

### **Reading Readiness**

Did you know proficient reading by the end of third grade is a significant predictor of future academic and life success? However, learning to read well begins long before a child enters elementary school. According to literacy experts, reading proficiently results from a combination of experiences and skill building that begins in the earliest years of a child's life.

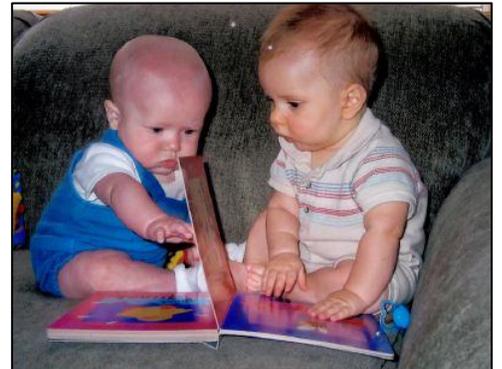
***“Extensive research has proven that reading aloud to a child is the single most important factor in raising a reader” (Jim Trelease author of The Read Aloud Handbook)***

When parents and other adults share books with babies, toddlers and preschoolers, they are not only demonstrating that reading is important, but also that reading is much more than sounding out letters and words. Plus, reading aloud promotes early language development and helps young children learn basic readiness skills that are essential for reading success in elementary school.

So how can you help your child get ready to read? Smart Beginnings has some suggestions below. All of these ideas are simple things adults can do everyday to help young children be ready for school, and ready for life!

#### ❖ **During the first 18 months (Babies & Young Toddlers)**

- ❖ Establish a regular time for reading, such as before naptime, bedtime or any other consistent time of the day.
- ❖ Talk about the pictures in books & point to familiar objects, but you don't have to read all the words.
- ❖ Allow babies to open & close the pages in a book.
- ❖ Make sounds or do simple actions while looking at books together (like making different animal noises)
- ❖ Put books all around your home, near floor level, to encourage babies & toddlers to look at books often.



#### ❖ **18-36 months (Toddlers)**

- ❖ While reading together, ask children to point to familiar pictures or objects in books.
- ❖ Read favorite books over and over – young brains thrive on repetition!!
- ❖ Every now and then, pause while reading and let your child fill in the next word (This works best when it's a familiar book or story. It also works well with favorite nursery rhymes)
- ❖ Keep a few books in your car, or diaper bag for little ones to look when you're out and about.

#### ❖ **3-5 year olds (Preschoolers/Pre-K)**

- ❖ Make connections between things in books and children's own experiences by saying things like, "The house in this story looks a lot like grandma's house." Or "The monkey in this book reminds me of the monkey we saw at the zoo."
- ❖ Make predictions by asking, "What do you think is going to happen next?"
- ❖ Help preschoolers notice the details in the pictures of a book. This will improve understanding.
- ❖ Give preschoolers an opportunity to pretend to "read" to you.
- ❖ Pick one or two places in the book to pause for questions or comments. You can prompt your child by saying: "Are you wondering anything?" or "Has this ever happened to you?"
- ❖ Make sure to read non-fiction books too to help children learn important facts about favorite topics (Such as real books about dinosaurs, animals, sports or nature.)