

Literacy at Home: Tips, Tools, and Ideas for Everyday Readers

Family Literacy Activities for All Ages

Looking for ways to make reading even more fun? These playful, low-prep activities build language skills, boost confidence, and help kids connect with stories in new and creative ways. Best of all—they work across age groups!

- **Start a writing journal.** Encourage your child to jot down thoughts, draw pictures, or write about their day. Prompts can connect to reading, feelings, imagination, or nature.
- **Play word games.** Try MadLibs, Would You Rather?, or vocabulary-based games like Wordle.
- **Have fun with words.** Try synonyms, opposites, or silly word mashups to spark curiosity.
- **Build oral storytelling skills.** Invite your child to tell a story out loud—real or imagined.
- **Sing and rhyme.** Songs and rhyming games help build phonological awareness and language rhythm.
- **Use puppets or props.** Act out a favorite book or invent your own story together.
- **Make a heart map.** Draw a large heart and fill it with names, traditions, places, foods, and favorite books that are special to your family.
- **Practice expressive reading.** Try out different character voices or emotions while reading aloud.
- **Change the ending.** After you finish reading, imagine a different ending together—funny, surprising, or even spooky!

Choosing and Using Books With Your Child

With so many books to choose from—online, in stores, and on library shelves—it can be hard to know where to begin. These tips can help you explore the world of children’s literature together with confidence and joy.

Selecting Books

- **Start with their interests.** Children are more engaged when the subject sparks curiosity. Dinosaurs, magic, sports, animals—there’s a book for everything.
- **Visit your local library.** If your child doesn’t have a library card yet, make getting one a special event. Browse together and let them lead the way in choosing titles.
- **Ask a librarian.** Many libraries have staff who specialize in children’s and young adult literature. These librarians can be fantastic mentors, especially for older readers who are exploring more complex topics or genres.

Talking About What You Read

- **Ask open-ended questions.** Try: “Why do you think that happened?” or “How would you feel if that were you?”
- **Encourage your child to ask questions, too.** If something’s confusing, pause and talk it through.
- **Use stories as a springboard.** Look up related topics online, explore maps, or watch a video that deepens understanding.

Make Reading a Shared Experience

- **Read aloud regularly.** Even older kids enjoy hearing stories read aloud—and it creates lasting memories.
- **Try shared reading.** Take turns reading paragraphs or pages out loud together.
- **Let them read to others.** A younger sibling, a pet, or even a stuffed animal makes a great audience!
- **Record a reading.** Capture your child reading a favorite book and send it to a friend or relative—especially someone who lives far away.

The Power of Read-Alouds

Reading aloud isn't just for little ones—it's one of the most powerful ways to foster a lifelong love of reading. It builds vocabulary, comprehension, and language skills while strengthening children's connection to books. Read-alouds also spark imagination, encourage social interaction, and create joyful, lasting bonds.

In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends reading aloud from birth, and ILA supports continuing the practice well beyond the early years. Why? Because read-alouds don't just teach kids how to read, they help them discover why reading matters—at any age.

“Effective read-alouds are more than reading aloud—they're rich, interactive moments that invite children into the world of stories, thinking, and conversation.”

—The Power and Promise of Read-Alouds and Independent Reading

Here are a few tips to make read-alouds a part of your family's routine:

- **Set aside a special time each day.** Just 10 minutes makes a big impact. Try taking our [Together We Read](#) pledge.
- **Choose books with variety.** Picture books, chapter books, poetry, articles—any format works, including audiobooks.
- **Make it interactive.** Ask questions, encourage predictions, and invite your child to describe the pictures or repeat favorite lines.
- **Use expression and fun voices.** Show your enthusiasm—it's contagious!
- **Let older children read aloud too.** Siblings can take turns or read to pets, stuffed animals, or grandparents over video chat.
- **Keep reading even after they can read themselves.** There's no age limit on the magic of a shared story.

For more tips, download ILA's [Making the Most of Family Read-Alouds](#). Learn more about the research in [ILA's full brief](#) on the topic.

Every Family, Every Page, Every Right

When families make time to read, talk, sing, and explore language together, they're doing more than fostering literacy skills—they're protecting and promoting a child's right to read. From the first board book to the latest graphic novel, literacy lives in every conversation, every question, and every story shared.

Let this guide and activity calendars serve as a starting point, not a checklist. However you choose to celebrate literacy at home, know that your efforts matter—and they make a lifelong difference.

Literacy Month Calendar: Emerging Readers (Birth to Age 5)

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
WEEK 1		1 Set a goal: How many books will you commit to reading this month?	2 Play and talk with your child while reading a book.	3 Invite readers to draw a picture of their favorite character or part of the book.	4 Explore new authors. Pick a title you've never read before for today's reading.	5 Try judging a book by its cover: Let young readers pick something that catches their eye and see if it pays off.	6 Take a "shelfie" (pic of what's on your bookshelf) and post on social media using #ILD2025 .
WEEK 2	7 Use our Readers in the Wild bingo card to track places you see people reading.	8 Celebrate International Literacy Day by affirming Children's Rights to Read .	9 Bring a blanket, snacks, and a few books to your backyard. Enjoy a "picnic and pages" time together.	10 Pack a few "just in case" books to bring along when you're out and about.	11 Pack a book in your bag and head to the park. After some playtime, find a shady spot and read together.	12 Choose an interactive book to read. Pause to ask, "What do you think will happen next?"	13 Attend an age-appropriate story time event at a local bookstore or library.
WEEK 3	14 Read upside down or in a silly voice.	15 Build with blocks or puzzles while telling a story—no book required!	16 Talk about your favorite book as a child and why you loved it. Then, share that book during read-aloud time.	17 Ask your child to tell you about a favorite book and why they love it.	18 See if your kiddo can pick out familiar words or tell you their favorite from a book you've read repeatedly.	19 Think about the books your child asks you to read over and over again. What do they have in common?	20 Read a book with animal sounds in it and get into character!
WEEK 4	21 Fill out the "Together We Read" pledge form and post it prominently.	22 Read a favorite book together as a family.	23 Choose a book to share with a neighbor or friend.	24 Invite an older sibling or friend to read with your child and ask them to talk about their favorite part afterward.	25 Read a favorite book with your child, then let them "read" it back to you in their own words.	26 Hide a few favorite books around the house. When your child finds one, read it together right there!	27 Don't skip over the illustrations! Try reading a wordless picture book with your child.
WEEK 5	28 Draw a picture to give to your local or school librarian.	29 Visit your local library and sign your child up for their very own library card (if available for their age).	30 Explore the children's area of your local library together. Ask your child to pick a book for you to read while there.				

Questions to Consider

- What times of day work best for our family to enjoy a reading activity together?
- What kinds of activities does my child enjoy most—and how can we build on that?
- What helps my child feel engaged, curious, and included during reading time?
- What stories, songs, or everyday moments can we use to spark conversation and play?
- How can we explore stories together using what we already have at home?

Weekly Themes

- **WEEK 1** (Sept 1–6): Starting Strong
- **WEEK 2** (Sept 7–13): Readers in the Wild
- **WEEK 3** (Sept 14–20): #MyBookVoice
- **WEEK 4** (Sept 21–27): Together We Read
- **WEEK 5** (Sept 28–30): Public Places, Reading Spaces

Literacy Month Calendar: Beginning Readers (Ages 5–8)

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
WEEK 1		1 As a family, set a reading goal for the month.	2 Create a cozy reading corner. Invite a favorite stuffed friend into the space.	3 Make a list of favorite authors, genres, or topics. Use this for reading inspiration throughout the month.	4 Visit a Little Free Library in your area and help add to its collection.	5 Start a family reading journal. Ask kids and adults to jot down quick notes about what they're reading.	6 Take a family photo reading together. If you share on social media, tag @ILAToday with #ILD2025 .
WEEK 2	7 Challenge children to find (and read) text in any setting. Use our Readers in the Wild bingo card to track!	8 Celebrate International Literacy Day by affirming Children's Rights to Read .	9 Bring a blanket, snacks, and a stack of books outside for a "picnic and pages" date.	10 Introduce "just in case" books kids can take everywhere—a screen-free way to stay engaged during long wait times.	11 Make a "My Book Voice" bookmark. Include a favorite quote from the book.	12 Pack a to-go book and head to the playground or park for some outdoor reading.	13 Look for no-cost events to attend as a family. Author readings, library story times, and book fairs make great options!
WEEK 3	14 Show kids a video of children giving a book talk.	15 Ask your child to talk about a book they love. Engagement is a great way to foster a love of reading!	16 Help kids plan their own book talk. Use ILA's resources to get them started.	17 Pretend you're a reporter and your young reader is the main character in the book.	18 Ask your child to draw a picture of a favorite scene from the book they're reading.	19 Invite your child to share their book talks on social media using the hashtag #MyBookVoice .	20 Turn drive time into story time! Take turns picking audiobooks to play in the car.
WEEK 4	21 Fill out the "Together We Read" pledge form and post it prominently.	22 Ask your child to select a book for family read-aloud. Make this a nightly habit.	23 Pick a favorite picture book and take turns reading the pages out loud.	24 Read a book and then watch the movie adaptation as a family. Discuss the differences.	25 Invite your child to read to a younger sibling, friend, or neighbor.	26 Share a favorite book with another child to read with their family.	27 Pick out a book together from the library or your local bookstore.
WEEK 5	28 Take your child to apply for a public library card if they don't have one already.	29 Make a card or write a letter to a school or local librarian. Thank them for their service!	30 Help kids make a list of 10 things they can do at the library.				

Questions to Consider

- When can we make time for shared reading or book talk?
- How can we make this feel like a cozy routine instead of a checklist?
- What kinds of reading experiences feel playful and positive?
- How can we invite our child to talk about books and share their voice?
- What access do we have to books (library, digital, borrowed)? What else could we use?

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- **WEEK 4** (Sept 21–27): Together We Read
- **WEEK 5** (Sept 28–30): Public Places, Reading Spaces

Literacy Month Calendar: Developing Readers (Ages 8–11)

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
WEEK 1		1 Make a reading goal for the month. Encourage kids to challenge themselves to try new authors and genres.	2 Ask children why they think reading is important.	3 Invite your child to share their favorite part of a book they recently read.	4 Ask, "If you could write a book about your life, what would the title be?" Have them to write it down.	5 Visit a Little Free Library in your area and help add to its collection or select a book to take home.	6 Take a reading selfie. If shared on social media, be sure to tag @ILAToday and #ILD2025 .
WEEK 2	7 Challenge children to find (and read) text in any setting. Use our Readers in the Wild bingo card to track!	8 Celebrate International Literacy Day by affirming Children's Rights to Read .	9 Encourage your child to read outside at dusk or in a blanket fort. Use a flashlight or lamp for dramatic effect.	10 Ask your child to snap selfies reading in unexpected places.	11 Have your child find the location of their book on a map. If imaginary, ask them to draw what they think the map looks like.	12 Ask your child to identify three new or interesting words. Have them write each one in a notebook or on a whiteboard.	13 Have your child make a list of places they usually read and make a second list of new places they want to try.
WEEK 3	14 Show your reader a video of children giving a book talk	15 Ask your child to record a book talk and share with ILA via social media using the hashtag #MyBookVoice .	16 Ask each person in your family to share a favorite book or character from childhood.	17 Have kids create a short playlist (three to five songs) that match a book or a character's personality.	18 Try a #MyGameVoice activity, asking kids to talk about their favorite game and explain why they like it.	19 Help your child make a book commercial or trailer using software like Canva.	20 Ask your child to make a list of books for their "to be read" piles based on the #MyBookVoice videos they've watched.
WEEK 4	21 Fill out the "Together We Read" pledge form and post it prominently.	22 Have kids write conversation starter questions on index cards.	23 Pick a favorite picture book and take turns reading the pages out loud.	24 Encourage your child to interview family members about a book that they loved when they were little.	25 Read the first chapter of a new book together, then guess what will happen next.	26 Read a mystery or suspense scene and freeze before the ending so you can make your own guesses.	27 Task your child with creating a dinner menu that goes with a book of their choice. Read that book at the dinner table!
WEEK 5	28 Help your child apply for a public library card if they don't have one already.	29 Ask your child to visit their school or public library and take a selfie with a book.	30 Ask your child to make a list of 10 things they can do at the library. How many can they check off next month?				

Questions to Consider

- What times of day feel easiest for reading together or checking in about books?
- How can I invite my child to share what they're thinking or enjoying without making it feel like an assignment or pop quiz?
- What kinds of activities or formats (drawing, talking, acting it out) bring stories to life for our child?
- What books or series do we already love—and what new ones might we try next?

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