



# KEYS TO HELPING A CHILD BECOME A GOOD READER

- 1 Start Early** The ideal time to begin sharing books with children is during infancy. From early on, children should own books, be read to often, and see others reading and writing. Also, children should be encouraged to talk about books they already know and to elaborate or add their own storylines or create new endings.
- 2 Surround Your Child With a Reading-Rich Environment** The home environment is critical. Make it a print-rich one. Make sure to put up some signs around the house that use the child's name. Have toys like alphabet refrigerator magnets, writing materials and high-quality books.
- 3 Talk With Your Child** There's no substitute for a caring adult who takes time with a child. Vocabulary, language skills and knowledge about the world are acquired during interesting conversations with responsive adults. In fact, talking to adults is a child's best source of exposure to new vocabulary and ideas. In daily life, parents should point out and read print in the environment. With your toddlers, share in making and using grocery lists, singing songs and telling stories.
- 4 Teach Your Child While You Read Aloud** When you read with your child, help them learn the basic rules of print. Point out how spaces separate words. Occasionally run your fingers along with the words as you read so your child can learn that sentences start on the upper left and go to the right. Point to the period at the end of sentences and say, "That's the end."
- 5 Help Your Child Develop Critical Thinking Skills** As children move from being toddlers to school age, they should increasingly be able to grasp the meaning of language. When you read, stop to discuss unfamiliar words so your child will learn what they mean. Pause to ask questions to help the child predict what is coming next. Help children understand the main characters of stories and encourage them to talk about why these characters act the way they do.
- 6 Find a Good Preschool Setting** Things to look for in a high-quality preschool include: A well-supplied, well-designed space; strong parent-teacher conferences; a regular daily routine; strong teaching methods; a varied curriculum teamwork among teachers; and language experience.



This tip sheet draws heavily on *Starting Out Right*, National Academy of Sciences Press, 1998. Get these tips in multiple languages at [www.cta.org/raa](http://www.cta.org/raa).

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