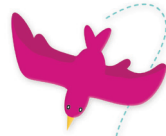




## Let's Read!



Reading with a child can be a wonderful and joyous time filled with cuddles, laughter and discovery. Whether they are pointing at pictures or retelling familiar tales, little ones see themselves as readers. As they grow, they are eager to make sense of those magical squiggles so that they can join older children and adults in the world of books.

Learning to read requires that young readers begin to connect a range of essential skills and new knowledge. Children transition from spoken language to written symbols, recognizing that the marks on a page represent words and hold meaning. They learn the alphabet, the rules of how print is placed on the page, and the quirks of English spelling. As experienced readers, we guide them through this journey, providing tools and encouragement along the way.



## Reading Essentials

**Phonological awareness** is the ability to notice and manipulate the chunks and sounds of spoken language, such as rhymes, syllables and the individual sounds in words. You and your child can have fun while they develop phonological awareness by singing songs, playing rhyming games, reading rhyming books and pointing out sounds in words as you travel in the car, talk and read together.

**Phonics** involves matching the forty-four sounds of the English language to our spelling patterns. Children learn that the twenty-six letters in the alphabet represent these sounds, and when we blend the sounds together, we can form words. Some sounds are represented by one letter, some are represented by two or more letters together. Being able to match the speech sounds with the letter(s) helps children read and spell words. With explicit, systematic instruction, children learn to match the letters on the page to the sounds of English in order to form words. This is called *decoding*. It's a foundational skill that helps set the stage for fluent reading and comprehension.

**The concepts of print** are the set of rules or agreements of how English texts work. These concepts include reading from left to right, recognizing letters and words, and understanding punctuation. As you read together, occasionally ask your child to follow along with their finger or point out punctuation marks. Point out words around them, such as on signs or food packets. Writing also reinforces these concepts, helping children become confident communicators.