

WORD builders



Rhyme Time

Children love to be silly. When you need a quieter activity, like during a car ride or at the table, play a rhyming game with your child. Start with a simple sentence that ends in a word that is easy to rhyme.

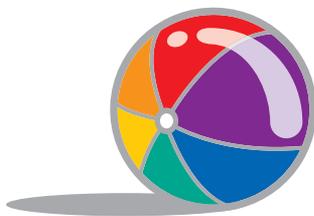
Look at that cat!

Say another sentence that ends in a rhyming word.

It has a hat!

Encourage your child to make up her own sentences that rhyme with yours. Don't worry if she makes up a word that isn't real – the idea is to match the sound and your child might think it is very funny to make up silly words. That makes the activity fun, and she is still learning about sounds.

This game helps your child learn the sounds that make up language, and understand that words and sounds have patterns. This will help her learn to read in the future.



Guess Which One?

Find a book that your child is familiar with, and that has more than one object on a page. First, read the book with your child. Show him all the different items pictured on each page. Then go back and pick one page that has more than one object. For example, both a dog and a cat are shown. Or the sun and flowers. There can be many objects on the page. Pick one of them and describe it to your child and see if he can guess what you are talking about. For example, you might say,

There is something in this picture that is yellow and round. It is in the sky. It makes you warm. Can you guess what I'm talking about?

See if your child can look at the picture and tell that you are talking about the sun. If he is having trouble, give him some more hints, or tell him the answer. Afterwards, review your description:

**Is the sun yellow and round?
Is the sun in the sky?**

Your child is learning new words to describe objects.



You Talk, I'll Write

Ask your child if he wants to write a note to a special person. It could be a mom or dad, grandparent, teacher or friend. Let your child tell you what to say, and then write his words down on a piece of paper for him. If he needs help, give him suggestions.

Do you want to tell Grandpa you like to play with him? What else do you want to tell Grandpa?

After he tells you a few sentences, read the note back to him so he can see that his words are on the paper. If he wants, let him draw or decorate the note, and give it to his special friend.

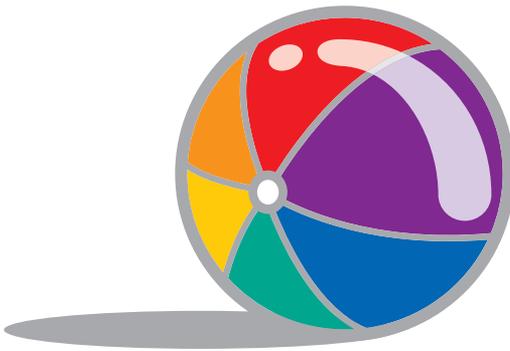
This activity teaches your child about letters, words and writing. It shows him that a word he speaks can be put onto paper and read back to him.



I Draw, You Draw

Give your three year old lots of chances to practice writing and drawing. You can tape a big piece of paper down on a table or floor for her to scribble on, and give her crayons, markers or colored pencils for writing. A paper grocery bag, cut and turned inside out, makes a nice big piece of paper for little hands to work with. Sit with your child and draw along with her. Talk together about the colors you are using, and the things you are drawing. Don't be concerned if her writing and drawing looks like scribbles – let her be creative. The next time you are making a list (such as groceries or things to do), give your child a piece of paper and let her work on a list too. You can ask what she is drawing, or about her list. She may or may not have a specific picture in mind. Encourage all her efforts!

Your child is learning eye and hand coordination and strengthening the small muscles in her hands to be able to write in the future.



I Know My Colors

One way to help your child learn his colors is to play a sorting game. Start by finding several objects that are different colors, for example, five crayons in different colors, or five different colored toy cars or blocks. Lay them out for your child to see, and ask him to give you one of the colors,

Can you give me the red car?

If he gives you the right color of toy, praise him. If he picks the wrong color, help him learn by saying something like,

That is the yellow car.

Can you give me the red car?

Keep helping until he gives you the red car, then give him lots of praise. After you've played this game for a while, put two or three objects of each color out for your child to sort. Ask,

Can you find all the red blocks?

Let's put them in a pile here.

Then count the objects together.

Look, we have three red blocks!

One, two, three.

This activity helps your child learn the names of colors and learn to tell different colors apart.



Tell Me the Story

Find a book that your child likes, and read the story to her. Perhaps it is one that you have already read several times with your child. After you have read the story to her a few times, ask her to read the story to you! For example say,

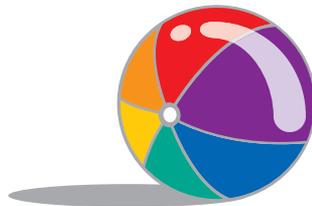
Now it's your turn to read the story.

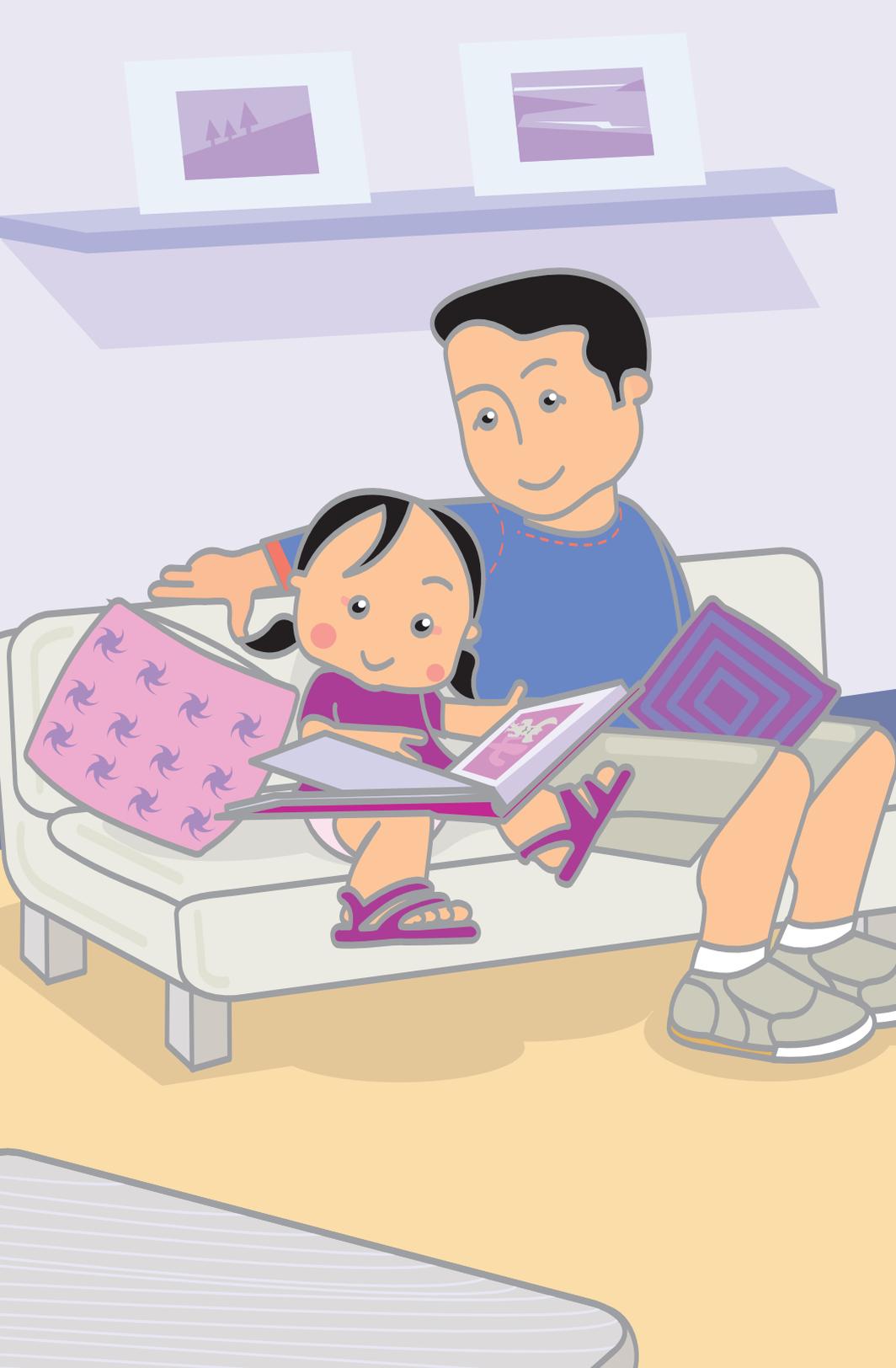
Let's start with the first page.

**Tell me what is happening to the rooster?
(or whatever character is in the book)**

As she turns the pages, let your child tell you the story. She may surprise you and repeat it word for word, or she may tell you the main idea on each page. She may even make up her own story to go with the pictures. Let your child turn the pages.

Looking at books and telling stories will help your child learn about words, language, reading, writing and listening. Pretending to read is one of the first steps in learning to read.





A Trip to the Library

Make a special date with your child to go your local library. Many libraries have special “story-telling” time just for kids, and many are open some evenings.

If you are not familiar with the library, ask a librarian to help you find the children’s books, and ask her to help you find a few books that will be just right for a three year old. At this age your child will like books with lots of big, bright pictures, and simple stories. Look for books that have rhyming sounds and words that are used over and over. Your child will like to say the words or rhymes along with you as you read. Or ask the librarian to help you find a non-fiction book about a subject your three year old is interested in. There are lots of books that have many pictures and give information about a single subject, such as dinosaurs, your body, or animals like tigers, cats, or fish. Sometimes when you read a book, point out the cover page with the author’s and illustrator’s names. Talk about how you start at the front of the book and read from left to right. Point to the words as you read them. These actions will help your child understand the concepts of printed stories.

Reading to your child will help him learn about words, language, reading, writing and listening. Reading non-fiction books with your child helps him learn many new words that he may not learn if you only read fictional stories together.



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three year old

Make a Call

Call a friend or relative on the phone and let your child talk to them. She has probably heard you make many calls, and will enjoy talking with someone this way. Before you hold the phone to your child's ear, tell your friend or relative a few questions they can ask that your child will understand and might be able to answer. For example, tell them to ask:

**How old is Karina? Or, I heard that you know your colors!
Can you tell me some colors?**

This will help your child feel like she is having an important conversation.

Talking on the phone is a fun way to learn important conversational skills like listening and responding to a question.



How Was Your Day?

Make it part of your dinner or nighttime routine to talk with your child about his day. Find a place where you can be at your child's eye-level – either sitting side-by-side or with him on your lap and be sure to give him your full attention. His attention span will probably not be too long, but you can ask him questions to keep the conversation going for a few minutes. If he cannot think of what he did, ask him questions. For example,

What did you (or we) do today?

What did you wear?

Was it cold today, or hot?

Did you see your friends?

Who did you see?

Did you sing any songs today?

Do you like to sing songs?

Do you remember what you had for lunch today?

Talk, talk, talk with your child! It is an important way that he learns sounds, new words, and how to put words together to make sentences. He learns to communicate with you and others around him by speaking and listening.



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three year old

An Alphabet Book

Staple 28 pieces of paper together to make an alphabet book. Let your child decorate the front and back covers. On the first two inside pages help your child write the letter "A." On the next two pages, write "B" and so on until there is a two-page spread for each letter of the alphabet. You will probably want to work on this book over several days or weeks. One day, have your child think of her favorite foods. Talk with her about what letters the different foods start with. Go to that letter in the alphabet, and let her draw a picture of that food. (If she wants you to draw it, that's fine too!) The next time you work on the book, have your child name her favorite animals. Talk about what letter they start with and draw a picture of the animal with the name written under it on the page with that letter. One day you can help your child cut pictures out of a magazine, grocery store advertisements, or junk mail. Help her glue or tape each picture under the letter it starts with. Write the name under the picture for her. Another day, draw or use photographs of family members and friends. Put their picture under the letter that starts their name. Soon you will have your own alphabet book with pictures of your child's favorite things and people. You can keep this with your other books and read it together over and over.

Your child is learning about letters and words – building blocks of reading and writing.



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three year old

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