

Reading on Your Phone or Tablet:

There are many classic books children can either read or have read to them as apps on a phone. Here are some popular titles:

- *The Monster at the End of This Book* (iPhone and iPad)
- *The Going to Bed Book* (iPhone and iPad)
- *The Cat and the Hat* (Android, iPhone, and iPad)
- *Little Critter: Just Big Enough* (Android, iPhone, and iPad)

Word and Letter Games on Your Phone or Tablet:

Building sound-letter connection along with practice sight words and spelling, try these apps:

- **Go, Clifford, Go!**
- **Scribble Press** (and the Scribble Press app on iTunes) is a multimedia creativity platform for creating, sharing and publishing stories.
- *“Build a Word” by WordWorld*: Based on the PBS Kids television show, users can select letters to build words to identify images of ducks, sheep, pigs, and more. (iPad, iPod Touch, and iPhone).
- *FirstWords: Animals*: You can use phonics rather than letter names to spell animal names, plus choose upper- or lower-case letters. (iPad, iPod Touch, and iPhone).
- *Interactive Alphabet—ABC Flashcards* : An interactive image brings each letter to life. For example, with X, your child can “play” a screen image of a xylophone. (iPad, iPod Touch, and iPhone)

Children's Learning and Gaming Systems

Two big names in children's computer games are ***Leapfrog and VTech***. There are a variety of options depending on the interests of the child.

Leapfrog offers spelling, letter and word identification, vowel and consonant practice, and spelling games. The games are themed to feature Disney characters, Sesame Street characters, Dora, Thomas the Tank Engine, and more. Their popular products include LeapPad, Leapster, Tag, and Tag Junior.

VTech offers similar games and products. Their platforms include "laptop" computers and the MobiGo products, which are handheld options.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE BOOK LIST



Best Books for Wordplay: Ages 3-5

See what letters, words, or phrases your child can remember on her own. Try substituting a wrong word and your child might correct you!



Best Cuddle-Time Books: Ages 3-5

Discuss the illustrations in these gorgeous picture books. Ask your little reader about what he thinks will happen next.



Reading Activities for Ages 3-5

1. Fun With Letters

Children enjoy copying words out onto paper. Write your child's name and have him copy it himself with alphabet stamps, stickers, or magnets. Encourage him to "write" his own words using the letters. Your child will write letters backwards, spell seemingly randomly, and may hold his marker strangely — it's "all good" at this age when a child wants to communicate in writing of any kind.

2. What Word Starts With...

The letter-sound connection is one of the first steps to reading. Play a guessing game about your child's favorite words. What letter does "p-p-p-pirate" start with? How about "M-m-mommy"? Once your child guesses one correctly, see how many words you can come up with together that start with the same letter.

3. Your Child the Author

Three-year-olds can be chatty, and by age 4, it can be hard to get a word in edgewise. Take advantage of your child's interest in talking by writing a book together. Start out with something simple, like describing a fun day at a park or visiting friends. Staple a few pieces of paper together, and write out one or two of your child's sentences on each page. Then, read the story to her and let her illustrate it.

4. A Different Way to Read

Reading to your child is great — but what's even better is something called "dialogic" reading. That's when you ask your child to participate in the story. Before turning the page, ask your child what he thinks will happen next. You can also ask your child what other way the book could have ended. For example, with the classic book *Corduroy*, what would have happened if the little girl hadn't come back to take Corduroy home from the toy store?

5. Take Letters Outside

Kids are tactile and enjoy few activities more than poking things with a stick. Many preschools encourage kids to make letters out of Play Doh or draw them into sand or clay. The next time you are out in the park, or at the beach, or in the snow, use your surroundings to play with letters. Take turns writing letters in the snow, dirt, or sand.

6. Just the Facts

Try getting your child interested in nonfiction books. At the library or bookstore, find books on your child's favorite topics. Cars, dinosaurs, dogs, and other topics are covered in on-level books with plenty of pictures, designed especially for kids this age.

Your Preschooler Discovers Letters and Words



- **Most Preschoolers Will:** Know the names of their favorite books; hold a book correctly and turn pages; recall familiar words and phrases in favorite books, pretend to read books; know the difference between a random squiggle and a letter or number.
- **Some Preschoolers Will:** Recognize and write some letters and numbers; name letters that begin certain words, make up rhymes or silly phrases.
- **Some Preschoolers Might Even:** Predict what might happen next in a story, read and write their names and some familiar words, retell stories that they know.

Literacy does not start only when your child starts school. At birth, babies and children are gathering skills they will use in reading. The years between ages 3 and 5 are critical for reading growth, and some 5-year-olds are already in kindergarten.

The best way to instill a love for and interest in reading is to simply read to your child. Sadly, many parents do not. Reading gives you the opportunity for bonding closely with your child, and it also provides a window into a world of literacy which your child is about to enter.

As your child goes from saying first sentences to speaking in paragraphs, you will start to see exciting milestones develop with reading. Your child will begin to recognize printed words on the street, stop signs, familiar store signs, and the address posted on your home.

- **Talk About Text**

A text-rich environment for Head Start/Preschoolers lays the groundwork for reading success. It is not just about having books in the home, which is a great start. Start talking about letters, numbers, and words on packages and signs.

Help your child see how text is already a part of daily life. Point out the name of the child's favorite cereal. Show the labels on clothing. Show the different parts of a birthday card or invitation.

When out and about, play games involving letter and number recognition. Can your child tell you any of the letters in the grocery store sign? Can your child read the serving amount on a packaged snack? Your child will be delighted to understand more about the world – however do not push the delight. Developing text awareness should never be a chore.

- **Be Aware of Problems**

Are you concerned that your child might have a learning disability? As with almost any disability, early intervention can prevent problems in the future. In the Head Start/Preschool years, speech delays are much more noticeable than the learning disabilities that may affect a child's efforts to read. Ask your Pediatrician for advice if you are concerned that your child's speech is delayed.

Most school districts will not diagnose reading disabilities until first grade. However, there are signs that you can look for earlier. If your 5-year-old cannot "hear" the rhyme in two simple words, or cannot tell the difference between a letter and a random doodle, this may be an area of development you will want to keep an eye on.