

Emergent readers: Look! That's my letter!

Even the youngest child is somewhere on the path to becoming a reader. As a parent, it's important to support your child's efforts in a positive way and help him or her along the reading path. Here's a little information about emergent readers, and a few pointers to keep in mind.

An emergent reader:

- knows some letters of the alphabet
- understands that writing conveys a message
- uses "scribble" writing when writing
- may recognize some words or letters in their environment (words like "stop" or "exit" or letters like the giant "K" signifying Kmart or the golden arches "M" signifying McDonald's)

When reading with an emergent reader:

- Model fingerpoint reading. That means to follow the words with your finger from left to right as you read them. As your emergent reader starts to read, they will learn to do the same thing.
- Encourage "reading" or "pretend reading." This reading from memory provides practice with retelling and practice navigating books correctly.
- Talk about the story. When your child is finished with a book, be sure to talk about what happened in the story, and maybe "re-read" favorite parts. Talk about any interesting words or new concepts.
- Let them know how proud you are! By sharing a book with a child, you're sharing the joys and excitement of reading.

For more parent tips on how to help your emergent reader, visit:

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/7833>

