

growing  
readers

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# Toddlers



Talking



Singing



Writing



Reading



Playing

# Early Literacy Goals



**30 Million Words Before Age 4** is an Early Literacy goal that helps guide caregivers with their child's language development. The

number of words a child is exposed to before the age of four is correlates directly with a child's future academic success. When you see the **30 Million Words** symbol on a card, that activity is geared to increasing the number of words that your child hears.



**1000 Books Before Kindergarten** is an Early Literacy Program that encourages caregivers and their children to

share the joy of reading and prepare their children for future academic success.

When you see the **1000 Books Before Kindergarten** symbol on a card, that activity is geared to integrate more reading into your daily lives.

Track your child's  
progress on  
[hcpl.beanstack.org](http://hcpl.beanstack.org)

I belong to:

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# Talk with Me



**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Vocabulary skills



**How much time will it take?**

5 Minutes



**Talking**  
Toddlers



# Talk with Me

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Embed conversations into every day routines.

## Activity

Talk with your child during every day routines, such as bath time and dinner time. Aim for one or two back and forth responses.

## Why this is important :

Simple conversation is one of the basic building blocks of learning a language.



# Picture This

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Narrative skills



**How much time will it take?**

10+ Minutes



**Talking**  
Toddlers



# Picture This

Share stories and memories from family photo albums.

## Activity

As you flip through a photo album together, have your child tell you a story about each photo. Find a picture of yourself as a child and tell them what you remember from the picture.

## Why this is important :

This activity builds your child's narrative skills. They learn that stories have a beginning, middle and an end.





# 1-2-3- Count!

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Anywhere



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Conceptual thinking



**How much time will it take?**

5 Minutes



**Talking**  
Toddlers



# 1-2-3- Count!

Start your engines! Count cars as you run errands.

## Activity

When you go to a store, count the number of cars between your car and the door of the store.  
You can also comment on the colors of the cars.

## Why this is important :

This activity builds your child's conceptual knowledge such as numbers, shapes, colors, etc.





# Ring! Ring!

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Narrative skills



**How much time will it take?**

10+ Minutes



**Talking**  
Toddlers



# Ring! Ring!

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Use a toy phone or hand to your ear to have a pretend phone conversation with your child.

## Activity

Toddlers love to copy things that adults do, including talking on the phone! Take time to pick up the “phone” and let your child babble away for a fun play conversation.

## Why this is important :

This activity builds your child's language skills and teaches them how to have a conversation in a fun, playful way.



# Explore Your World

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Anywhere



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Vocabulary skills



**How much time will it take?**

30 Minutes



**Talking**  
Toddlers



# Explore Your World

Explore the world around your child by identifying different objects as they point them out.

## Activity

When you are out and about, take time to identify objects or features your child may pay attention to. Make sure to call something by its proper name. For example, say **"daisy"** instead of **"flower."**

## Why this is important :

This activity builds your child's vocabulary. Studies have shown it is easier for children to read words they already know.

# Sing Along with Me

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Anywhere

**What skill(s) does this build?**

Phonological awareness



**How much time will it take?**

10+ Minutes



**Singing**  
Toddlers



# Sing Along with Me

Change the words to your child's favorite song to match a daily activity.

## Activity

Sing the day away! Change the words of your toddler's favorite songs as you go about your day.

## Why this is important :

This activity improves your child's ability to retell stories and events in an easily accessible way.



# A-Rhyming We Will Go

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Anywhere



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Phonological awareness



**How much time will it take?**

5+ Minutes



**Singing**  
Toddlers



# A-Rhyming We Will Go

Rhyme words and sing “A-Rhyming We Will Go” to the tune of “A-Hunting We Will Go.”

## Activity

Ask your child for a word that rhymes with something you see. Give them the first sound of another word that rhymes.

Sing: **“A-Rhyming We Will Go, A-Rhyming We Will Go, We’ll catch a rhyme in the nick of time, and this is how it goes!”**

## Why this is important :

This rhyming activity builds your child’s ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words.

# The Beat Goes On

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Motor skills  
Phonological awareness



**How much time will it take?**

5+ Minutes



**Singing**  
Toddlers



# The Beat Goes On

When singing or listening to music, clap along with the music.

## Activity

When listening to music, teach your child when the beat hits by clapping along at that moment. Gently hold your child's hands and show them the clapping movement.

## Why this is important :

This activity develops your child's motor skills and helps them to hear the beats and syllables in words.



# The Alphabet Song



**Where should I do this activity?**

Home

**What skill(s) does this build?**

Letter knowledge



**How much time will it take?**

5+ Minutes



**Singing**  
Toddlers



# The Alphabet Song

Sing the alphabet song with your child.

## Activity

Sing the alphabet song any time of day. Try singing it before reading an alphabet book or try singing the song to a different tune.

## Why this is important :

This activity develops your child's letter knowledge.



# Mix It Up!

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Everywhere



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Narrative skills



**How much time will it take?**

5 Minutes



**Singing**  
Toddlers



# Mix It Up!

Sing the day away!

## Activity

Change the words to your child's favorite songs to match a daily activity as you go about your day.

Why this is important: This singing activity improves your child's ability to tell stories in an easily accessible way.

# Shopping List

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Print awareness



**How much time will it take?**

10 Minutes



Writing

Toddlers

# Shopping List

As you prepare a shopping list, have your child scribble along with you.

## Activity

With your child, discuss items to add to the shopping list. Read aloud what you have written and ask your child what they have written and drawn.



Toddlers  
**Writing**

## Why this is important :

This activity helps reinforce that what is written on paper has a meaning.



# Sign Here

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home

**What skill(s) does this build?**

Print awareness



**How much time will it take?**

5 minutes



**writing**  
Toddlers



# Sign Here

Have your child sign their name.

## Activity

Anytime your child hands you their artwork, have them write their name. Be sure to identify every letter.

## Why this is important :

This helps your child identify the letters in their name and other words.

# No Mess Finger Painting

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home

**What skill(s) does this build?**

Creativity  
Motor skills



**How much time will it take?**

10+ Minutes



Writing

Toddlers



# No Mess Finger Painting

Unlock your child's inner artist without the mess.

## Activity

Pour finger paint inside a zip lock bag. Seal up the bag with painter's tape and attach to a table or other flat surface. Let your child explore and create.

## Why this is important :

This activity develops motor skill and creativity, which helps with problem solving and imaginative thinking.

# Follow the Line

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home

**What skill(s) does this build?**

Letter knowledge



**How much time will it take?**

15+ Minutes



Writing  
Toddlers



# Follow the Line

Draw several different lines, squiggly, straight, wavy and help your child to trace along the path.

## Activity

Help your child trace lines either with their fingers or use blocks, toy cars, stuffed animals, etc. to turn it into play time.

## Why this is important :

This activity develops your child's fine motor skills that will be needed to form letter shapes and start reading.



# Pop the Letters!

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home

**What skill(s) does this build?**

Letter knowledge



**How much time will it take?**

15+ Minutes



Writing  
Toddlers



# Pop the Letters!

Give bubble wrap a new life by turning it into a fun sensory experience.

## Activity

Take a piece of bubble wrap and write different letters, such as your child's name. Help them pop away!

## Why this is important :

This activity helps your child learn different letters.

# Play to Their Favorites

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Background knowledge



**How much time will it take?**

5-10 Minutes



**Reading**  
Toddlers



# Play to Their Favorites

Choose a book that has a character or subject that your child enjoys.

## Activity

Does your child enjoy dinosaurs? Trucks? Princesses? Try to use that knowledge to engage your child in a book.

## Why this is important :

This activity builds on prior knowledge and develops print motivation.

# It's Your Turn

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Narrative skills



**How much time will it take?**

10+ Minutes



**Reading**  
Toddlers



# It's Your Turn

Let your child “read” to you.

## Activity

Pick a book with great pictures and have your child tell you what is happening in the picture.

### Why this is important :

This activity builds language skill and articulation by saying ideas out loud rather than just thinking them.

# All About the Book

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Print awareness



**How much time will it take?**

5-10 Minutes



**Reading**  
Toddlers



# All About the Book

Learn all about the parts of a book.

## Activity

Underline the title and the author with your finger as you say it out loud. Show them the spine of the book. Underline the words with your finger as you read them. Be silly with voices and sounds, maybe even turn the book upside down!

## Why this is important :

This activity reinforces print awareness and teaches children that what we read are the words on the page.

# 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Print awareness



**How much time will it take?**

10+ Minutes



**Reading**

Toddlers



## 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten

Set a goal to read 1,000 books to your child before kindergarten.

### Activity

Read a book- any book. You can read books multiple times. Repetition helps children learn that words remain the same, no matter how much time passes between readings.

### Why this is important :

A positive reading experience allows you and your child to bond and become life-long readers.

# I Spy...Shapes!

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Conceptual thinking



**How much time will it take?**

10+ Minutes



**Reading**  
Toddlers



# I Spy...Shapes!

Play "I Spy" with shapes as you read together.

## Activity

Point out shapes on the page while you read with your child. For example, **"I spy something in the sky that looks like a circle."** **"Yes, the moon looks like a circle."**

## Why this is important :

Learning to identify shapes helps your child build letter recognition skills.



# Sink or Swim

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Background knowledge



**How much time will it take?**

10+ Minutes



Playing  
Toddlers



# Sink or Swim

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Have fun testing the waters as you and your child determine if a toy sinks or swims (floats).

## Activity

During bath time or using a container of water, take turns dropping toys into the water. Try saying **“It can swim! Look at it float on the top of the water.”** Or **“Look at it sink to the bottom.”**

## Why this is important :

This activity builds your child’s background knowledge of opposites and introduces them to new vocabulary.



# Moo! Oink! Meow!

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home

**What skill(s) does this build?**

Background knowledge



**How much time will it take?**

10+ Minutes



Playing  
Toddlers



# Moo! Oink! Meow!

Learn animal sounds with your child using a fun Tic-Tac-Toe inspired game.

## Activity

Start by drawing a Tic-Tac-Toe board. Draw or put pictures of different animals in each square. Take turns with your child choosing an animal on the board and make that animal's sound. The first one to make three animal sounds in a row wins.

## Why this is important :

This activity builds background knowledge of animal sounds. Imitating animal sounds also helps your child to practice making language sounds.

# P is for Playdough

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home

**What skill(s) does this build?**

Letter knowledge



**How much time will it take?**

30 Minutes



Playing  
Toddlers



# P is for Playdough

Get hands on with the alphabet as you squish and explore with playdough. You can use store bought or make your own.

## Activity

Sculpt or stamp different letters into the playdough. Name and trace the letters with your child, and then let them explore.

## Why this is important :

This activity builds letter knowledge and helps your child learn the alphabet in a fun, hands-on way.



# Listening Game

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Phonological awareness



**How much time will it take?**

5+ Minutes



Playing  
Toddlers



# Listening Game

Did you hear that? Your child will have fun identifying the beginning sound of words.

**Activity** Give your child a sound to clap to.  
**“I hear with my little ear, the sound /g/.”**  
Say three words, one of which begins with the /g/ sound.  
You can clap along if your child needs help.  
To change up the game, try stomping or have your child give you a sound.

## Why this is important :

This activity builds your child's ability to hear and play with smaller sounds in words.



# Oh, the Drama!

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**Where should I do this activity?**

Home



**What skill(s) does this build?**

Narrative skills



**How much time will it take?**

10+ Minutes



Playing  
Toddlers



# Oh, the Drama!

Lights! Camera! Action! Act out a story with your child.

## Activity

Act out stories with the use of toys such as dolls, puppets, or stuffed animals. Try dressing up and being a part of the story you both tell.

## Why this is important :

This activity helps your child understand that stories have a beginning, middle and end. Acting in their own stories fosters imagination and creativity.

