



Reading Skills and Journal-Keeping

Finding ways to spend time together is important to both you and your child. As the parent of a Kindergarten 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 a 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 everyday to help your child with assignments from school. If your schedule permits, volunteer to help in the classroom during reading periods.

Adapted from: Riley, D. Help Your Child Become a Better Reader, MAPP, National Family Data Base Penn State University.

Help Your Child Keep a Journal

Keeping a journal can help children become comfortable with written language and provide a way to express their thoughts and feelings. By helping children maintain a journal, you are showing that you value what they have to say.

A Kindergarten child’s journal will be much shorter and simpler than the journals kept by older children or adults. An entry might consist of only one sentence, such as: “Today I played at the park” or “I am happy Grandma is visiting.”

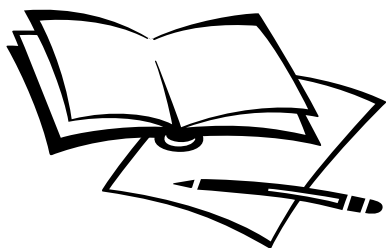
At first your child may want to dictate journal entries to you rather than attempting to write them out. When ready to write the words, your child will probably want your help with spelling them.

Some children enjoy having a regular time to “write” in their journal with their parent—maybe before dinner time or Saturday mornings. If your child doesn’t feel like writing in the journal, that’s OK. Pick a different activity to do together and put the journal on the shelf until your child expresses an interest in using it. Some children might not be interested in writing in a journal regularly, but like using it to write about something special or as a tool to express a feeling.

Whether you have a regular time to write together or not, keep the journal some place safe from being damaged but where it is readily visible and accessible to your child.

Putting A Journal Together

You can buy a variety of suitable notebooks at the store. Making your own journal, however, can be a fun craft for you and your child to do together. Get a stack of plain white unlined paper and use a paper punch to put two or three holes on the side of each piece. Use two pieces of heavyweight paper or cardboard in a color your child selects for the cover. Together, write a title on one cover sheet (for example, “Jamie’s Journal”). Your child may wish to use markers to decorate the cover. You also could glue your child’s picture on the front. Then put clear contact paper over both cover pieces and punch holes in them.



Insert the unlined paper between the cover sheets. Put paper brads in the holes to hold the paper together, or string brightly colored yarn through both holes and tie. Your child’s journal is ready to go!

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Keith L. Smith, Director, Ohio State University Extension.

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