Finding ways to spend time together is important to both you and your child. As the parent of a preschool child, you may also be wondering what you can do to help your child’s emerging reading skills. Here are five suggestions:

1. **Spend time each day talking to your child.** Talk about any topic of interest to you both. Talk about the day’s events and how your child feels about them.

2. **Create a good reading climate.** Show your child that reading is valuable and fun by making it a visible part of your own life. Have newspapers, magazines, and books in your home. Talk about the things you read and ask about books your child likes. Avoid pressuring your child to perform. Children’s skills will develop best in a relaxed atmosphere.

What if you aren’t a confident reader yourself? If you enjoy reading, then you are a good example. Consider working to improve your reading skills—your efforts may be the best example your child can have.

3. **Make reading a part of everyday activities.** Read cereal boxes together at breakfast. Read road signs while you are driving. Read product labels out loud at the grocery store. Help your child to “read” the name on the labels of familiar products such as milk.

4. **Spend time as a family reading out loud or story-telling.** Make reading or story-telling part of your child’s bedtime routine. Set aside a “no-TV” night just for reading.

Let your child help select the book to read. You may find yourself repeating a favorite many times. When you read out loud, be animated and dramatic. Change your voice to fit the characters or mood.

Story-telling is a wonderful family activity. Tell stories from your childhood, or family stories your parents passed on to you. Make up stories with your child and write them down to share again later.

5. **Work with your child’s teacher.** Children benefit in many ways when their parents and teachers work together. Ask your child’s teachers for book suggestions or other ideas to support your child’s reading at home. Take time every day to help your child with assignments from school. If your schedule permits, volunteer to help in the classroom during reading periods.

For reading resources and free books to read with your child, be sure to visit the public library in your community. To find your local library, check your telephone book or go to publiclibraries.com and search for your community.

**References**
Riley, D. Help Your Child Become a Better Reader, MAPP, National Family Data Base Penn State University.
**Alphabet Authors**

Creating a book with your child is a great way to encourage reading and to spend time together. Make an alphabet book to practice letters, sounds, and making stories.

**Materials needed:**
- Scrap paper (you can use the back of junk mail letters or any other paper you have around)
- Crayons, markers, pencils, or pens
- Yarn or string

**Directions:**
1. Help your child write one letter of the alphabet on each piece of paper until you have all 26 letters.
2. Help your child think of a word that begins with each letter and fill in each page with the word, a picture, and a sentence about that word. You may also think of a short story about each word together.
3. When all 26 pages are complete, punch or poke three holes on the left side of the pages and use the string or yarn to tie the pages together.

   **Your child is an author!**

**Library Scavenger Hunt**

Have an adventure with your child by going to the library together. Have your child check off each task below as you complete it together:

1. Find your community library. Look at the sign out front and help your child name the letters that spell “library.”
2. Inside the library, find the children’s section. Look around at all the books to read together!
3. Find the section where you can borrow movies and DVDs. Find out if they have your child’s favorite movie available.
4. Find the section where you can borrow books on tape and CDs. Share your favorite book growing up with your child, and see if you can find it on tape or CD.
5. Meet a librarian. Help your child introduce him or herself, and ask the librarian about what free programs are available that your child might be interested in.
6. Pick out a few books from the children’s section to take home with you.
7. Find the circulation desk. If your child does not have a library card, this would be a great time to sign up for one. As long as your child can print his or her name and you will sign too, your child can have his or her own library card and borrow as many books as you can read!

   **Way to go! You’ve completed the Library Scavenger Hunt!**

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