

TIPS | for parents of Kindergartners

Play with letters, words, and sounds! Having fun with language helps your child learn to crack the code of reading. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

■ Talk to your child.

Ask your child to talk about his day at school. Encourage him to explain something they did, or a game he played during recess.

■ Say silly tongue twisters.

Sing songs, read rhyming books, and say silly tongue twisters. These help kids become sensitive to the sounds in words.

■ Read it and experience it.

Connect what your child reads with what happens in life. If reading a book about animals, relate it to your last trip to the zoo..

■ Use your child's name.

Point out the link between letters and sounds. Say, "John, the word *jump* begins with the same sound as your name. *John, jump*. And they both begin with the same letter, J."

■ Play with puppets.

Play language games with puppets. Have the puppet say, "My name is Mark. I like words that rhyme with my name. Does *park* rhyme with *Mark*? Does *ball* rhyme with *Mark*?"

■ Trace and say letters.

Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Do this on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar.

■ Write it down.

Have paper and pencils available for your child to use for writing. Working together, write a sentence or two about something special. Encourage her to use the letters and sounds she's learning about in school.

■ Play sound games.

Practice blending sounds into words. Ask "Can you guess what this word is? *m - o - p*." Hold each sound longer than normal.

■ Read it again and again.

Go ahead and read your child's favorite book for the 100th time! As you read, pause and ask your child about what is going on in the book.

■ Talk about letters and sounds.

Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make. Turn it into a game! "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound *mmmmmm*."

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