Studies have shown that two important factors in a child’s school success are sharing books with adults and being read to from a very young age. Choosing books that are appropriate in format and sharing them in age-appropriate ways create a positive experience and foster a love of reading.

Cuddling with a preschooler for a one-on-one reading time – or sharing a book with a small group – reconnects you with active, independent young children. Make this a special time. Find a quiet, cozy reading nook. Establish a routine and read every day at the same time. Before you share the book with a child, take a few minutes to read it through to be sure that the child will enjoy it.

Additional tips for sharing books with preschoolers

- Always hold the book so that the child can see as you read. Or let the child hold the book.
- As you read, move your finger along under the words. This helps the child make the connection between the words he sees on the page and the words you are reading.
- Read at a slow pace. Children like to take time to really look at the illustrations. Pictures are important because they tell a large part of the story.
- Talk while sharing a book. Ask children about the characters and their actions. Point out interesting things in the illustrations.
- Children love “dramatic readings” with voices full of expression. Use different voices for the characters and exaggerate the rhythm and rhyme of the words.
- When you have finished reading, take time to share thoughts about the book. Preschoolers may want to tell you something, ask you questions, or go back to certain pages. Relax and enjoy the experience.
- Sometimes a preschooler may want to be the “reader.” Children read stories they have memorized. Sometimes they like to make up funny new versions. Encourage these important pre-reading skills.

Following the child's lead will keep story time a pleasant, happy experience.
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