

5 Tips to Build a Reader

In Canada, early literacy skills, such as **phonemic awareness**, **knowledge of letter names** and **sounds** and **how to print letters**, and **decoding simple words** are all expected in Kindergarten (Right to Read Inquiry Report, 2022)*

Young children exposed to lots of varied language patterns develop **phonological awareness**—the ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken language. This skill is crucial for learning to read later on (Shanahan, 2019).

Kids' brains are rapidly developing, and **communication stimulates brain activity**. Listening to words helps babies make sense of the world around them, enhances their cognitive abilities, and fosters critical thinking skills.

Making words important from an early age cultivates a positive attitude and enthusiasm for reading, helping babies view literacy as a source of joy, knowledge, and exploration.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

- **Reading Rockets** An excellent resource with articles, activities, and videos on early literacy development. <https://www.readingrockets.org/>
- **Zero to Three** Offers information and tips for supporting literacy in the early years. <https://www.zerotothree.org/>
- **Scholastic Parents** Provides guidance on nurturing literacy skills in young children. <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/home.html>

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01 TALK, TALK, TALK

Engage in frequent conversations with your child. Describe daily activities, objects, and emotions to build vocabulary and language skills. Integrate phonological awareness activities into daily routines. (Toronto Public Library, 2017).



02 PRINT AWARENESS

say. Show how books work by reading left to right and turning pages. Point out words, letters, and symbols in your environment. (Guo et al., 2022).



03 LIMIT SCREENS

Higher screen exposure in preschoolers has been associated with language delays. Nearly all children in Canada are exposed to screens by the age of 2, and only 15% of Canadian children aged 3 to 4 meet screen-time guidelines of less than one hour per day (Ponti, 2022).



04 PLAY WITH SOUNDS

Engage children in rhyming games, clapping out syllables, and identifying initial sounds in words. These playful activities develop essential pre-reading skills and lay the foundation for phonemic awareness, a crucial skill for decoding words and future reading (Shanahan, 2019).



05 READ TOGETHER

Boost your own vocabulary while you bond! Books expose us to new words and new word patterns. Set aside 15 minutes for shared reading every day. Choose books with rhymes, repetitive patterns, and colourful images to enhance phonological awareness (Ece Demir-Lira et al., 2019).

