

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.