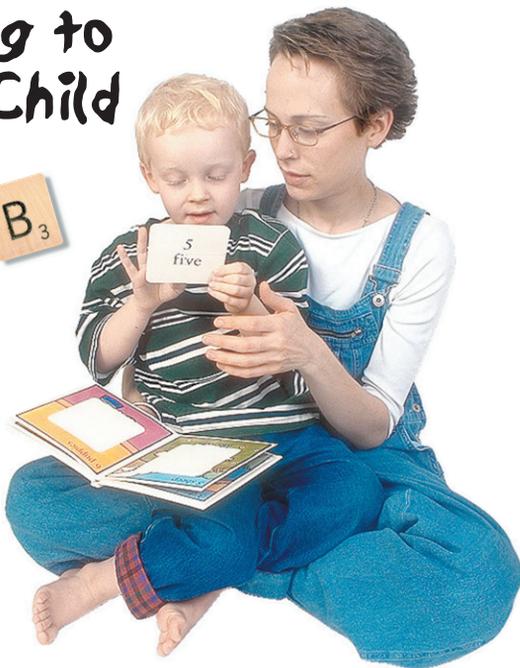


# Hints for Reading to Your Preschool Child

**A<sub>1</sub>** Your preschooler will enjoy—and benefit from—listening to you read out loud. Whether you're reading a favorite storybook or an interesting article in the newspaper, or making up a story of your own, here are some tips to make the most of your reading together time.

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- ★ Start with short reading sessions and slowly build up to longer sessions.
- ★ Pick a time when your child is usually calm—try reading together the same time each day.
- ★ Find a comfortable and quiet place, away from the television and phone.
- ★ Let your child sit close to you or on your lap.
- ★ Let your child turn the pages.
- ★ Engage your child in the story. Discuss the pictures and the events taking place.

Let your child ask questions, too.

- ★ Run your finger under the words as you read. Young children will begin to associate the sound of your voice with the symbols on the page.
- ★ Make comparisons, such as "That tree is not as tall as our big tree, is it?" or "She has brown hair—what color hair do you have?"
- ★ Point out pictures, shapes, colors and page numbers.

# The ABCs of Newspaper Reading

If you and your child look hard enough, you'll probably be able to find every letter of the alphabet in the newspaper!



**Recognizing and learning letter names and shapes is an important early step for children who are just beginning to**

**learn to read. There are lots of ways newspapers can help your child practice his or her ABCs.**

- ★ Play an alphabet game.
- ★ Hunt together through the newspaper for words that use each letter of the alphabet.
- ★ Try going in order first, then randomly selecting a letter to search for.
- ★ You can also ask your child to look for the letter that makes a particular sound, like "buh" for the letter "b."



- ★ If your child is learning to write his name, ask him to look for words that contain the same letters.
- ★ Read these words out loud together, emphasizing the sound of the letter you just found and talk about the meaning of the word.
- ★ Find a letter that's large enough, like in a headline, your child can cut it out to explore the shape of the letter. Or your child may want to practice writing the letter on a separate sheet of paper.

# The Library Link

A<sub>1</sub>

**Next time you and your child go to the library, ask the librarian to show you where the newspapers are kept. Many libraries have newspapers from all around the country and maybe the world. They may also carry newspapers in different languages.**

Try exploring different newspapers with your child. Look for similarities and differences in the way the newspapers are organized, the photographs they run, and the points of view expressed in editorials.

If you live in a larger city, perhaps there is more than one daily or weekly newspaper that serves your area. Chances are, your local library carries copies



of all these newspapers. You may also find it

interesting to look at several newspapers serving communities within your state. You and your child could compare the front pages of these papers to see which stories the newspaper editors feel are most important. Talk to your child about why one newspaper might favor a topic over another.

Another fun experiment could be to compare local or national weather forecasts from different newspapers. Older children might enjoy searching for different reviews of a movie or new CD they're interested in.

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Inquire about any children's reading programs, story hours or special events the library has planned. Many libraries also provide reading lists for children of all ages, compiled by their staff.



# Surfing for the News

**A<sub>1</sub>** Children's literacy development is enhanced by exposure to a variety of text formats, from picture books to newspapers to electronic text. Using the computer to gather news and information gives kids a chance to interact with text in a different and intriguing way. Reading on the computer, just as reading a book, helps children to see relationships between letters and words, and to recognize that text moves from left to right and top to bottom.

You and your child can explore electronic text by visiting your local newspaper's Web site. You usually can find the Web address on the newspaper's front page or in the masthead, or you can visit Newspaper Links ([www.newspaperlinks.com](http://www.newspaperlinks.com)), a service of the Newspaper Association of America.

Compare the articles you find on your newspaper's Web site to the articles in the printed version. How are they different? Does the Web site use color in different ways? Is an

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article on the Web site shorter, longer or the same length as the printed version? Can you look up older news articles, features or reviews on the Web site?

As you read the newspaper together, perhaps an article will really grab your child's interest. You can look up more information about the subject, using the computer together. For example, if the article is about an event in another country, you could search for information about that country on the Internet or use encyclopedia software.

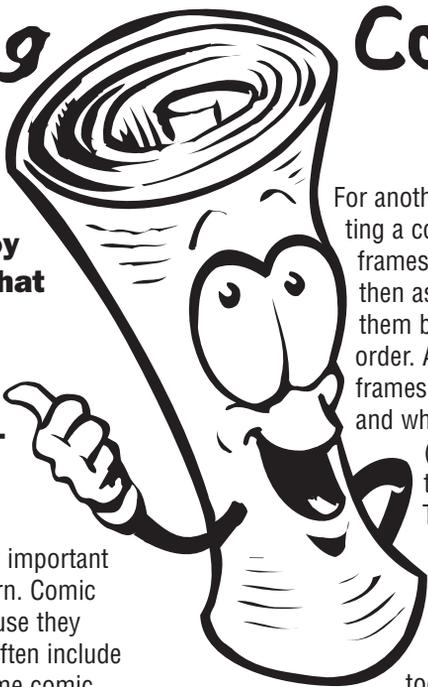
If you don't have access to the Internet at home, visit the public library with your child. Most provide free Internet access and many offer workshops on how to navigate the World Wide Web.



# Something Comical

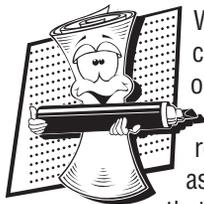
**A,** Many children (and adults!) enjoy the comic strips that appear in the newspaper. But did you know that comics are a great source for supporting language and literacy development?

Reading aloud is one of the most important ways you can help your child learn. Comic strips are fun to read aloud because they have interesting characters and often include plays on words. With a multi-frame comic strip, alternate reading aloud with your child—you read the first frame, then have your child read the next. Or read the first several frames out loud and ask your child what she thinks will happen before you read the final frame. For a change of pace, try singing the comic strip like an opera. Be dramatic and silly!



For another fun activity, try cutting a comic strip into different frames. Rearrange them and then ask your child to put them back in the original order. Ask why she thinks the frames belong in that order, and what clues she looked for (in the pictures and the text) to help decide. Talk about the story the comic strip tells once it's put together.

Use the comics to practice writing skills, too. Find a single-frame comic with a caption. Cover up the caption and ask your child to write his own description of the cartoon's action. Write one yourself and then compare your captions with the original. Whose is the funniest? For younger children, try reading the caption aloud and ask your child to draw a picture that matches it.



# Map It Out

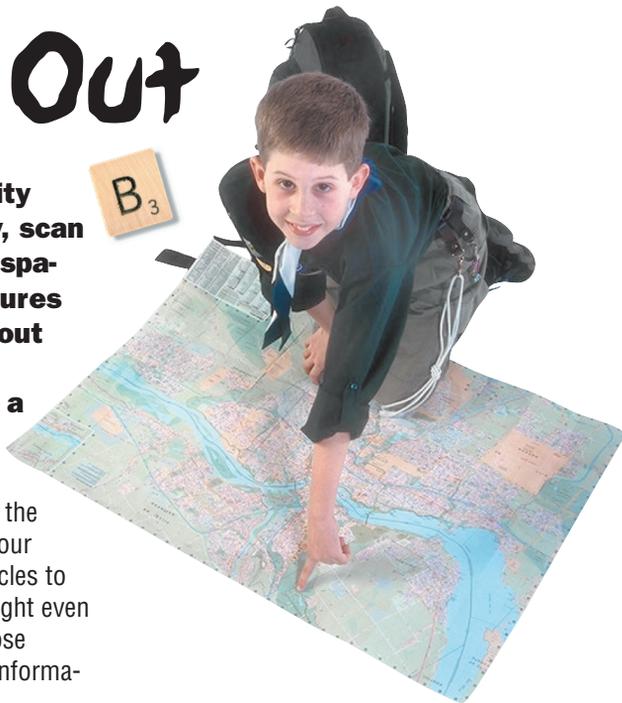


**With a map of your city or community nearby, scan sections of the newspaper for articles, pictures and advertisements about specific places—city hall, a museum, movie theatres or a particular neighborhood.**

Help your child mark these places on the map and look at them in relation to your home. This will help connect the articles to real places in your child's life. You might even take an afternoon to visit some of those places, talking about the newspaper information that led you there.

For older children, give them a bus, subway or train schedule and help them figure out the best way to get to a specific location using public transportation. Identify departure and arrival times and figure out how long the trip will take. How much will it cost?

You could also look through the Travel section of the newspaper and discuss the locations described there. If they



sound interesting, help your child locate the cities, states or countries on an atlas or globe. Be sure to relate these new locations to your home and talk about the distance between them. Could you drive there or would you have to fly?

Tying newspaper articles to places your child recognizes helps children understand that print has meaning, and that reading is an important part of everyday life.



# Letters to the Editor

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**Adults and children often have strong opinions about topics and issues. Parents can guide middle-schoolers to express these feelings through a letter to the editor. This process can lead to meaningful interactions between parents and children.**

Try the "Model, Read, Talk, Engage" approach.

**1 Model.** When parents listen to their children talk, they begin to understand the issues that are important to their children. Parents set an example by holding discussions, reading about issues, reading letters to the editor and editorials about the topic. If parents write a letter to the editor themselves, they model important behavior.

**2 Read.** Encourage children to read various letters to the editor and share topics of interest. Point out and discuss the Op-Ed section of the newspaper and identify different types of editorials and local commentaries. Checking the editorial section of the paper on a regular basis is a way for your child to connect to community issues.

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**Talk.** Talk to your children about the issues and causes that are important enough to prompt a letter to the editor.

Discuss reasons why an editorial piece or letter to the editor might have been written. Identify differing opinions and writers' techniques of persuasion.

4

**Engage.** Discuss an issue about which your child has a strong opinion. Encourage your child to write a letter to his or her school or local paper.

Remember, it's your child's idea and opinion! Discuss the importance of expressing opinions in a thoughtful way. If your child's letter is printed, celebrate the fact that she has made her point in a meaningful manner!

# “Ad” It Up for Teens

**Teenagers often don't set aside time to read except when they are required to do so for school. Parents can help teens realize that reading is a lifelong skill. Discussing an advertisement with your teen uses a number of reading strategies.**

Advertisements are designed to persuade people to accept certain ideas or to buy certain products. Advertisers use a variety of techniques to accomplish this, and ads can provide an excellent opportunity to talk to your teenager about persuasive techniques.

Ask your teen to look at an advertisement for a service or product that might appeal to him. Ask him to identify the audience for this advertisement and then discuss the ad's purpose.

Pick out a statement from the ad and ask your teen to determine whether it's fact or opinion. What other facts and opinions are given? Remember that ads are really arguments designed to convince an audience to buy something. Can your teen identify some of the persuasive writing techniques that appear in the ad? Look for:



**Generalities** “Product X helps everyone!”

**Testimonials** Teen idol says, “Product X worked for me!”

**“Get on the bandwagon” techniques** “All the major league sports teams use Product X!”

Has this ad has been successful? Challenge your child to practice persuasive techniques by creating an ad that might sell you this product.

Reading and discussing ads will help promote thinking skills, and help your child to become a better reader, communicator and consumer.

# Comparing + Contrasting = Good Choices

**Many teens read the classified ads in the newspaper, looking for part-time jobs, or researching purchases like used cars, musical instruments or computer equipment. Parents can use this interest as a way to build reading, math and consumer skills.**

Encourage your teen to compare and contrast information in the ads she finds. Ask her to make a list identifying the features and/or prices of each item. If she creates a chart on the computer displaying the information from each ad, she can see at a glance the qualities of one versus the others.

When shopping, ask your teen to consider the following:

Is the more expensive item worth the extra money? Is it newer? Does it have more

features than the less expensive item? Are all these features necessary?

If your teen is searching for a job, ask her to consider what the pay and work hours would be. She'll also need to consider how far from home the job is and how to get there. Ask her to figure weekly income and subtract any charges there may be for transportation, meals at work and the cost of a uniform, if required, for any job being considered.

When teens have real-life opportunities to use reading skills, they are more likely to understand the importance of what they are learning. One day, teenagers will be making decisions about major purchases—college educations, cars and homes. The more experience they have, the better decision-makers they will be.

