

# School Readiness

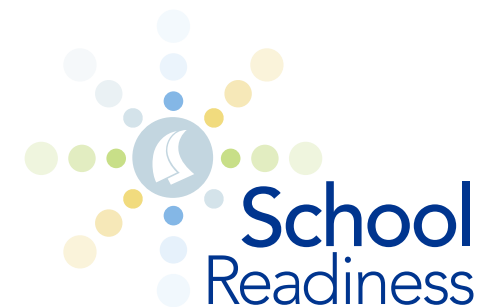
Ages  
0-5



Get children  
school-ready  
with games,  
fun activities,  
and books

## Library Storytimes

are an excellent way to help children develop skills in all of the areas of school readiness.



## What is school readiness?

School readiness includes all the skills a child needs to be prepared for school: academic, physical, social, and emotional development. This means knowing not only the ABCs and 123s, but also how to hold a pencil, how to interact with a teacher and classmates, how to sit and listen, and much more. The American Academy of Pediatrics' Council on Early Childhood found that every year, more than 1 in 3 American children start kindergarten without the language skills they need to learn to read.<sup>1</sup> The Clermont County Public Library wants to help families by providing them with the tools they need to get their children school-ready.

### What is early literacy?

Early literacy doesn't mean teaching your child to read; instead, you are putting in place the smaller pieces that will build toward reading in the future.

**There are five early literacy practices recommended as part of Every Child Ready to Read<sup>2</sup>**

**TALK | SING | WRITE | PLAY | READ**

These are things you can easily do during a normal day at meals, diaper changes, bath time, etc. that will be fun for your child while also teaching early literacy skills.

### WHAT'S IN THIS BOOKLET?

Based on a recent survey of Clermont County teachers, this booklet covers the top five skills that new kindergarteners are often missing. Library staff have paired each of these school readiness skills with one of the five early literacy practices and described activities that your family can do at home. Book suggestions to help your child build these skills are included, and many more on each topic can be found at the Library. Using this booklet, your child can have fun exploring the world while also learning important skills.

<sup>1</sup> (Pediatrics, August 2014, 134 (2) 404-409)

<sup>2</sup> Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library is a program of the American Library Association

Letter Knowledge is being able to recognize and name both uppercase and lowercase letters and to know that letters have different shapes. Letter knowledge is an important skill for school readiness as it is one of the first steps toward learning to read. Talking about letters and shapes throughout your day is one way to help your child practice their letters and add to their vocabulary.

▶▶  
Try these  
to help your  
child build letter  
knowledge



## GAMES &amp; ACTIVITIES

- **Learn the most important letter** – The most important letter to a child is the first letter of their first name. Work on recognizing and writing that letter first.
- **Sing songs about the ABCs** – Many alphabet books have the letters on the front and back inside covers. Sing the ABC song and point to each letter as you sing. Be sure to slow down and point out that L, M, N, O, and P are separate letters.
- **Magic letters** – Draw a letter on a piece of paper with a white crayon. Let your child paint over it with watercolor paint. The letter will magically appear and they can name the letter.
- **Get messy with letters** – Let your child draw letters with their hands in shaving cream, sand, rice, cornmeal, flour, finger paint, pudding, etc. Don't be afraid to let them get messy and have fun.
- **Sort shapes** – Cut 3-4 of the same basic shapes (squares, circles, triangles, etc.) out of colored paper and have your child sort them into piles. After they are finished sorting, provide a piece of paper and a glue stick and have them make a picture with the shapes.
- **Sort letters** – Use foam or magnetic letters and have your child sort them by similar shape: letters that are round, letters that look like a triangle, etc.
- **Build letters** – Use modeling dough, pipe cleaners, or items found in nature to build and form letters.
- **Practice writing** – Get ready to write letters by practicing writing lines in different ways: standing up, laying down, slanted, spirals, and circles.
- **Draw shapes and letters** – Be sure to provide your child with plenty of paper and crayons or markers so they can practice drawing lines, shapes, and letters.
- **Letter memory** – Cut squares out of paper and write an uppercase or lowercase letter on each of them. Be sure to create the cards in pairs. Turn the cards over and try to find the matches. The one with the most matches wins.
- **Letter of the day** – Pick a letter of the day and look for it everywhere there are words: in books, on signs, on cereal boxes, etc. The one who finds it most wins. These letters and words are called environmental print, which is found on signs, labels, and logos. For many children, recognizing environmental print helps them make their first efforts to read.
- **ABC scavenger hunt** – Write letters on sticky notes and put them around the house for your child to find. They must tell you which letter is on each note to earn points, if you are keeping score.

A

B

C

## SUGGESTED BOOKS

### SHAPES



**Circle, Square, Moose**  
by Kelly Bingham



**The Greedy Triangle**  
by Marilyn Burns



**Love, Triangle**  
by Marcie Colleen

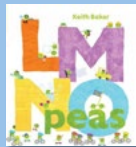


**Shape by Shape**  
by Suse MacDonald

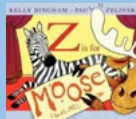


**Tangled:  
A Story About Shapes**  
by Anne Miranda

### THE ALPHABET



**LMNO Peas**  
by Keith Baker



**Z is for Moose**  
by Kelly Bingham



**Click, Clack,  
Quackity-Quack**  
by Doreen Cronin



**Eating the Alphabet:  
Fruits and Vegetables  
from A to Z**  
by Lois Ehlert



**Chicka Chicka  
Boom Boom**  
by Bill Martin Jr.  
& John Archambault

## SKILL 2

## Letter & Word Sounds



Helping children learn letter and word sounds is important. This helps children break words into sounds and blend sounds into words. Singing is the early literacy practice that helps children hear the smaller sounds in words, because each syllable in a song usually has its own note. The process of learning letter and word sounds can take quite a bit of time, but eventually children learn that written letters and words have sounds that go with them.

## GAMES & ACTIVITIES

- **Sing alphabet songs** with your baby, toddler, or preschooler.
- **Clap it out** – Help children clap the beats or syllables in words.
- **Show children words** on items such as food boxes, magazines, or toys.
- **Read stories** with repeated phrases and rhymes.
- **Sound hunt** – Choose a letter to begin. Identify it, say its sound, and go on a sound hunt. When you find an item that matches the letter sound, write the letter on a sticky note and place it on the item. Start with letters that your child knows, including the first letter of their name, and then move to other letters.
- **Label items with words** – Put written word tags on toy shelves and other items in your child's world.
- **Look for letters** – Point out signs and labels with letters that your child might recognize (start with the first letter of your child's name). Ask them what sound each letter makes.
- **Sort by beginning sounds** – Find and cut out pictures from a magazine, or print images from online. Help your child sort these pictures by their beginning sounds. This will help your child understand alliteration (words with the same beginning sound).
- **Play games** with words that rhyme. Rhyming words are those that end with the same sound, such as *cat* and *hat* or *bug* and *rug*. For kids who are learning how to rhyme, it's okay if the word is made-up, such as rhyming *cat* with *zat* – this still helps them learn about ending sounds. See the next page for some rhyming game ideas.



## RHYMING GAMES

► **Rhyming word box** – Get a small box to hold pictures of familiar words that rhyme – like a picture of a box and a picture of socks, a cat and a hat, etc. (Pictures might be cut from magazines or printed from the internet). Hold the box and choose a picture. If the picture shows a cat, say, *In my box, there's a cat*. Ask your child to come up with a rhyming word by asking for a word that sounds the same as *cat*. The child might say, *In my box, there's a hat*. (or some other rhyming word). You can respond by saying, *Yes, cat and hat sound the same. They rhyme!*

After they answer with a rhyming word, hand them the box and let them choose a picture. Take a turn coming up with a rhyming word. Continue until there are no more pictures. After you have emptied the box of pictures, match up the rhyming pairs.

► **Erase a rhyme** – Using a whiteboard, draw several pictures of common items that your child will be able to name easily.

First, work with your child to name all of the pictures on the board by saying out loud what is shown in each picture (*What do you think this picture is? That's right, it's a dog*).

Then, say a word that rhymes with one of the pictures on your board. For example, *It isn't a frog, it is a \_\_\_\_\_*. Your child figures out the picture word that rhymes with frog is *dog*, and they erase it from the board.

You can also make up a sentence about two rhyming words, leaving out the one with a picture on your board: *I took my goat for a ride in a \_\_\_\_\_*. Talk about which picture sounds the same as *goat*. Your child says and erases the picture for *boat*.

### SUGGESTED RHYMING PAIRS

box/socks; cat/hat; chair/bear;  
mouse/house; star/car; pan/can;  
goat/boat; snake/cake; train/rain;  
mat/bat; nose/toes; bug/mug;  
tie/pie; bee/tree



**Variation:** If you don't have a whiteboard at home, try playing the *Erase a Rhyme* game using a piece of paper and crayons or markers. The grown up will draw pictures on the paper, say matching words as described above, and the child will circle or color the matching picture instead of erasing it.

## SUGGESTED BOOKS

### LETTER & WORD SOUNDS



**Take Away the A:  
An Alphabeast  
of a Book!**  
by Michael Escoffier



**The Babies on  
the Bus**  
by Karen Katz



**We're Going on  
a Bear Hunt**  
by Michael Rosen



**Clip-Clop!**  
by Nicola Smee



## SKILL 3 Fine Motor Skills



**Fine Motor Skills** involve using the smaller muscles of the hands and fingers, such as while writing or cutting. It's important to work on developing these in your child so the muscles are strong enough to write letters and words in kindergarten. Writing is one of the five early literacy practices that helps children get ready to read. Both reading and writing help children understand how spoken words can be shown as written words that share information and stories. You don't have to start with actual writing, though - lots of fun activities are available to help develop these muscles that will look like play, not school, to your child. In order to develop strong muscles, children should work on these skills for several days out of the week.

### GAMES & ACTIVITIES

- **Coloring** – Coloring is a fun way to introduce the skills needed for writing. As your child colors (or even scribbles), the finger muscles are getting strong. The ability to color is a very important step toward using pencils for writing in a school setting.
- **Puzzles** – Fitting puzzle pieces into place develops fine motor skills and also helps with shape knowledge – part of learning letters and how to write them.
- **Stringing objects** – Use pipe cleaners, straws, string, shoe laces, or floss to help your child string beads, buttons, cereal, or dry pasta. The precise movements involved in stringing will develop not only the finger muscles but also hand-eye coordination. As you string, you can also talk about patterns, colors, and counting, which are other school readiness areas.
- **Play dough or clay** – All the motions involved in sculpting clay (mashing, rolling, squishing, pinching) work the muscles in the fingers and hands.
- **Safety scissors** – Caregivers can draw lines and shapes on a piece of paper for kids to follow. Cutting along lines is appropriate for preschoolers; cutting and pasting shapes is a kindergarten expectation to work toward. To make this activity more challenging, fold the paper to make it thicker, or have your child cut an image out of a cardboard cereal box.
- **Writing tools** – Let your child try the different writing instruments – markers, crayons, pencils, pens – you have at home and are comfortable with your child using. Even if they are simply scribbling and drawing, these actions are still working toward developing writing skills they will need in school. Try having preschoolers write letters of the alphabet and short words.
- **Working with paper** – Using scrap paper or junk mail, let your baby or

toddler tear and crumple it to their heart's delight! This is an easy way to get their fingers working.

- **Fingerplays** – Fingerplays are actions that go along with rhymes or songs, such as the motions to The Itsy Bitsy Spider. If you watch the Library's online Storytimes, you can learn many new fingerplays to share with your child. You can also search for them online by topic (e.g., *fingerplays farm*).
- **Tracing** – Draw shapes, letters, and/or words by hand or print copies for your child to trace with either a crayon or their finger. This is good writing practice.
- **Read a story, then draw a picture** – Read any story, and then ask your child to draw a picture of their favorite part. Help them label or caption the picture and write their name on their project.

- **Writing and knowing their name** – Kindergarten teachers recommend practicing this skill with your preschooler before they start school. Start with practicing the first letter of their name, and use capital letters. For toddlers, work on recognizing the letters in their name.
- **Use various materials to write their name** – Make it fun to write their name by using materials such as play dough, sand, shaving cream, or salt to trace or form the letters.



### NAME GAMES

- ▶ **Letter hunt** – Inside or outside, watch to find the letters in your child's name.
- ▶ **Letter cover** – Print or draw their name on paper and have your child place objects (buttons, beads, cereal) over the shapes of the letters.
- ▶ **Name hopscotch** – Play by creating the game with sidewalk chalk using the letters in their name instead of the traditional numbers.
- ▶ **Name puzzle** – Write your child's name on a piece of paper, cut out each letter in a strip or shape, and have your child reassemble the name puzzle.

## SUGGESTED BOOKS

### TRACING & FINGERPLAYS



**The Itsy Bitsy Spider**  
illustrated by Yu-hsuan Huang [Sing Along With Me! series]



**Five Little Ducks**  
by Natalie Marshall [Fingers & Toes Nursery Rhyme Book series]



**Farm**  
by Dawn Sirett [Follow the Trail series]

Books with tracing and fingerplays are especially good for babies and toddlers, who aren't ready to write, but fun for any child for helping develop their fine motor skills.

Books that model writing show your child practical ways in which writing is useful. You can do this at home, too: have your child help with your next grocery list or note to a family member.

### WRITING



**The Thank You Letter**  
by Jane Cabrera



**Can I Be Your Dog?**  
by Troy Cummings



**Put It on the List!**  
by Kristen Darbyshire

## SKILL 4 Managing Emotions & Self-Control

Self-regulation is the ability to consciously control your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Managing emotions and self-control are two important aspects of self-regulation. Children who have developed this important skill will be more successful in school and in everyday life. The early literacy practice of **Playing** will help your child to learn self-control. Talking about your own emotions and providing an environment where children feel safe to explore and express their feelings will help children learn to manage their own emotions.



EVERY CHILD READY TO READ  
**PLAY**  
Early Literacy Practice

### TEACH STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING EMOTIONS

**Breathing Exercises**  
Like the ones in the book  
*Breathe Like a Bear*

**Reframing**  
Instead of *I can't do this,*  
try *I might need some help*

**Positive Self-talk**  
*I will do my best!*

**Seek Support**  
Talking to a friend or grown up

## GAMES & ACTIVITIES

### Self-Control

- **Follow the directions** – Do activities together that have a set of instructions: Play a game with rules; dance to a freeze song; bake something together.
- **Change the rules of a game to make it an opposite game.** For example, play a version of Red Light, Green Light where green means stop. This will help your child learn to think flexibly.
- **Play sorting games while cleaning up,** such as picking up all of the blue blocks first or the big blocks first. Playing while cleaning up can help children to maintain focus.
- **Sing a song or recite a rhyme while waiting in line.** This gives your child a tool to use to cope with frustration and distraction while waiting, and can help them learn to manage their own behavior.
- **Make a plan for situations that might be challenging for your child,** and talk them through the plan in advance. For example, *We're going to a new store that has a lot of things that can break. You can look, but please don't touch anything.* Once you get to the store, give a reminder about the plan.

### Managing Emotions

- **Model your ability to self-regulate.** When you're experiencing a strong emotion like anger or frustration, you can use it as an opportunity to tell your child about your feelings and share the tools you use to manage your emotions. Is your heart racing?

Let your child feel your heartbeat and share some ideas for how you might relax, such as taking a deep breath or taking a break.

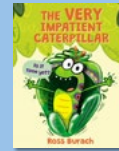
- **Talk to children during the daily routines** and experiences of each day, and describe to them what you are doing. Encourage them to talk about what they are thinking and feeling. To help them learn perspective-taking, ask them how others might feel in the same situations.

## EMOTION GAMES

- ▶ **Mirror game** – With your child next to you, stand in front of a mirror. Take turns naming a feeling, and then both make a face for that feeling. Once you have made your feeling face, share a time when you felt that way.
- ▶ **Feeling charades** - Put feeling faces on cards. Identify all of the emotions on the cards, then place the cards in a bag or box and play charades. Take turns picking a card and acting out that feeling. After your acting turn, share a time when you felt that way.
- ▶ **Variation:** Look at emojis on a phone or tablet. Identify a few and practice making those faces. Play Guess the Emoji by taking turns making faces and guessing which emoji it is.

## SUGGESTED BOOKS

### SELF-REGULATION



**The Very Impatient Caterpillar**  
by Ross Burach



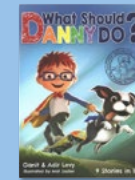
**Ping Pong Pig**  
by Caroline Jayne Church



**Argyle Fox**  
by Marie LeTourneau



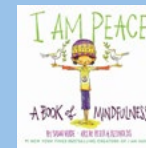
### SELF-REGULATION



**What Should Danny Do?**  
by Ganit & Adir Levy



**The Most Magnificent Thing**  
by Ashley Spires



**I am Peace**  
by Susan Verde



**Nanette's Baguette**  
by Mo Willems



**Waiting is Not Easy!**  
by Mo Willems



**Breathe Like a Bear**  
by Kira Willey



# SKILL 5

## Knowing Books & Stories



Knowing Books and Stories means that children understand how books work (turning pages, reading from left to right) and the basics of how to tell a story, such as they have a beginning, middle, and end. Reading is one of the five early literacy practices. When children have positive experiences around books and reading, they are more likely to stick with learning to read when they get to school, even if it is difficult. Books have a wider variety of words than everyday conversation, so children learn more words when you read books to them. Many books for young children include animal sounds and have rhymes, both of which support phonological awareness (knowing the smaller sounds that make up words).

### GAMES & ACTIVITIES

- **Make it a fun experience** – Bring your child to the library to choose books together. Be sure to find books on topics that interest them, which will increase their desire to read.
- **Make books accessible** to your child by bringing books with you to read in the car or while waiting for appointments, and having a box or shelf for your child’s special books.
- **Read for leisure** – If you don’t read for leisure, your children are unlikely to either. Once in a while, share with them the interesting things you’re learning through the books you’re reading.
- **Nursery rhymes** often contain all the building blocks of a complete story in a small package: characters, plot, setting. They help children learn how to understand and tell stories and describe events. Share nursery rhymes during meals or diaper changes.
- **Play with books** – Babies and toddlers love books that show familiar things, like babies’ faces or foods. Show them how books work and let them try turning the pages. Choose books with interactive features, such as Touch & Feel panels or flaps, to help develop an interest in books by encouraging children to play with them.

### Rhyming word activity for preschoolers

To prepare this activity, gather some plastic eggs and a permanent marker. If you don’t have any plastic eggs, see the variation below for instructions to make paper puzzles instead.

- Break apart the eggs.
- On the top part of an egg, write one of the rhyming words.
- Write the rhyming word that goes with the top part on the bottom half.
- Repeat these steps for all eggs until every egg has a top half and matching bottom half.
- Have your child find the rhyming word matches by saying the words out loud and placing the egg halves together.

In addition to using plastic eggs or paper puzzles to practice rhymes, you can use these games to work on colors or letter recognition (match uppercase & lowercase letters)



### Variation:

Instead of plastic eggs, you can use pieces of paper to make paper puzzles. Cut the paper into smaller squares or shapes like circles or triangles. Write one rhyming word at the top of the shape and the other at the bottom, and then cut a wavy line through the middle of the shape so that the words are each one half of a puzzle that can be put back together. Repeat this process with more rhyming words, and then mix up all the pieces of paper. Help your child sort through the pieces to recreate the rhyming pairs, showing them the words as you say them.

### SUGGESTED RHYMING PAIRS

box/socks; cat/hat; chair/bear;  
mouse/house; star/car; pan/can; goat/boat;  
snake/cake; train/rain; mat/bat; nose/toes;  
bug/mug; tie/pie; bee/tree

### Interactive Reading Ideas



**B**efore reading, look at the front, back, and inside of the book and ask your child what they think the book will be about.

**A**sk questions about the story that require more than a yes or no answer, such as: *What do you think will happen next?* Use where, when, why, and how questions, too.

**A**sk what is happening in the story and pictures. Build on your child’s response. If they say they see a house, you could say: *Yes, that is an enormous blue house. Enormous means big. Can you say enormous?* Also, define any new words as you read to help build your child’s vocabulary.

**T**alk about connections to the real world, such as: *The characters are going to the playground. What do you see in the picture that we have at our playground?*

## SUGGESTED BOOKS

### FOR READING ENJOYMENT



**Stanley the Builder**  
by William Bee



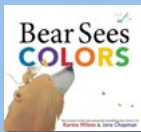
**Baa, Baa, Black Sheep**  
by Jane Cabrera



**5 Little Ducks**  
by Denise Fleming



**Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?**  
by Bill Martin Jr.



**Bear Sees Colors**  
by Karma Wilson



**Rhyming Dust Bunnies**  
by Jan Thomas



Every child enjoys different topics, so help them find books that interest them! If you need suggestions, please ask a library staff member. The books listed here include rhyming stories and staff favorites.

## Where can I get more help?

### Stop by your local library to check out our resources!

Our storytimes are designed to help your child develop early literacy and school readiness skills. Library staff are always happy to recommend new and interesting books. [clermtontlibrary.org/storytimes](http://clermtontlibrary.org/storytimes)

To find other Library resources or to request books through our catalog for quick, easy pick up, visit [clermtontlibrary.org](http://clermtontlibrary.org)

### 1000 Books Before Kindergarten

A fun, free way to encourage reading and earn prizes!  
[clermtontlibrary.org/information/early-literacy/1bk](http://clermtontlibrary.org/information/early-literacy/1bk)

### Imagination Library

Receive free monthly books in the mail!  
[clermtontlibrary.org/imagination-library](http://clermtontlibrary.org/imagination-library)

### Parenting Supports, 4C for Children

[4cforchildren.org/families/parenting-supports](http://4cforchildren.org/families/parenting-supports)

### Ohio Department of Education, Early Learning Family Resources

[education.ohio.gov/topics/early-learning/early-learning-family-resources](http://education.ohio.gov/topics/early-learning/early-learning-family-resources)

### Ohio Department of Education, Getting Ready for Kindergarten

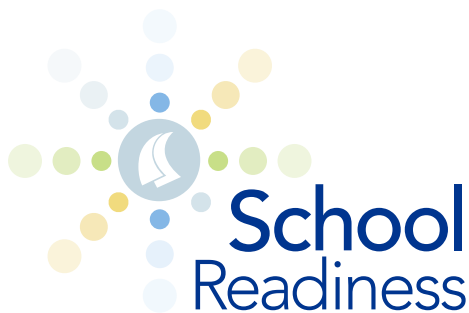
[education.ohio.gov/topics/early-learning/kindergarten/kindergarten-readiness-checklist](http://education.ohio.gov/topics/early-learning/kindergarten/kindergarten-readiness-checklist)

### Day by Day Ohio, Family Literacy Calendar

[daybydayoh.org](http://daybydayoh.org)



If you are still concerned about your child's progress after trying some of this booklet's suggestions, please talk to your child's pediatrician.



**STOP BY YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY TO CHECK OUT OUR RESOURCES!**

**Amelia Branch**

58 Maple Street  
Amelia, Oh 45102  
(513) 752-5580

**Batavia Branch**

180 South Third Street  
Batavia, Oh 45103  
(513) 732-2128

**Bethel Branch**

611 W. Plane Street  
Bethel, Oh 45106  
(513) 734-2619

**Felicity Branch**

209 Prather Road  
Felicity, Oh 45120  
(513) 876-4134

**Goshen Branch**

6678 State Route 132  
Goshen, Oh 45122  
(513) 722-1221

**Miami Township Branch**

5920 Buckwheat Road  
Milford, Oh 45150  
(513) 248-0700

**New Richmond Branch**

103 River Valley Blvd.  
New Richmond, Oh 45157  
(513) 553-0570

**Owensville Branch**

2548 Us Route 50  
Owensville, Oh 45160  
(513) 732-6084

**Union Township Branch**

4450 Glen Este-Withamsville Rd.  
Cincinnati, Oh 45245  
(513) 528-1744

**Williamsburg Branch**

594 Main Street  
Williamsburg, Oh 45176  
(513) 724-1070

CCPL 7-2021

[CLERMONTLIBRARY.ORG](http://CLERMONTLIBRARY.ORG)