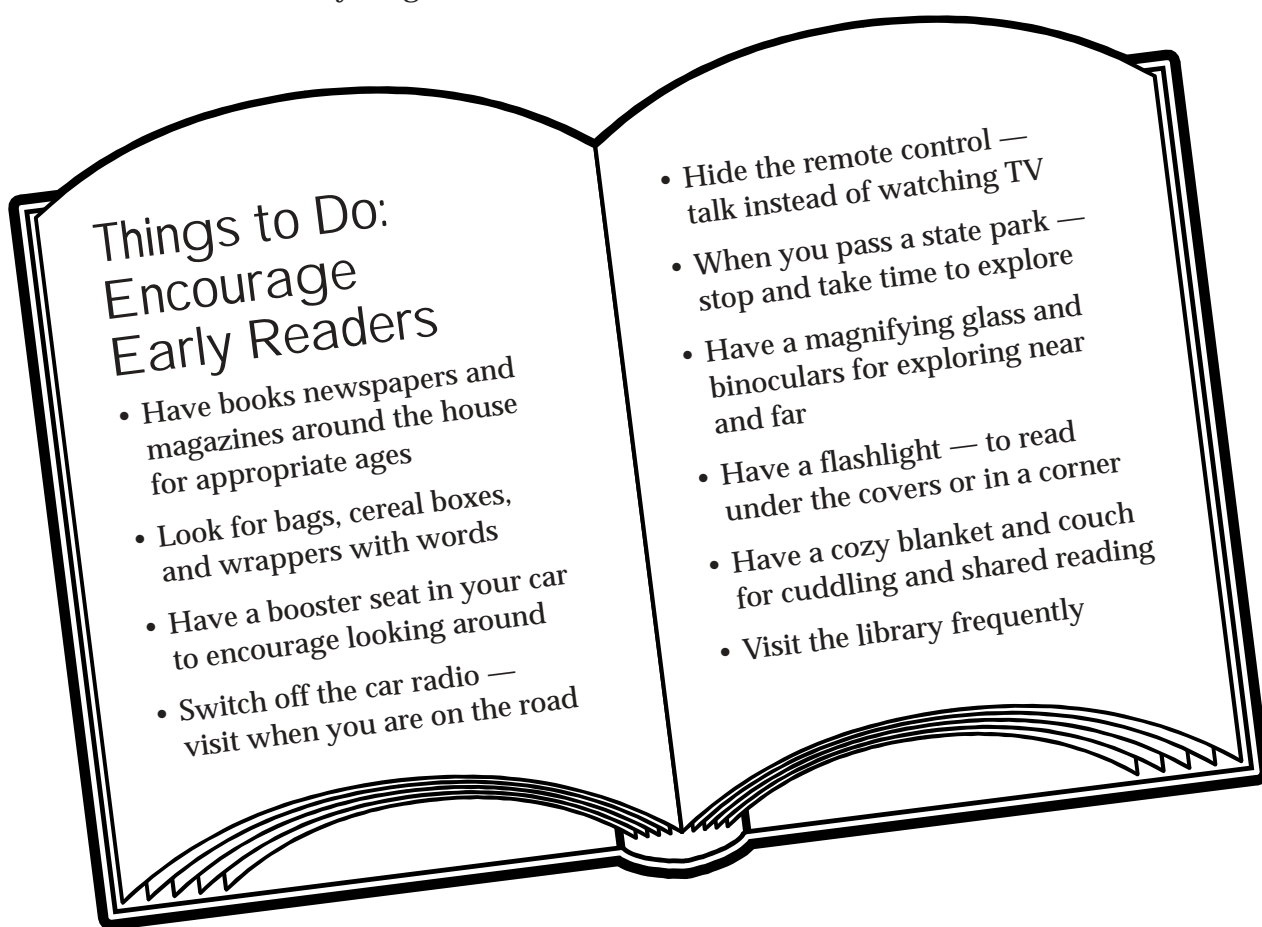
Encourage older children to read to younger children.

## ■ Meaning

Occasionally check for meaning by asking open ended questions about a story or instructions. "So what do you think that means? What is the author trying to say? Please read the recipe to me? How should we do this?" Keep it low key and fun.

## ■ Time

Take time to encourage your child to read to you and for you to read alone. As they get older, don't skip the reading together, but add time for reading alone — silently and aloud.



For more information on this and other topics, see: [www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu](http://www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu)

