

Building Blocks: The Sequence of Emergent Literacy Skills

Learn how listening, talking, writing, decoding, and comprehension work together to build a child's literacy skills.



Building Blocks: The Sequence of Emergent Literacy Skills

The five emergent literacy skills are listening, talking, writing, decoding, and comprehension. Join us as we focus on the important sequence of these skills and how each has a chain reaction effect on the following one. Children are naturally curious. When we encourage them the cycle of developing literacy continues like dominoes falling on each other.

This workshop includes the following sections:

Learning Triangle Activity Sheet
What Can I Do for My Child?
Activities

Why Is This Important to My Child?
Book List
Additional Resources



Special Thanks

KBYU Eleven gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and organizations that contributed to the design and creation of this workshop and the thousands of workshop participants whose questions and suggestions inspired our work: Stephanie Anderson, Carrie Allen Baker, Barbara Leavitt, Aubrey McLaughlin, Theresa Robinson, Public Broadcasting Service, and United Way of Utah County.

KBYU Eleven Ready To Learn[®] FAQs

What Is KBYU Eleven Ready To Learn?

Children are born equipped for learning. Parents and caregivers can help children enter school with the essential skills and knowledge they need to be ready to learn. KBYU Eleven provides children and parents with three related services:

1. **Quality educational television programs.** Children who consistently watch these programs enter school better prepared to learn, and once in school they perform at a higher level.
2. **A safe and fun online environment** offering engaging activities, games, and videos that teach and reinforce key skills and concepts.
3. **Online video workshops** that provide insights into how children develop and demonstrate how to combine media with reading and hands-on activities to greatly enhance children's learning.



What Is the Purpose of the KBYU Eleven Ready To Learn Workshops?

The 12 KBYU Eleven Ready To Learn workshops help parents become their child's first and best teacher. The workshops were created over several years by experts in early childhood education and offered in partnership with schools, libraries, and community organizations throughout Utah. In creating these workshops KBYU Eleven built on the national Ready To Learn initiative sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), PBS, and the Ready To Learn Partnership (RTLTP). You can learn more about the national Ready To Learn effort at pbskids.org/read/about.

What Are the 12 KBYU Eleven Ready To Learn Workshops?

1. Benefits of Media and the Learning Triangle
2. Rhymers Are Readers: The Importance of Nursery Rhymes
3. Music Is a Must!
4. Storytelling: You Can Do It!
5. The Brain: How Children Develop
6. The FUNdamental Powers of Play
7. What Do You Do with the Mad That You Feel?
8. Who Is My Child? Understanding Temperament
9. Math Is Everywhere!
10. Learning Through the Early Years: The Benefits of Repetition and Variation
11. Shared Reading: Tools to Bring Literacy to Life
12. Building Blocks: The Sequence of Emergent Literacy Skills

How Can I Participate in a KBYU Eleven Ready To Learn Workshop?

Video versions of the workshops are available online at no charge. While they are sequentially based—with each workshop building on the previous one—they can also be viewed independently. To watch a workshop, visit kbyueleven.org and click on Ready To Learn under the Kids & Family section.

What Are the Four Areas of Child Development?

1. **Cognitive development** includes thinking, information processing, problem solving, remembering, decision making, understanding concepts, and overall intelligence.
2. **Physical development** is rapid following birth as children learn to control large and then small muscle groups. The sequence of stages is important, and providing an environment children can physically explore while they are growing is critical to all ages.
3. **Language development** is most intensive during the first three years while the brain is developing rapidly and is stimulated most by exposure to sights, sounds, and being talked to.
4. **Social/emotional development** is critical to all other areas of development, because how children perceive their world (their ability to give and accept love, be confident and secure, show empathy, be curious and persistent, and relate well to others) affects how the brain physically develops and how they learn and process information.

What Is the PBS Learning Triangle®?

The Learning Triangle is a three-part learning pattern that helps reach all types of learners by teaching through a variety of activities. The three points of the Learning Triangle are **View**, **Read**, and **Do**.



VIEW with your child an educational program that teaches a concept or skill.

READ with your child age-appropriate books that reiterate the new concept or skill.

DO an activity that reinforces the concept or skill and allows your child to practice what she or he has learned.

As you use the Learning Triangle you will see how each point reinforces the others. The workshops provide suggested Learning Triangle activities, but more important, they teach you how to build your own learning triangles to best meet the needs of your child.

How Do Children Learn?

The Learning Triangle is built on how we learn. Using our senses we gather information and then process it into our memory. Some learners rely more on one sense than another.

- **Auditory learners** use their sense of hearing. They process information better when they can hear the information.
- **Visual learners** use sight as a key tool for processing information.
- **Kinesthetic (or hands-on) learners** process information best by physically performing a task that incorporates the new information.

While learners can have a strong affinity to one type of learning, it is more effective to teach using a combination of all three. As a parent or caregiver, it is important to understand what types of learning work best for your child so that you can guide them to become better learners. For young children, ages 0–3, learning is holistic, meaning that they use all three types of learning. PBS developed the Learning Triangle to help reach all types of learners and enhance their learning through repetition. According to Dr. Bruce Perry, repetition is key to the development of a child’s brain. Repetition leads to skill mastery, which increases confidence and builds self-esteem.

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Learning Triangle Activity Sheet



Try the Sand and Soil Activity at www.pbskids.org/curiousgeorge/parentsteachers/activities/pc_sand_and_soil.html.

In the children’s book *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, by Laura Numeroff, one thing follows another in a sequence. Teaching your child to read also follows a sequence, a sequence referred to as emergent literacy. There are many simple activities you can do as soon as your child is born to start the cycle that will help your child to be ready to read once he or she enters school. This process moves from listening to speaking, from speaking to writing, from writing to sounding out words (decoding), from decoding to reading, and from reading to comprehending.

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Why Is This Important to My Child?

Language Development

Listening comprehension precedes reading comprehension. For children to be able to talk, write, decode, and comprehend they must have someone to communicate with them verbally. Children can learn language only from a human voice during the first year of life. Make sure that you talk to your child as you go about your day. Children will imitate sounds as they first begin to talk. A typical two-year-old has a vocabulary of 200 words but can understand almost everything that is said.

Between the ages of 3 and 6, children are in a verbal learning stage. This means that they say what they are thinking. This method helps children understand. It is very typical for children to ask 10 questions an hour! Be patient and let them talk.

Children learn to read from everyday symbols such as stop signs and pictures. These are referred to as environmental print. Letters become symbols, especially letters in their names. There is not phonetic recognition in early childhood.

Cognitive Development

Children's brains have a trait known as plasticity. This means that their brains can easily adapt to new learning experiences provided in their environment. An environment full of talking, singing, fingerplays, nursery rhymes, and daily shared reading will provide the necessary stimulation to help your child's speech develop.

Children are born with the cognitive ability to learn any language on the earth. The neurons necessary for speech specific to a language either grow or die off depending on a child's early exposure to language. This means that young children can learn multiple languages very easily if they are exposed to them routinely.

In the book *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, by Laura Numeroff, children learn important cognitive tasks such as sequencing. Sequencing is when a string of events follow one another in a predictable pattern. Children are delighted when they can predict the next event in a sequence. Help your child develop this ability by reading them this story and asking them what they think the mouse is going to want next.

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Why Is This Important to My Child?

Physical Development

In *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* the young boy cleans up after his mouse friend, who makes a mess around his house. A wonderful way to support your child's physical development is to allow them to help you with age-appropriate household chores. Age appropriate means that you choose chores that are neither too simple nor too challenging for your child. For example, an older baby may be able to help you place toys in a basket, a toddler can put his shoes in the closet, and a preschooler can stand on a stool and help you rinse the dishes.

A great way to have your little one help around the house is by purchasing child-sized brooms, mops, and dusters. Although your child may not be cleaning very well, they will feel responsible and develop muscle strength and coordination as they help you.

Social/Emotional Development

Healthy emotional development and good social skills are critical to academic success. Simple children's stories contain a wealth of social and emotional principles woven into the storyline. *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* teaches children about cause and effect by showing that our actions have consequences. It also teaches children about the importance of caring for their home and belongings as the young boy in the story carefully cleans up the mess his mouse friend makes. At one point in the story, the mouse misses his family and feels a little bit sad. He handles his feelings by drawing a picture of his loved ones.

As you read books to your child and tell them stories on a regular basis, your little one will begin to internalize the principles taught in the story. Carefully select stories based on social skills your child is working on.

You can reinforce these skills by acting out your child's favorite stories. You can act out *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by using homemade sock puppets or by dressing up as the characters in the book. Acting out your child's favorite stories will also help with listening comprehension. Finally, this activity provides your young child the opportunity to act and think like another character, which teaches empathy.



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What Can I Do for My Child?

For Babies to Toddlers (0–2 years)

- Talk to your child as if he or she understands everything you are saying. Make eye contact, use facial expression, and vary your voice pitch.
- Get down on your child’s level when you interact with him or her.
- Coo and make “baby noises” as they begin to make the sounds themselves. Give your baby many opportunities to make different sounds as you pause and listen.
- Make singing time part of your daily routine.
- Let infants look in mirrors and see their own expressions.

For Toddlers (2–4 years)

- Communication is much more than simply talking. Watch for the nonverbal cues that your child gives you, and respond to those cues.
- Sing songs with actions so that children can act out the song while you sing. Have them say key words and phrases (for example “The Itsy Bitsy Spider”).
- Let your child pick out a book for you to read even if it is a book you have read over and over again. Children learn through repetition. Allow your child to turn the pages as you read.
- Around the house and during your daily outings point out pictures and environment print such as signs and labels.
- Provide an assortment of writing supplies such as crayons, colored pencils, and washable markers.
- Have your child draw a picture. Write a story based on the picture, and make your own picture book.

For Older Children (4–5 years)

- Find wordless books, and have your child tell you the story.
- As you read stories, ask questions about what is happening. Ask children what might happen next. Mix up the storyline, and have your child give new ideas.
- Tell stories about the lives of your family members.
- Give many opportunities for children to write and draw.

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Book List

Title:

A Is for Annabelle
A Was Once an Apple Pie
*Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible,
No Good, Very Bad Day*
Alice the Fairy
Animalia
Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing
Bad Case of Stripes, A
Bob's A to Z Word Book
Bugliest Bug, The
Butterfly
Chicka Chicka 1 2 3
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom
Chicken Soup with Rice
Clifford's ABC
Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs
Commotion in the Ocean
Count the Ways, Little Brown Bear
Dinosaur Roar!
Do You Know the Difference?
Down on the Farm
Duck on a Bike
Ducks in Muck
Farm Flu
Flea's Sneeze, The
Frederick
Funtime ABC and 123
Grumpy Morning, The
Honey . . . Honey . . . Lion!
Hop on Pop
House for Hermit Crab, A
How Are You Peeling?
I Heard Said the Bird
I Like It When . . .
I Went Walking
If You Give a Moose a Muffin
If You Give a Mouse a Cookie
If You Give a Pig a Pancake

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Teresa Bateman
Lynn Downey
Leo Lionni
Eugene Bradley Coco
Pamela Duncan Edwards
Jan Brett
Dr. Seuss
Eric Carle
Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers
Polly Berrien Berends
Mary Murphy
Sue Williams
Laura Joffe Numeroff
Laura Joffe Numeroff
Laura Joffe Numeroff

Subject:

ABC Variation
ABC Variation

Book Variation
Book Variation
ABC Variation
Book Variation
Book Variation
ABC Variation
Theme Repetition
Book Variation
Theme and Word Repetition
ABC Variation
Theme Repetition
ABC Variation
Book Variation
Theme Repetition
Theme Repetition
Theme Repetition
Book Variation
Word Repetition
Book Variation
Theme and Word Repetition
Theme and Word Repetition
Theme and Word Repetition
Book Variation
ABC Variation
Theme Repetition
Theme Repetition
Theme and Word Repetition
Book Variation
Theme Repetition
Word Repetition
Word Repetition
Word Repetition
Theme and Word Repetition
Theme and Word Repetition
Theme and Word Repetition

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Title:

If You Take a Mouse to School
If You Take a Mouse to the Movies
Inside a Barn in the Country
Inside a House That Is Haunted
Into the A, B, Sea
Is Your Mama a Llama?
K Is for Kissing a Cool Kangaroo
Kisses
Let's Go Visiting
Miss Bindergarten (any title in the series)
Mole in a Hole
Mouse Makes Words
My Crayons Talk
Papa Papa
Seeds! Seeds! Seeds!
She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain
So Many Bunnies
Spider Names
Swimmy
The Biggest, Best Snowman
This Is the House That Jack Built
Very Busy Spider, The
Very Hungry Caterpillar, The
We All Went on Safari
We're Going on a Bear Hunt
We're Going on a Lion Hunt
Wheels on the Bus, The
Where Do Kisses Come From?
Who Says Moo?

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Margery Cuyler
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Michael Rosen
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Illustrated by Dick Witt
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Subject:

Theme and Word Repetition
Theme and Word Repetition
Word Repetition
Word Repetition
ABC Variation
Theme Repetition
ABC Variation
Word Repetition
Word Repetition
ABC Variation
ABC Variation
ABC Variation
Word Repetition
Word Repetition
ABC Variation
Book Variation
Word Repetition
ABC Variation
Book Variation
Book Variation
Book Variation
Book Variation
Word Repetition
Book Variation
Theme Repetition
Word Repetition
Word Repetition
Word Repetition
Word Repetition
Word Repetition
Theme Repetition

This is a small reference sample of books that can be found at your local library.

Building Blocks: The Sequence of Emergent Literacy Skills Activities

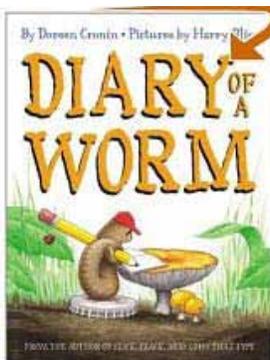
Diary of a Worm

Try these activities that go with the book *Diary of a Worm*, by Doreen Cronin.

Then What Happened?

Directions: Read each event that happened in the book *Diary of a Worm*, by Doreen Cronin. Place numbers 2–7 to show the correct order of events. (The first one has been done for you.) Use the book to help you. Not all events are listed here.

- _____ The worm ate macaroni for dinner.
- _____ The worm forgot to bring his lunch to school.
- 1 The worm tried to teach Spider how to dig.
- _____ The worm went to a school dance.
- _____ After it rained, the worm spent the entire day on the sidewalk.
- _____ “Good morning,” said the worm to the ants.
- _____ The worm scared some children in the park.



Bonus Activity: Diary of a _____

Ask your child to choose a favorite animal, and write diary passages from that animal’s perspective. Read select passages from *Diary of a Worm*, and call attention to the humor in the book. Look at the July 29 entry, and together name all the funny things that you see (for example, Dr. D. Kay name tag). Discuss different styles of writing, and ask your child to include humor in his or her animal diary. Suggested writing topics can include:

- What does the animal eat?
- How does the animal move?
- What is the animal’s living environment?
- How does the animal’s size compare to people, buildings, etc?



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The Wind Blew

Try this sequencing activity to go with the book *The Wind Blew*, by Pat Hutchins.

Supplies

- 5 feet of ribbon or yarn
- 11 paper clips
- Images from the story printed on card stock (see next page)
- Crayons or colored pencils

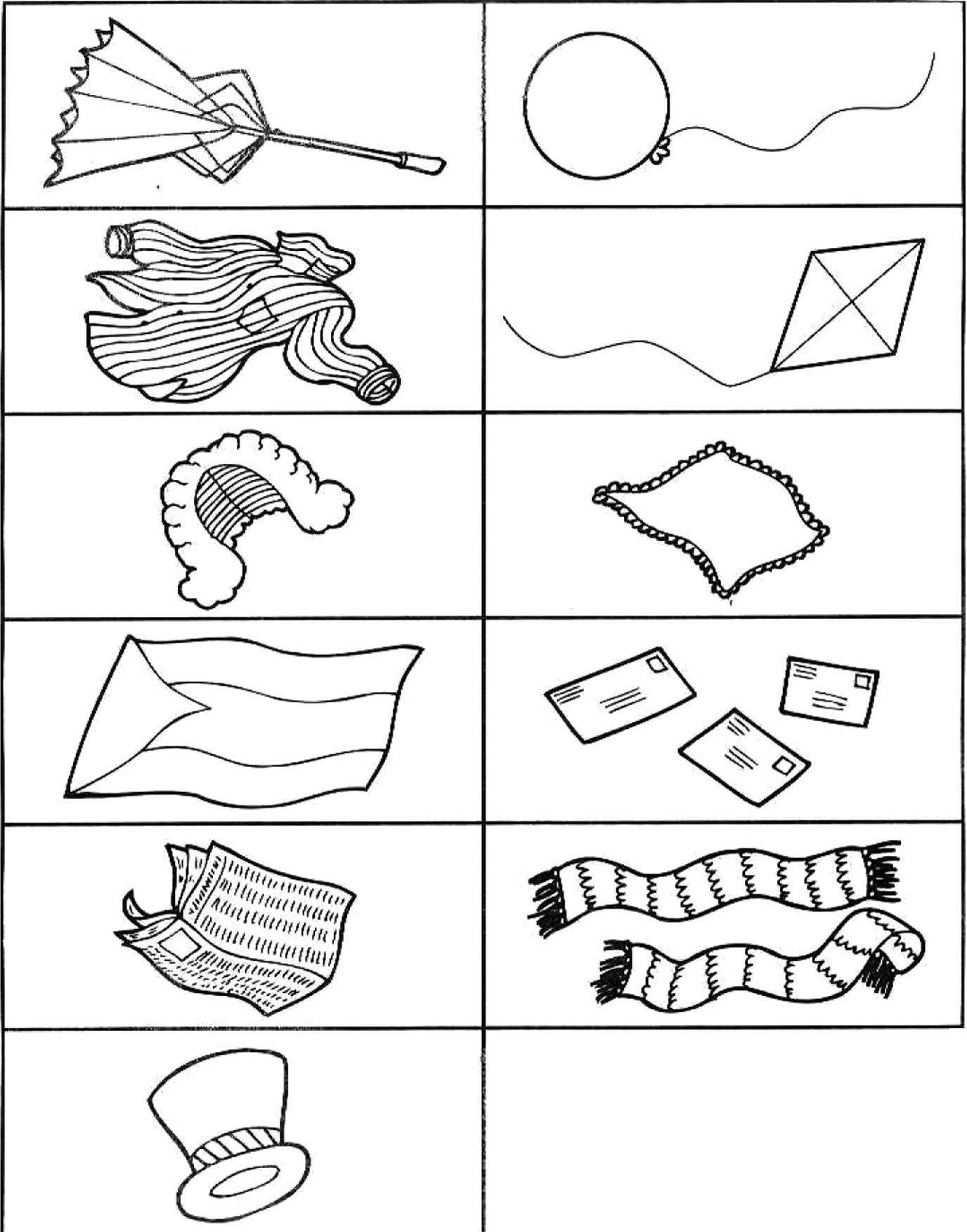
Directions

1. With your child, color the images from the story.
2. Tie paper clips onto the ribbon or yarn; try to space equally between paper clips.
3. Have your child attach the pictures to the paper clips in the order they appeared in the story.

Alternate Activities

- Have children sort items by size or colors.
- Have children sort items by categories.

Images from the story *The Wind Blew*, by Pat Hutchins.





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Additional Resources

PBS Parents

Bookworm Basics: Growing Readers of All Sizes

Learn about literacy and reading in the context of how a reader grows, from emergent literacy through fluency.

www.pbs.org/parents/booklights/archives/2010/04/bookworm-basics-growing-readers-with-poetry.html

Word World

Discover games and activities to help younger children recognize words and begin reading.

www.pbs.org/parents/wordworld/index.html

Pre-Reading Skills Book List from Utah State Library

This book list includes books for children of different ages, in different learning stages, and with different needs.

library.utah.gov/programs/youth/documents/booklists.pdf

Provo Library: Emergent Literacy

Learn about the basic components of emergent literacy and how to help your child learn emergent-literacy skills.

www.provolibrary.com/emergent-literacy

Early Childhood News: Emergent Literacy

Read this article to learn more about emergent literacy skills.

www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=212

George Mason University Literacy at School and Home

This website is designed to provide families of kindergarten through third-grade children with information about writing, emergent literacy, word knowledge, and comprehension.

mason.gmu.edu/~cwallac7/TAP/TEST/index.html