

Getting Ready for Kindergarten: Exploring Books

Children who enjoy books become eager readers. Children need lots of opportunities to explore books and stories.

We support young readers when we:

- Look at and read different types of books together;
- Talk about the stories or information in books;
- Talk about the written words/print they see in books.

Here are some ways to explore books with your child:

The activities in this handout support the following Lincoln County Schools Kindergarten Readiness Skills:

- I can hold a book upright and turn the pages.
- I can use my finger to follow along printed words from left to right and top to bottom.
- I can listen to a short story and re-tell the beginning, middle, and end.
- I can listen to and understand short stories, and answer questions about them.

Find books your child will enjoy.

- Think about things your child enjoys and look for books that match those interests.
- Borrow books from the public library. Some libraries let children get their own library cards!
- Start building a collection of books for your child.
 - Ask friends and family to give children's books or magazines for gifts.
 - Visit a local bookstore. Paperback or board books are often the least expensive books to buy.
 - Look for gently used books at yard sales or second hand stores.
- Read and talk about books in the language(s) your family speaks.



Explore different kinds of books. Look for...

- Alphabet, counting/number, and concept books
- Traditional stories, nursery rhymes & poetry
- Books with a predictable pattern or that repeat key words and phrases.
- Wordless books (You can make up your own stories together!)
- Non-fiction or reference books, especially ones with lots of pictures

Talk about the stories and pictures make it a conversation!

- You don't have to read a book from beginning to end - it's okay to stop to talk!
- Make comments. Wonder about what's happening. Ask open-ended questions – questions that don't have a right or wrong answer. For example:

"It looks like they're getting ready for a trip on this page. See, they're packing their suitcases. What would you put in your suitcase if you were going on a trip?"
- Pause frequently to let your child make comments, ask questions or guess what happens next.

Introduce your child to the different parts of a book.

- Demonstrate how to hold and handle books. Show your child how to turn pages gently and carefully.
- Point out the title of the book. Look at any pictures on the cover and talk about what your child thinks the book might be about.

- Explain that the words in the book tell you what to say. Show your child where you're going to start reading. As you read, run your finger along under the words.
- Talk about different elements or sections in a book. Look for opportunities to show your child:
 - The name of the author and/or illustrator
 - Page numbers
 - Different types or sizes of print (for instance, some words may be in big bold print while others are in regular size or small print)
 - Small or hidden details in the illustrations.
- If the book has a table of contents or an index, show your child how that helps people find specific information. For example, "Here's the word 'turtle' in the index, next to the number 15. That means there's something about turtles on page 15. Let's see if that page will help us figure out what kind of turtle we saw at the park."

Don't try to do all of these ideas at once. Just pick one or two concepts to introduce at a time.

Help your child notice and remember details .

- If your child is just starting to explore books, help him/her:
 - Point to or name objects or actions in the pictures;
 - Act out or imitate simple actions, events or characters
 - Make connections between what's in a book and his/her own experiences.
- As your child grows more comfortable with books and stories, encourage her/him to:
 - Name or briefly describe characters, events or actions
 - Retell or recall a story using pictures or props
 - Include more details about events and characters
 - Talk about the sequence of events and discuss what happened at the beginning, the middle and the end of the story.

Something to remember: When you are asking your child questions, avoid making it sound like a test or quiz. Don't emphasize right or wrong answers. You want your child to feel comfortable talking about books.

