Being ready to start reading isn't something that happens overnight. It's not like children wake up on their first day of Kindergarten and are ready to learn how to read. Some children are ready far before that first day, and some aren't ready until well into that year. However, there are ways you can prepare your child for that process of learning to read and promote what's called reading readiness in your home!

Research shows that children who are exposed to literacy and reading early in their lives “positively affects [their] long-term academic success” (Bruns & Pierce, 2007). Everything that literacy builds on is oral language – that is, talking, listening and understanding it all (Miller, 2010). So to start getting your child ready to read the most important thing you can do is TALK TO THEM! Talk with them about your day, their day, school, the weather, anything at all!

Inspire!

Beginning reading with your little ones!

Ready to Read?!

By Emily Nolan

Books for Budding Readers!

2. Where the Wild Things Are By M. Sendak
3. No, David! By David Shannon
4. The Very Hungry Caterpillar By Eric Carle
5. Chicka Chicka Boom Boom By J. Archambault
We all know songs like “Old McDonald”, “B-I-N-G-O” and “The Name Game” are great ways to pass time and have fun with your children but did you know these fun little songs and games can actually help your child become a better reader? **Childhood songs like these promote phonological awareness.** Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and play with the sounds in the language we speak and it is **extremely important** for children to develop in order to be successful readers. “Several studies have demonstrated that even when phonological awareness is measured in very young preschool children it remains a robust predictor in early reading achievement and that problems in phonological awareness persist for poor readers into the teenage years and throughout adulthood”. The fun little songs mentioned before are great songs to get your child familiar with rhyming and sounds. Games are another great way to help your children build their phonological awareness! In “I’m Going on a Picnic” you and your child can go through the alphabet and say what you would bring to a picnic. The trick is, you must remember everything that people are bringing to the picnic. Children will become familiar with how to identify what letter a word begins with by the sound it makes and the order of the alphabet. Another fun game is trying to rhyme words as many times as you can! Cat, bat, mat, hat, pat...have your little one rhyme as fast as they can! This will promote phonological awareness and probably get a few laughs out of your child. You can also “listen to environment” and ask your child to identify the sounds they hear around them. These games allow children to recognize the importance of **sounds** and will improve their awareness of sounds. The best news is, you do not need to set aside specific time to work on this! There are many opportunities throughout the day in which you can play and sing to learn! You and your child can play these games during car rides, while you’re making dinner, when sitting in waiting rooms, or whenever there is free time. You and your little one will be entertained, while at the same time, improving the future reading success of your child! With a little creative thinking, it is easy to think of various games that promote phonological awareness. For even more ideas, visit [www.phonologicalawareness.org](http://www.phonologicalawareness.org) and [www.readingrockets.org](http://www.readingrockets.org). These websites will further show the importance of phonological awareness and provide a number of games and activities. These little games and songs are fun for both you and your child and they are fantastic way for your child laugh, sing, and rhyme their way into reading success!
Many people believe that the easiest way to help children get ready for their first year of school is by simply sitting with their child, and helping them to learn certain skills that can be helpful to them when beginning school. Some of these things include being able to write their own name, identify numbers and colors, and be able to follow directions. These things, although they may seem small, are a great way to make the transition from home to school much easier on your child! There are also ways to you’re your children ready for school in ways that are not necessarily academic. Play catch with your little one, keep them active at home, and try to socialize them with bigger groups of children, to help prepare for the classroom.

Helping your child write their own name helps them to be an individual in the classroom as well as feel comfortable in the classroom. Help your children to identify letters and colors - students who know how to identify them will feel more comfortable in the classroom and more likely to be excited about being at school! Another way to make the transition from home to school easier, is to talk about it! Talk about all of the different, FUN things that your child will do in school. Talking about it will get your child excited about school and make them feel less anxious about leaving you, and going into a new environment for a while.

Reading stories to your children about going to school will also make the transition easier on them. See the story suggestions on the left!

One of my favorite books is The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn. This is a wonderful story is about a young racoon who is going to his first day of school. He shares all of his fears with his mother, and she comes up with an idea that will help him get through his first day of school. She kisses his hand and tells him that whenever he starts to miss her, he can just press his palm to his cheek and know that she is there. Its a great book, and it will really help your children ease into school knowing that you will always be there!

Visit www.gettingreadyforschool.com for more ideas!
Talking with your children will help them to understand the spoken language.

Understanding the spoken language helps them to start understanding sounds, words and sentences and the meanings that they have. This is what leads to children understanding that all of these things can be expressed with writing.

You can also point out familiar store and restaurant signs, and other letters and words in the environment to your children. This is called environmental print. Making children aware of words and letters in the environment helps them to start recognizing letters and words, and associating them with meaning. So, while you’re out and about, go on a scavenger hunt for CVS, Giant, Target, STOP signs, street signs, ANYTHING that gets your child paying attention to words!

Another way to prepare your children to read on their own is to read with them! It is recommended that children hear a minimum of three books a day by the time that they are six years old (Miller, 2010). This helps them to learn how books and written print work. Included are a few suggestions – Books for Budding Readers!

Just like a child can’t start walking alone without learning to roll, scoot, crawl, and walk with help first, a child can’t learn to read without getting the right background first. This means that they need to be EXPOSED to literacy as much as they can! YOU are a vital part of that! So read with your children, talk to them, play letter and word scavenger hunts outside, let them know that letters and words are all around!

Sources:
Before They Read by Cathy Puett Miller (2010)
Let’s Read Together: Tools for Early Literacy Development for All Young Children by Deborah Bruns and Corey Pierce (2007)