

[Parent Tips] Create a Literacy-Rich Home

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It's no secret that strong reading skills are closely tied to success in the classroom and beyond. Common Core and next-generation state standards are also putting more and more focus on teaching and assessing literacy skills beginning in the earliest grades. As a parent, you know that your child is spending time in the classroom with formal literacy lessons and reading practice, but how can you maximize opportunities at home to build on that instruction? One of the most important things is to simply ensure that your home is a literacy-rich, environment. Don't worry—no redecorating or lesson planning is involved! Follow these five simple tips, and you'll be well on your way to a literacy-rich home that not only nurtures your child's literacy skills but also helps build a love for reading.

1. Make reading and writing materials easily available

If reading and writing materials are consistently within sight and easily within reach, your child will explore them! Keep the living room shelves filled with a variety of books (novels, coffee table volumes, picture books, atlases, etc.), subscribe to magazines and newspapers, keep plenty of age-appropriate books in your child's room, and keep notepads and writing tools (including crayons and markers) in convenient places. You can also read aloud everyday items, like signs,

labels, and recipes, to your child or have your child help you with tasks like making grocery lists and to-do lists.

2. Share your own love of reading and writing

We all know that children model the behavior of the adults around them. So, make sure that your child sees you enjoying reading and writing on a regular basis. This can be simply reading the paper while hanging out on a weekend morning, writing a note while your child works on homework, or bringing a book along for a beach day or picnic. Talk about your interest in what you've been reading, and share with your child your own favorite books from when you were his or her age.

3. Set aside time to read together

Dedicating time on a regular basis to read with your child is a huge piece of making your home a literacy-rich environment, not to mention a fun way for you and your child to connect. The common suggestion is to aim for 20 minutes per day; that small amount of time will expose your child to 1.8 million words per year! Reading at bedtime is a tried-and-true strategy to fit in this practice—plus, avoiding screen time before bed can promote a better night's sleep for your child.

4. Have fun with word games

Word- and language-focused board games are a great way for your child to build literacy skills without even realizing that he or she is learning. Options like Scrabble, Boggle, Scattergories, Catchphrase, Bananagrams, and numerous others subtly teach important lessons about word structure and vocabulary. Besides, they're a fun addition to your family's game collection.

5. Visit the library

What better place to foster a love of the written word than the library? Make outings to your local library a regular event to take advantage of child-focused programs like story times, crafts, and learning groups. A trip to the library also gives your child the chance to renew his or her excitement for reading by picking out fresh reading material that appeals to him or her. Try keeping a "library bag" in your living room or other family space to keep the books your child has picked out organized and easily accessible.

A little planning and creativity is all that it takes to make your home a literacy-rich environment, which helps your child build critical reading and writing skills.

Looking for additional resources to encourage literacy at home? [PBS Parents has a great listing of reading tips!](#)