

# HELPING YOUR CHILD TO READ, WRITE, SPEAK AND LISTEN



In the early years of primary school, students learn to read through rhymes, story-telling and following along with their favourite book. Learning to write begins with scribble and drawings. The activities below will help your child develop these skills.

1. Share rhymes and songs and encourage your child to join in.
2. Save safe cardboard and household items for your child to build with.  
Ask your child to describe what they are building.
3. Have a dress-up box for your child to use for imaginative play.
4. Listen to your child and respond to their ideas with questions and ask for more information.
5. Write down your child's stories as they tell you and encourage him or her to read it back to you.
6. Point out and talk about letters and words all around you. For example, on cereal boxes, car number plates, signs.
7. Cook simple things together. Read out the recipe, talk through what you are doing.
8. Join a toy library and choose toys together.
9. Look at junk mail and talk about the things for sale.
10. Provide materials and create a writing/drawing table or area.
11. Talk about family photos and histories.

# STORY-telling

Story-telling is a great way to extend your child's language and listening skills, as well as expanding their imagination. Either you can tell the story, or encourage your child to tell the story.

Story-telling might be about:

- 12. A favourite character from a book or television program.
- 13. Another family member.
- 14. Your child's favourite toy.

Here are some tips to start your storytelling:

- 15. Make it exciting, with different voices, puppets, props or a finger play.
- 16. Start with what interests your child.
- 17. Create a character and setting.



# READING together

Reading is an important way to make the link from spoken words to written words.

Reading to your child is a valuable thing to do. Here are some tips:

18. Encourage your child to select the books, magazines, catalogues, multimedia stories or DVDs.
19. Discuss the pictures in a book and encourage your child to talk about the pictures.
20. Share wordless picture books to develop imagination, ideas and vocabulary by naming things in the pictures.
21. Re-read your child's favourite books and stories.
22. Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books.
23. Support your child to make their own books with pictures and then 'read' the story to you.





**Reading with** your child will begin when your child becomes familiar with the story and can take over some of the reading.

When your child **reads to you**, allow time for working out words and ask questions to see if he or she understands what they have read.

If your child is trying to read a long or tricky word, give your child time and ask questions like these:

24. Look at the picture, what can you see that might start with that letter?
25. Look at the picture, what word makes sense?
26. What letter does it start with? What sound does the letter make?  
What letter does it end with?

It's also important for you to show your child how you read every day for different purposes, for example: recipes, greeting cards, calendars, shopping lists, food labels, instructions, maps, newspapers, emails, signs, and websites.

# READING together...



**Book talk** is an important part of reading. Chat about the book before, during and after reading and really encourage your child to talk about their ideas and ask questions about the book.

Here are some questions you can ask at different times before, during and after reading the book:

27. What would you like to read about?
28. Would you like to choose a book you know?
29. Look at the cover – what do you think this book is about?
30. What is happening in the pictures?
31. How could we work out these tricky words?
32. What do you think is going to happen next?
33. What was your favourite part of the book?
34. Who was your favourite character in the story? Why did you like that character?
35. If you could change the ending of this book, what would it be?

# READING ideas

36. View and try quizzes together by clicking the Quiz link on the *Connect-Primary* website for primary students.
37. Write down what your child is telling you about an experience and then read it back together.
38. Visit your local library or school library to select and read books together.
39. Find out facts about the world by clicking the Find out link on the *Connect-Primary* website.
40. Draw or paint pictures about the scenes or characters. Click on the Draw link on the *Connect-Primary* website.
41. Explore words using a dictionary.
42. Talk about what authors and illustrators do.
43. Point out important things about a book – for example, the front cover, the spine, the contents page, or the title.



Visit the *Connect-Primary* website at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/primary](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/primary)

# READING and writing go hand in hand

Learning to write begins with scribble and drawings. This is an important first step and should be encouraged. Support your child to read their writing aloud. Create somewhere to store and display their writing.

Use your child's experiences to create links between talking, writing and reading. Here are some steps to follow:

44. Ask your child to talk about an experience or something that interests them.
45. Ask your child what part of the conversation they would like you to write.
46. As your child is talking write down their ideas. Use the child's language.
47. Ask your child to read back the writing.
48. Your child may want to draw a picture or create something to match the writing.



# OPPORTUNITIES to write everyday at home

Like reading, writing becomes an everyday activity at home. Let your child see you writing.

Try some of these writing ideas at home:

49. Write a shopping list or add items to the list and tick off the items as you buy or unpack them.
50. Keep a board to write and read family messages.
51. Give your child a pad of sticky notes to write reminders for themselves.
52. Plan and write your weekly menu together.
53. Write captions for photographs in your family photo albums.
54. Write labels for your child's art works and creations.
55. Make words using magnetic letters and stick them on the fridge.
56. Make and write greeting cards, birthday cards, and thank you notes.
57. Keep a family calendar on display and write down family events. Talk about upcoming events with your child, for example, where, when, and who will be there.

