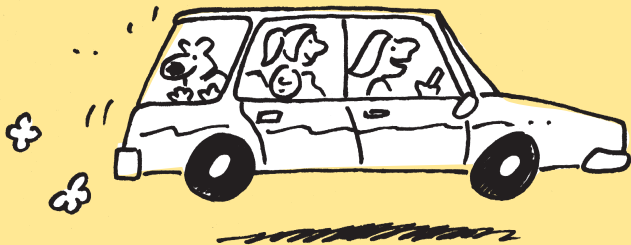


# Literacy ~ on the Go!

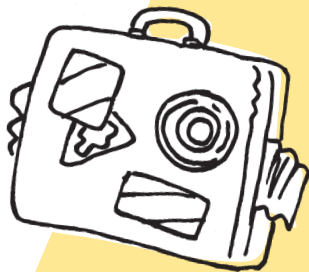
Tips, ideas, and activities that help  
encourage early literacy for busy  
families . . . on the go!



Whether you're headed across the state to visit relatives or across town to the grocery store, these simple brain-building activities will help increase your child's early literacy skills and can be a fun way to pass the time. If any of these activities seem too difficult or boring for your child, try again another time!

The National Research Council recommends that children enter school with these six early literacy skills that serve as the foundation for learning to read and write. Children who enter school with more of these skills are better able to benefit from the reading instruction they receive when they arrive at school.

Your public library has other resources for more things you can do to reinforce these skills and make reading an enjoyable time for you and your child.



# EARLY LITERACY

## **Narrative Skills**

Tell stories together, encourage pretend play, and let your child be a storyteller.

## **Letter Knowledge**

Help your child identify the first letter in his/her name and find it on street signs and package labels.

## **Print Awareness**

Help your child discover how to hold a book and turn the pages. Show them that print is all around them.

## **Vocabulary**

Teach your child the specific name of things, like the different vegetables at the grocery store.

## **Print Motivation**

Find books that match your child's interests and share them often.

## **Phonological Awareness**

Sing songs, play games and share rhymes to help your child play with the smaller sounds in words.

# FUN GAMES FOR THE CAR OR ANYWHERE

**These games help build letter knowledge.**

## **Find It A to Z**

Search for billboards, signs, license plates, etc., that contain the letter A. Then the search is on for B, next C, and so forth, until you come to Z. This can be a cooperative game, with everyone in the family searching for the next letter in the alphabet. You can also play different versions of Find It, by seeing who can find the most out-of-state license plates, pick-up trucks, etc., in the next five miles.

- Adapted from "Games for Reading: Playful Ways to Help Your Child Read" by Peggy Kaye



## **Edible ABCs**

Think of food words for each letter of the alphabet. Take turns naming something delicious to eat for each letter – this may take some creativity for letters like X and Z (try X-ray fish and zucchini).

## **Name Game**

Parent and child take turns, each giving the name of a boy or girl as you start with the letter “A” and continue through the alphabet to the letter “Z”.

## **TRIP TIP**

Pack some drawing boards such as Magna Doodles, Etch-A-Sketch, and small white boards with dry erase markers. Try using pipe cleaners, bag ties, or aluminum foil so kids can make letters, flowers, animals, and all kinds of fun sculptures. Pack a small cookie sheet and take magnetic letters for them to play with (older children might like to use the cookie sheet to play cards or other games on).

## License Plate Game

To play the “License Plate Game,” see how many different license plates you can find. Work as a team in the car or individually. You might even write down the time, date, and the state where you saw it. This can be a family project as you build your “collection” of license plate sightings together.



# BONUS!

Find plates from Canada, Mexico, or US Territories. If you have older children, see how many state capitals they know for a bonus round!

## FUNNY “VANITY” PLATES WE SAW:

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Alabama

Alaska

Arizona

Arkansas

California

Colorado

Connecticut

Delaware

Florida

Georgia

Hawaii

Idaho

Illinois

Indiana

Iowa

Kansas

Kentucky

Louisiana

Maine

Maryland

Massachusetts

Michigan

Minnesota

Mississippi

Missouri

Montana

Nebraska

Nevada

New Hampshire

New Jersey

New Mexico

New York

North Carolina

North Dakota

Ohio

Oklahoma

Oregon

Pennsylvania

Rhode Island

South Carolina

South Dakota

Tennessee

Texas

Utah

Vermont

Virginia

Washington

Washington, DC

West Virginia

Wisconsin

Wyoming

# IT'S RHYME TIME!

Rhymes and songs help children develop phonological awareness, which is an ear for language. Some researchers believe children who know at least 6 rhymes by the time they are six are more likely to become better readers.

Use these prompts to come up with the remaining rhyme. Check your local library for those you don't know or have forgotten. Leave out the last rhyming word in the phrase and see if your child can fill in the missing words.





*Jack and Jill*

*Humpty Dumpty*

*Pat-A-Cake*

*This Little Piggy*

*Jack Be Nimble*

*Shoe the Little Horse*

*Hot Cross Buns*

*Jack Sprat*

*Eensy Weensy Spider*

*Old King Cole*

*Hey Diddle Diddle*

*Three Little Kittens*

*Simple Simon*

*Ring Around the Rosie*

*Baa, Baa, Black Sheep*

*Hickory Dickory Dock*

*I See the Moon*

*Bye Baby Bunting*

*Diddle, Diddle, Dumpling*

*Round and Round the Garden*

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear*

*Georgie Porgie*

*Little Miss Muffet*

*One, Two, Buckle My Shoe*

*Little Bo Peep*

*Little Boy Blue*

*To Market, To Market*

*Wee Willie Winkie*

*Mary, Mary Quite Contrary*

*Rub-a-Dub-Dub*

*There Was an Old Woman*

*Peter Piper*

*Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater*

*Ten Little Monkeys*

*Star Light, Star Bright*

# MORE FUN WITH RHYMES

## Rhyming Hunt

Say, "We're going on a rhyming hunt. Let's find some things that rhyme with clock."

Try it with words like: floor, blue, shoe, coat, wall, book, door, red, hog, and mouse.

## Line Rhyme

Say an easy rhyming word like cat. Go around the car and have each person take turns saying another rhyming word until there are no more letter/sound combinations. For children who get stuck, supply the beginning sound. "Let's try putting the 'f' sound in front. What would it be? Fat. That's right. Fat."



## Change that Song

Sing to the tune of "Skip to My Lou"

*Rhyme, rhyme, these words rhyme*

*Rhyme, rhyme, these words rhyme*

*Rhyme, rhyme, these words rhyme*

*So rhyme along with me!*

(You can also substitute "Sing, ring" for Rhyme, rhyme")

Try this with other words like: cat, hat; dog, hog; tug, rug; big, wig; hit, sit; pen, hen.

## I Spy

Use this phrase to help children identify things to look for:

*I spy, with my little eye something that rhymes with \_\_\_\_.*

Other variations could include:

*Something that starts with (identify letter sound)*

*Something that is the color (identify color)*

*Something that starts with the letter (D)*

*Something that starts with this sound (fff)*

# FUN SONGS FOR THE CAR OR ANYWHERE

The best way to share songs with young children is to relax and enjoy singing with them. Singing songs together can help children expand their vocabulary and improve their attention span, concentration, phonological awareness, and memory. So pick a tune and start singing! Stop by your local library for all kinds of great music CDs and more.

Make up new words to songs. "The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round," could name animals instead of parts of a bus. Examples could be, "The dogs on the bus go bow-wow-wow" or "the chickens on the bus go cluck-cluck-cluck."

WRITE DOWN ANY MORE FAMILY FAVORITES:

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*I'm a Little Teapot*  
*Hokey Pokey*  
*Yankee Doodle*  
*You Are My Sunshine*  
*Knick, Knack, Paddy Whack*  
*Old MacDonald*  
*Down by the Station*  
*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*  
*Baby Beluga*  
*It's Raining, It's Pouring*  
*Hush Little Baby*  
*Doe, a Deer*  
*Mary Had a Little Lamb*  
*Little Bunny Foo Foo*  
*BINGO*  
*Five Little Speckled Frogs*  
*Shake Your Sillies Out*  
*Farmer in the Dell*  
*Down By the Station*  
*Row, Row, Row Your Boat*  
*Three Blind Mice*  
*Pop Goes the Weasel*  
*Baby Bumblebee*  
*London Bridge*

*Are You Sleeping?*  
*If You're Happy and You Know It*  
*Ten in the Bed*  
*Fishing in the Dark*  
*Take Me Out to the Ballgame*  
*Rain, Rain, Go Away*  
*The Ants Go Marching*  
*Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*  
*It Ain't Gonna Rain*  
*Gilligan's Island Theme Song*  
*The Bear Went Over the Mountain*  
*Kookaburra*  
*Beverly Hillbillies Theme Song*  
*She'll Be Coming Around the Mountain*  
*It's a Small World*  
*Green Grass Grew All Around*  
*The Wheels on the Bus*  
*This Land is Your Land*  
*Michael Finnegan*  
*Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*  
*Head and Shoulders*  
*Do Your Ears Hang Low*  
*De Colorés*  
*Five Little Ducks*

# NARRATIVE SKILLS

These activities help build narrative skills – the ability to describe things and events, as well as tell stories. Being able to tell or retell a story helps children understand what they read.

## Tell a Tale

If you remember the plot line, you can tell your child these stories without reading a book. Or have your child tell you the story. Here are a few to get you going:

*The Three Little Pigs*

*Little Red Riding Hood*

*Three Billy Goats Gruff*

*The Gingerbread Man*

*The Boy Who Cried Wolf*

*Rumpelstiltskin*

*Cinderella*

*Goldilocks*

*Snow White*

*Chicken Little*

Or add a twist to these stories. For example, “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” could become “Goldilocks and the Three Hares,” or “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” could become “Snow White and the Three Little Pigs.”

## Family Stories

Recalling childhood memories and recent experiences are excellent ways to involve children in family storytelling. Here are a few prompts:

*The day your child was born or adopted*

*How the child's name was chosen*

*What the first school you attended was like*

*Where you lived as a child*

*The pet(s) you had as a child*

*Your most memorable vacation*

*How you met your husband/wife*

*Your favorite family story*

*What your grandparents were like*

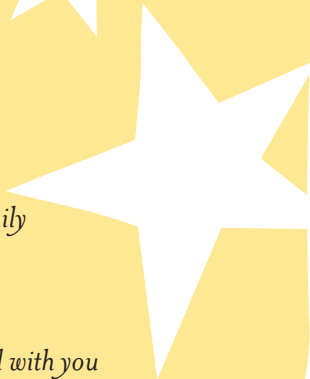
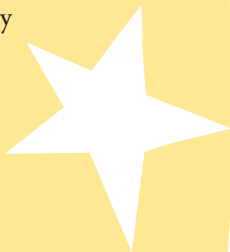
*Your first job*

*How holidays were celebrated in your family*

*Your best friend as a child*

*What kind of chores you did*

*Stories your parents/grandparents shared with you*



## **Make up your own stories**

Here are a few prompts:

*"Once upon a time there was a girl/boy named \_\_\_\_\_ .  
She/He liked to \_\_\_\_\_ .*

*Pick your favorite toy. If it could come to life, would it be a boy or girl? What would it act like? Which of your other toys would it be friends with?*

*Tell a story about living in a far off land or another planet.*

## **Story Bags**

Put several items in a bag. Each person takes a turn pulling out one object and going on with the story using the "prop." Begin with "once upon a time . . ."

## **Story Starter**

One person makes up a sentence that could begin a story. The next person continues the story by adding a sentence of their own. Keep taking turns until you've completed your story. If you want, write it down to read again later.



## Fortunately-Unfortunately

This game helps teach kids to look at the bright side of things in a silly way. For example, you say, "Unfortunately, there's a tiger in the car." Your son says, "Fortunately, he doesn't eat boys." Your daughter says, "Unfortunately, he's looking at me and licking his lips." You say, "Fortunately, I brought along my tiger-jaw-clamper." And so on, alternating between fortunate and unfortunate things.

- From [www.momsmininivan.com](http://www.momsmininivan.com)

## Fantastic Pets

Fantastic pets make for some fantastic stories. To play, make up a story about a weird or unusual animal who comes to live with you.

What if a bear came to live with you?  
An eagle? A deer? What would happen?  
Would you give it a name? Would it sleep in your room?  
What would it eat for breakfast?



# PLAYING WITH PRINT

These activities help build print awareness which includes knowing how to handle a book and knowing how to follow words on a page. This teaches children that print has meaning and gets them comfortable with printed language.

## Word Hunt

Have your child think of words that can be found in the grocery store, like giant, chocolate, bargain, cereal, orange, and free. Choose two words and write them on a sheet of paper designed as a score sheet. As you and your child walk down the aisles, hunt for the two words and see which one of you can find them the most times. Pick out some new words next time. Or play the word hunt game while running errands in your neighborhood. Try words like bank, flowers, red, and pizza. Have fun!

- Adapted from "Games for Reading: Playful Ways to Help Your Child Read" by Peggy Kaye

## Making a List and Checking it Twice

Before you leave your home, help your child make a list of things you need to get at the store. As you get them, have your child cross them off the list.

## Maps & Menus

If possible, print out a map of your destination and show your child how you read the map to find out how to get to where you are going. Use the same technique for menus, signs, and even bumper stickers. They all show how we read different things to get information.

## TRIP TIP

Get postcards at your stops to document the trip and write to friends while you are gone. Bring stamps so you can drop the postcards in the mail on the road so they arrive at their destination before you return home.

Keep a writer's notebook in your car or backpack. Your child might write down interesting things he or she sees along the road; memories of places you visit or people you meet; lists of things she sees; or questions she wonders about. Encourage your child to write things in his or her own way or dictate stories to you.



# VOCABULARY BUILDERS

Vocabulary is knowing the names of things. The more words children hear and understand, the more ready they will be to read on their own.

## **Play First Word**

Start the game off by saying any word. It can be any word that comes to the top of your head. Your child will then immediately say the first word that comes to mind. Then you will say another word and so on. For example, if you say “cat,” your child may say “mouse,” then you might say “cheese” and your child may say “sandwich.” It is interesting to see how your child’s thought process works.

## **Talk it up!**

While you are in the car together, tell your child the names of the parts of the car. Don’t be afraid to use the “big words” for things. “This is the gas pedal, or accelerator. Some people call it that because it makes the car accelerate, which means go faster.” If possible, have your child help you fill the car with gas or wash the windows. Show them how to tell how much the gas will cost.

## Travel Scavenger Hunt

Watch for these items on your next trip. Make up your own lists and adjust them for the scenery. Be sure to include an unusual word or two that you can talk about together (i.e. we included alfalfa or hay on this list. If it's summer and you're traveling through Idaho you might spot alfalfa in a field. You can talk about what farmers do with alfalfa when they harvest it. What other crops can you identify together?)

*Red light*

*Bus*

*Stop sign*

*Dog*

*Grocery store*

*Train*

*Library*

*Bike*

*Church*

*Playground*

*Alfalfa or Hay*

*Post office*

*Cow*

*Sagebrush*

*Barn*

*Dog in a car*

*Bridge*

*Hat*

*Truck*

*Chicken*

*Tractor*

*Pond*

*Gas station*

*Cat*

*White car*

*Garden*

*Police car*



# PRINT MOTIVATION

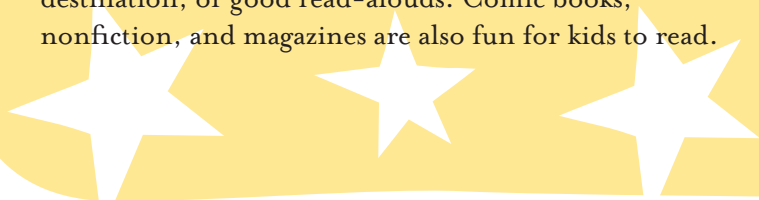
Print motivation is a child's interest and enjoyment of books. Children who enjoy books will want to learn how to read.

## Head to the Library!

Your local public library is a great place to visit. Not only do most libraries now offer a wide variety of children's books and magazines that will interest your child, but there is also a specially trained children's librarian to help you. Most libraries also lend CDs, audiobooks, and videocassettes and DVDs of children's books and movies. They often sponsor special programs, including storytimes, summer reading programs, and homework help.

## TRIP TIP

Always have at least one or two books with you in the car. Try joke or riddle books, books about your travel destination, or good read-alouds. Comic books, nonfiction, and magazines are also fun for kids to read.



## Great Read Alouds for the Whole Family:

*Poppy* by Avi

*The Secret Garden*

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

*Brown Girl Dreaming*

by Jacqueline Woodson

*Ramona or Henry*

books by Beverly Cleary

*Where the Sidewalk Ends*

by Shel Silverstein

*The BFG* by Roald Dahl

*The Tale of Despereaux*

by Kate DiCamillo

*Elephant and Piggy books*

by Mo Willems

*The Princess in Black*

by Shannon Hale

*Winnie-the-Pooh* by A. A. Milne

*Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen

*The Lightning Thief*

by Rick Riordan

*Holes* by Louis Sachar

*Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White

*Little House on the Prairie*

books by Laura Ingalls Wilder

*A Series of Unfortunate Events*

books by Lemony Snicket

*A Bear Called Paddington*

by Michael Bond

*Esperanza Rising*

by Pam Munoz Ryan

*Wonder* by R. J. Palacio

*The Magic Treehouse Collection*

by Mary Pope Osborne

*The Cricket in Times Square*

by George Selden

*Fun Jungle*

series by Stuart Gibbs

*The Graveyard Book*

by Neil Gaiman

*Henry and Mudge books*

by Cynthia Rylant

*Dragon Slippers*

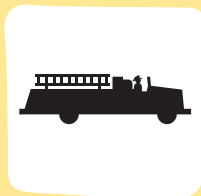
series by Jessica Day George

# BINGO!

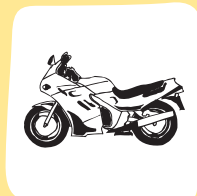
How many of these items can you spot?



Bus



Fire truck



Motorcycle



Airplane



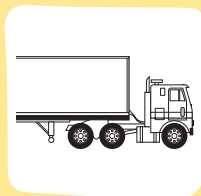
Car



RV



Barn



Semi



Tractor





Pickup truck



Police car



Dog



Cow



Tow truck



Dump truck



Minivan



Sports car



Bicycle



Rabbit



Tanker truck



VW beetle

# OTHER GAMES FOR THE CAR



## Rhyming Riddles

Say, "I'm thinking of something that you use to eat cereal. It rhymes with moon." (spoon)

*where you sleep that rhymes with red (bed)*

*put on over your sock that rhymes with blue (shoe)*

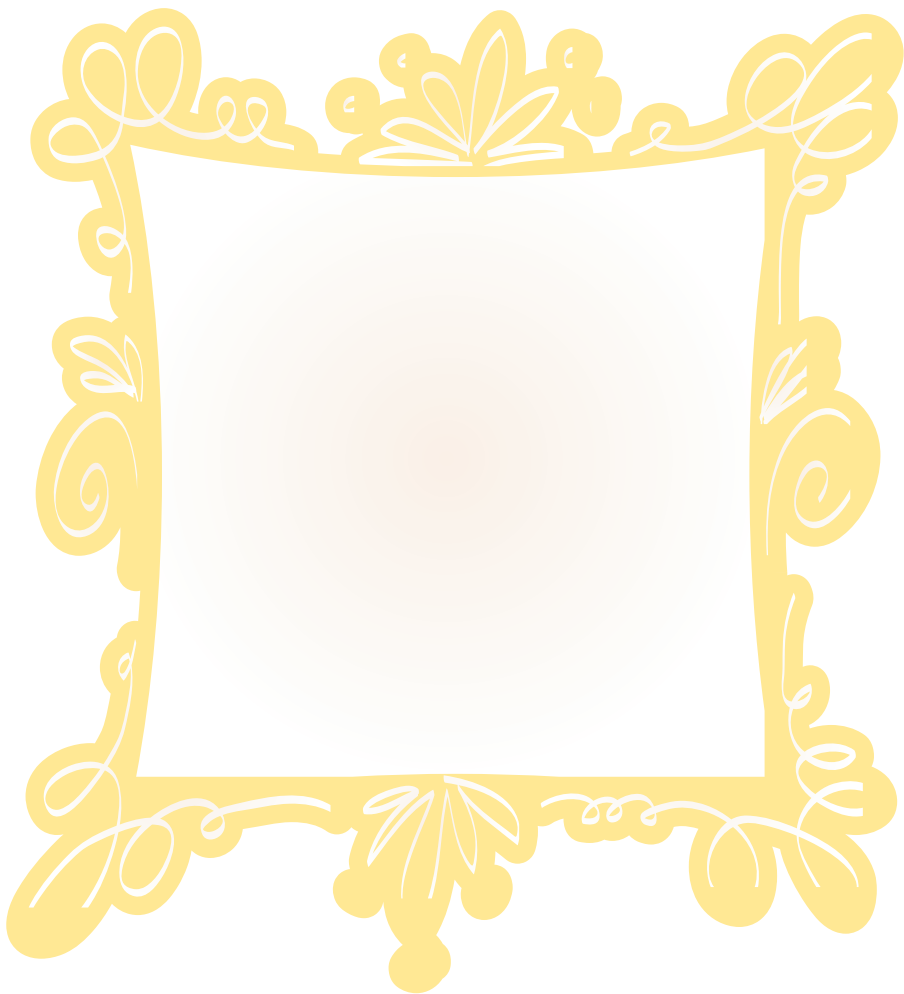
*it's a pet and rhymes with bog (dog)*

*it can fly and sounds like rain (plane)*

*it has four legs and rhymes with fat (cat)*

## 20 Questions

For kids who have outgrown I Spy, try coming up with an item (animal, vegetable, or place) and take turns asking questions to narrow it down. The goal is to guess the item in under 20 questions. Modify 20 Questions for younger kids by starting with "I'm thinking of an animal (with a long neck)" . . .



Draw a picture of your family or something you see out your car window.

“Libraries connect children to a world far  
bigger than their own.”

– Virginia Matthews, author of “A Library Head Start to Literacy”



Read to Me is a service of the Idaho Commission for Libraries.  
For more information, contact your local public library or visit  
<http://libraries.idaho.gov/rtm>.

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Libraries and is funded in part with a federal grant from the  
Institute of Museum and Library Services.

