

# GETTING READY TO LEARN



Getting Ready  
to Learn

“Sharing books every day will help my brain to grow!”



Children who are read to more frequently at an early age enter school with larger vocabularies and more advanced comprehension skills.

## Key Messages:

- ⇒ Reading and sharing books together helps to strengthen the bond between you and your child.
- ⇒ Reading or telling stories to your child helps your child’s brain develop and has been shown to improve their social and communication skills.
- ⇒ Young children often enjoy books, songs and stories with good rhymes, rhythm and lots of repetition.
- ⇒ Anytime is a good time for a book or story. Try to read at least one book to your child each day.
- ⇒ Stories can help your child learn the difference between real and make believe. They can help your child understand change, new or frightening events and also the strong emotions that go along with them.
- ⇒ When a child looks at a book with an adult, the child has the opportunity to hear words they might not otherwise hear, eg if the book is about animals who live in the wild, the child will hear lots of new words about the animals and the environments they live in.
- ⇒ When a child is read to, they hear more complex language structures. This helps them to develop their ability to use these words or sentence structures themselves eg “... but not the hippopotamus”.

## NURSERY RYMES

- ⇒ Nursery rhymes have a lovely rhythmic pattern and simple repetitive phrases that young children find easy to remember and repeat.
- ⇒ Doing actions will encourage your child to develop fine and gross motor skills and their balance and co-ordination.
- ⇒ The actions in rhymes will also help to reinforce the meaning of words helping your child to understand abstract concepts like big, small, in front, behind, first and last.
- ⇒ There are lots of fun nursery rhymes that you can sing/say in 2 parts. They will encourage your child to learn important conversation skills such as turn-taking and listening
- ⇒ Rhymes help children experience lots of different emotions. Many can be scary or sad.
- ⇒ Repeating nursery rhymes will encourage your child to learn to anticipate rhyming words, build their memory and also teach them to make predictions.
- ⇒ Nursery rhymes are full of rhyming words. They help your child’s brain to differentiate between syllables and to identify similarities between words that rhyme or words that begin with the same sounds. This is an important skill for reading,
- ⇒ Visit [www.worldnurseryhymeweek.com](http://www.worldnurseryhymeweek.com) for lots of inspiration and rhymes.

## READING TIPS

- ⇒ Find somewhere quiet away from noise, television and mobile phones. Cuddle up together and get brothers and sisters to join in and enjoy stories and rhymes together.
- ⇒ Allow your child to choose books they love. It is okay to read the same book over and over again because familiar books are comforting, they help develop fluency and build confidence in young children.
- ⇒ Have fun! Make animal noises or sound effects as these help to bring the story to life and will make you both laugh! Try pulling funny faces or putting on character voices—these always make children giggle!
- ⇒ Let your child be the storyteller. They can ‘read’ the pictures to you and talk about what is happening on the page.
- ⇒ Ask questions when you’re reading together—look at the cover and talk about what the book might be about; include question like “why is the child going into the woods? Encourage your child to ask lots of questions. Asking questions is one of the most important skills that a successful learner needs!
- ⇒ Visit your local library—this is a great way to try different books and borrow for free. Free Rhyme and story sessions are offered in most libraries.
- ⇒ Visit [www.librariesni.org.uk](http://www.librariesni.org.uk) to access free downloadable books to share with your child