

FREE GUIDE · PARENTING

Help Your Child Learn to Read *at Home*



A friendly guide for parents of children aged about 2–7: building early reading skills through play, teaching letter sounds and blending, first sight words, and a simple 15–minute daily routine.

15 min

a day is enough

8

fun reading games

4

week starter plan

Reading starts long before school

Children build reading skills step by step: hearing sounds in words, knowing letters, linking letters to sounds, and then blending sounds into words. Parents can help with every step through short, playful moments together.

Stage	What it looks like	How you can help
Listening	Enjoys stories, songs, and rhymes	Read aloud and sing every day
Sound play	Notices rhymes and first sounds in words	Rhyming and "I spy" games
Letters	Recognizes letters and their sounds	Letter-sound games, magnetic letters
Blending	Joins sounds: c-a-t makes "cat"	Sound-out short words together
Early reading	Reads simple words and short books	Easy readers and sight words

The 5 habits that matter most

1. **Read aloud daily:** even 10 minutes builds vocabulary and a love of books
2. **Keep it short and fun:** stop while your child still wants more
3. **Talk a lot:** describe, ask questions, and listen to their answers
4. **Praise effort:** "You worked hard sounding that out!"
5. **Follow their pace:** every child is ready at a different time

Read-aloud tips that build readers

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Run your finger under the words as you read | ☐ Let your child turn the pages |
| ☐ Use different voices for characters | ☐ Re-read favorites; repetition helps |
| ☐ Pause and ask, "What do you think happens next?" | ☐ Talk about the pictures together |

Letter sounds & blending

Teaching the sounds letters make (phonics) is one of the most effective ways to help children learn to read. Focus on the sound, like "mmm" for M, rather than the letter's name.

A common teaching order for first sounds

1. **Group 1:** s · a · t · p · i · n (you can already make words like sat, pin, tap)
2. **Group 2:** m · d · g · o · c · k
3. **Group 3:** e · u · r · h · b · f · l
4. **Then:** the remaining letters, and later pairs like sh, ch, th

Say it slowly

BLENDING

Say a word in sounds, "c... a... t," and ask your child to put it together. Then swap: they say the sounds, you guess.

Sound boxes

HEARING SOUNDS

Draw 3 boxes. Say a word like "sun" and push a coin into a box for each sound you hear: s-u-n.

First 20 sight words

RECOGNIZE ON SIGHT

the · a · and · to · I · is · you · it · in · he · she · was ·
my · we · said · of · are · for · they · on

Word families

PATTERNS

Once they know "-at," change the first letter:
cat, hat, mat, sat, bat. One pattern unlocks many words.

Sounds my child knows

Tick them off as you go: s a t p i n m d g o c k e u r h b f l j v w x y z q u

8 fun reading games

Games turn practice into play. Pick one or two a day, and keep each to about 5 minutes.

1. I spy sounds

AGES 2+

"I spy something that starts with 'b'..." (ball, book, banana).

2. Rhyme time

AGES 2+

Say a word and take turns finding rhymes, even silly made-up ones.

3. Letter hunt

AGES 3+

Find a chosen letter on cereal boxes, signs, and book covers.

4. Magnet words

AGES 4+

Build short words with fridge letters, then change one letter to make a new word.

5. Treasure notes

AGES 4+

Hide simple notes like "look in the box" that lead to a small surprise.

6. Word hop

AGES 4+

Write sight words on paper on the floor. Call one out; your child hops onto it.

7. Label the house

AGES 4+

Stick labels on everyday objects: door, bed, chair, cup.

8. Your turn to read

AGES 5+

Share reading: you read one page, your child reads a word, line, or page.

Make it hands-on: young children learn letters well through movement and touch, such as tracing letters in sand, making them with play dough, or writing them in the air.

A simple 15-minute daily routine

Short, regular practice works far better than long, occasional sessions. Choose a calm time of day, like after a snack or before bed.

Minutes	What to do
5 min	Read a favorite book aloud together; point to words as you read
5 min	Sounds practice: 2–3 new letter sounds or a blending game
3 min	Sight words: a quick game with 3–5 words
2 min	Your child "reads" or retells part of the story; lots of praise

Choosing books

- ☐ Picture books with rhyme and repetition
- ☐ Books about things your child loves
- ☐ Simple "decodable" readers for practice
- ☐ Visit the library and let them choose

When they get stuck

- ☐ Wait a few seconds before helping
- ☐ Ask, "What's the first sound?"
- ☐ Look at the picture for clues
- ☐ Read it together, then move on

Keep it positive: if your child is tired or frustrated, stop and simply read to them. A happy connection with books matters more than finishing the lesson.

Create a cozy reading corner

- ☐ A comfy cushion or small chair
- ☐ Good light
- ☐ A low shelf or basket of books
- ☐ Rotate books every week or two

YOUR PLAN

Your 4-week starter plan

Adjust to your child's age and pace. It's fine to repeat a week, and fine to move faster if your child is ready.

Week	Focus	Done
Week 1	Daily read-aloud, rhyme games, and "I spy" with first sounds	☐
Week 2	Sounds s, a, t, p, i, n; blend words like sat, pin, tap	☐
Week 3	Sounds m, d, g, o, c, k; first 5 sight words; magnet words	☐
Week 4	Word families (-at, -in, -op); 5 more sight words; shared reading	☐

Progress tracker	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Letter sounds known				
Sight words known				
Words blended alone				
Favorite book this week				

Talk to a teacher or doctor if your child has trouble hearing, speaking, or following simple instructions, or if reading remains very hard despite regular practice. Early support makes a real difference.

Want a step-by-step program? For structured phonics lessons you can follow at home, see [Children Learning Reading](#) → (more on page 7).

YOUR NEXT STEP

Want a structured reading program?

This guide gives you a strong start. If you'd like a complete, step-by-step phonics program with short daily lessons for young children, here's a popular one designed for parents to use at home.

RECOMMENDED PROGRAM

Children Learning Reading

Phonics-based

Teaches letter sounds and blending step by step.

Short daily lessons

Designed to fit into a few minutes a day.

For young children

Made for parents teaching toddlers and early readers.

Learn at home

Lessons and materials you can use with your child.

[See Children Learning Reading →](#)

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Happy reading,

Uday Chandra

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