

# Early Reading

## Get a letter puzzle

This is so your baby can hold the letters. These physical shapes in hand are much more interesting to babies than print on paper. Also, each day, try to use the letters as toys that you move around and play with and tell stories with. This will make the letters much more enjoyable and memorable. Start using M for Mama and P for Papa.

## Every letter echos an important thing for baby

Every letter gets associated with the real or made-up name of something that is either much liked by baby, or something important to baby.

A = Ah-ah (hello)  
B = Bath  
C = Cake (sweet baked things)  
D = Do, Drr-Drr (car/trip)  
E = Eat  
F = Food  
G = Good  
H = Hug  
I = Ice cream, go in a direction  
J = Juice  
K = Kookoo (peekaboo)  
L = Love  
M = Mama  
N = No (The start of the 2nd half)  
O = Oma  
P = Papa  
Q = Question, teach last  
R = Run, go fast  
S = Sweet,  
T = Ta-ta, grandfather, uncle  
U = Uppies and Um (feeding)  
W = Woo-woo (toy animal)  
X = Eks, meaning a location, teach last  
Y = Yum  
Z = Zebra

Baby hears and sees all the letters a few times each day. Also every letter gets associated with a thing that is talked about repeatedly every day in baby's life.

## Playing letters

Call it "playing letters" so it is perceived as more of a fun game. And make it an opportunity to earn some scarce and precious sweets. The game is that the parent holds up letters and baby says what the letters are. If baby guesses correctly, then baby gets a cheer. Yay!

## Then shorten the words

With playing letters, you want to first make each wooden letter synonymous with the word for the

thing. Then you start saying calling Ice cream as "I" and Mama as "M", and Good as "G" and "J", and Yum as "Y" and "E" and "I". So once you have taught all the letters as words, you want to cut the words down so they are only the letter sounds. Then the letter is tied to the sound.

## Letters called by their sounds

I think the ABC song is bad. I think we should teach the names of the letters later because they are confusing. Our objective here is to teach early reading. So instead of calling a W as "Double-u", instead it should be taught by its sound "W". And instead of "Tee", we should teach "T". We don't want any more confusion than necessary.

## Only capital letters

Only use capital letters. Lowercase letters not only amount to a bunch more characters to remember and recognize, but they also have those famously confusing letters bB, dD, pP, qQ. So only use capital letters to teach early reading. This is how we bypass most problems with b, and d. We do this by using B and D. Then once the kid is reading, context and familiarity will eliminate much of the problem.

## Motivation

I use sweets and ice cream as my main motivator. To increase effectiveness, I also reduce sugar intake overall (including juice, fruit and all sweets). Then the sweets become an powerful motivator for getting 2 and 3 year olds to participate. The after school rush is the best time. This is a bit late in the day, so for most of the day you can threaten to withhold the precious ice cream if your kid doesn't do their reading. Remember, you set the bare minimum for attention and behavior by withholding the ice cream once or twice. Also going during the rush creates a sense that all the other kids have also done their reading and now are getting their ice cream.

## Reading and ice cream

"Reading and ice cream" is the name of the game. But don't give a whole scoop of ice cream daily to a 15kg baby. Aim for about half a scoop a day, with a tiny amount of sprinkles for extra credit. "Want to do a little more to get sprinkles." This helps get the kid habituated to putting in a bit more effort.

## Exciting words

Try to pick early reading words that interest the kid. Interesting words motivate more than long words are difficult. You will get much more engagement if you are talking about chocolate, or jumping, or dinosaurs than shorter but less interesting words.

## Text full screen

Download a Text Full Screen app and start showing your child their flash card words on the app. Start

with 5 simple words: MOM, DAD, DOG, CAT, TOY etc. Then increase the number of words.

### **Sidewalk reading**

Reading while paused from a walk seems to work best. It is easier to move on and distract in this way. Thus you can get the kid to do words more often. Also, it doesn't hurt for the daily process of reading to be tied with exploration and a fun walk.

### **Many short sessions**

With 3 year olds, short learning sessions is all you can get. So the first lessons need to be short and many. My advice is to try once or twice to lengthen the reading session (which we can't control), and instead focus on starting over a few minutes later (something we can control).

### **A reward at the end of the day**

You can hand out sweets during the day, but these should be much smaller in total than the big late afternoon payout. This will drive the kid into wanting to wait for the big daily payout, and working diligently all day to get it. Thus you create the habits of hard work and patience. Also, the trip for ice cream makes the reward seem more rewarding, while keeping the value of sugar high.

### **Visualization skills**

Listen to audio-only stories together and explain how you visualize the story in places familiar to the kid. Do this many times so the kid gets habituated to imagining stories in familiar places. Then show the kid lots of media to imagine stories in. Essentially, you want to help them to develop their visualization skills with audio books while they are learning to read individual words as flash cards.

### **Keep reading fun**

You are doing all this so reading is effortless and enjoyable once the kid starts reading books. This way, hopefully, reading will beat the media-console. (You might also help this process along by reducing media time and increasing "ice-cream related activities".)

### **Mothers and eggs**

1/ Cholesterol is a necessary component of most hormones and brain chemicals including serotonin, dopamine, and the reproductive hormones.

2/ Some depression can be caused by low cholesterol. So if you have postpartum depression, you might want to try having an egg with each meal for a few days.

3/ You might also want to eat eggs daily while you are pregnant to help assure that both of you always have sufficient hormones and brain chemicals.

4/ Cholesterol help reduce meltdowns. However, be sure not to give your kid too much egg. Remember

that for a person 1/6th of adult size, 1/3 of an egg yolk = 2 eggs for an adult.

### **Magnesium deficiency is common**

Not only do we need vitamin D to metabolize calcium, we also need magnesium. The thing is that active brains can burn lots of magnesium. So some active-minded kids grow up thin boned because they don't get enough magnesium. Also, metabolized calcium is calming, so you may notice a difference.

### **Baby harnesses**

1/ For early walking, it is best to put the kid in a harness so falling doesn't hurt. This way, the process of exploration gets established with less pain and downside. This will make your kid a bit more adventurous.

2/ Put your harnessed toddler in front of things they want to touch. Then you want to hold them back a bit. Let them pull away easily at first. Then later, you want to resist more until it is a situation where the kid is pulling with all his strength. This will start the development of a mental process where they try real hard to get things.

### **Uppies**

From day one, I took my child around the apartment and showed her interesting new things every day. This was called Uppies. I would say: "Let's go for uppies". "Check this out". "What is that?" "What do you want to see?" . "Want to go there?"... Just remember that the things you show a baby need to be near to the baby, maybe 60cm. Otherwise they are blurry. Also try to get in the habit of describing things to baby as you see new things.

To help your child to have a longer neck and straighter back, you might want to wait extra long before letting your child remain in an unsupported upright position. From day-1 pick up and show your kid around their environment to develop their brain. But be a few weeks slow in allowing baby remain in an unsupported upright position, as this weight on a young and pliant spine produces obvious lifelong effects in a great many people.

### **Words from the first day**

We played Hello/byebye and Peekaboo from Day 1 to stimulate the mind and connect words to fun from an early age. We also said "um" for all feedings. All this helps to develop the verbal mind earlier and better. Also, from day one, talk to your newborn constantly, even if you don't get a spoken response.

Much more on my site. [AndrewMelcher.com](http://AndrewMelcher.com)

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