

## GKIDS READINESS PARENT RESOURCES: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



This area of learning includes children’s early language and literacy development. These skills are foundational for fluent and effective communication and literacy skills such as reading and writing. To help support your child with the skills assess in the GKIDS Readiness Check, watch the [overview video](#) and learn more about each skill by clicking on the skill in the section below.

### RECOGNIZES UPPER AND LOWER CASE LETTERS

- **Alphabet Pasta:** Cook alphabet pasta and serve it to your child. Have her look at her spoon and call out letters before she gobbles up the pasta.
- **Creating Letters:** Using a handful of cereal, such as Cheerios®, create letters for your child to name (be sure to snack along the way)!
- **Fun with Fonts:** Point out that letters can look different based on their fonts, and help your child look for similar features across fonts.
- **Letters Everywhere:** As you are driving down the street, point out letters in the environment, such as restaurant signs, stop signs, billboards, license plates, and favorite stores.
- **Pretend Play with Letters:** Play activities can help your child with letter awareness, which is the ability to identify written letters. Your kitchen provides a large variety of letters on environmental print, such as restaurant menus, food boxes, and coupons. While playing grocery store or pretending to run a restaurant, you can point out familiar uppercase letters and have your child identify lowercase letters if they are able. If needed, assist your child with the letters.
- **Chalk It Up:** Use sidewalk chalk to write letters on your driveway or sidewalk, and have your child “hop” to a letter and name it.
- **Guess the Letter:** Squirt some shaving cream on a smooth surface. Make a letter and ask your child to name it.
- **Letter Hunt:** While reading a bedtime story, call out a letter name and encourage your child to point to that letter on the page. Help your child find the letter if needed.
- **Name that Letter:** Using uppercase magnetic letters, have your child point to and name the letter. Provide assistance if needed. Start with letters that are most significant to your child, such as letters in her name.
- **Listing to Learn Letters:** Have your child help you create a list of chores or errands that need to be done. Point out features of letters as you create the list together.
- **ABC Books:** Read ABC books to your child and have him identify the letters. Name the letters he does not recognize.
- **Letter Toss Up:** Write or tape interchangeable uppercase letters in the cups of a sanitized egg carton. Start with letters that are familiar to your child. Place a large bead or coin in the egg carton and close the top. Have your child shake the egg carton, open it, and identify the letter where the bead or coin has landed.

### DRAWS PICTURES, LETTERS, AND NUMBERS

- **May I Take Your Order:** Play restaurant in your kitchen and have your child take your order on a notepad.
- **Create a Sign:** Give your child a card on which his name is written. Ask him to practice writing his name by copying from the card. He can create a name sign for his bedroom, toy box, or bathroom.
- **Explain the Drawing:** Ask your child to explain her drawing while you write down her words.
- **Sign Your Work:** Invite your child to sign (and later label) his work, which may include scribbles or initials.
- **What Do You See:** Give your child a clipboard or a sturdy book. Walk around the house and have him “write” letters and numbers that he sees. In the beginning, the letters may be scribbles, or written backwards or sideways. This is a great start to copying letters and numbers.

## DRAWS PICTURES, LETTERS, AND NUMBERS continued

- Family Portrait: Have your child draw a family picture. Write the name of each family member on the picture, then encourage your child to copy the name.
- Grocery List: Have your child write a grocery list before going to the store. She may scribble or ask you which letter comes next.

## FOLLOWS MULTIP-STEP DIRECTIONS

- Mother May I: While outside, play the game “Mother May I?” For example: “Marcus, take two steps forward, then hop one time.” Your child then says, “Mother May I?” and follows the steps. Another fun game to play is “Simon Says.” “Simon says touch your nose. Now, stand on one foot. Simon didn’t say stand on one foot!”
- Little Gardener: Provide materials for your child to plant her own seed (e.g., cup, soil, seed, water). Give step-by-step directions, both verbally and by drawing pictures, if needed.
- Games with Directions: Play board games that involve multi-step directions.
- Getting Ready: Provide your child with a morning routine and help her to follow the routine every day (e.g., brush teeth, brush hair, get dressed). Start with just a few steps, and then add steps as she is successful.
- Practice Making the Bed: Teach your child to make his bed. You will need to assist in the beginning. Realize it will not be perfect, but that he is practicing to remember and duplicate a series of steps.

## USES SPOKEN LANGUAGE

- Deliver the Message: Have your child relay a message to another family member of the house. For example, you could say, “Tell your sister that it is time to eat.”
- Playground Talk: Have your child tell you who he played with on the playground. Ask, “Why did you choose to play with \_\_\_\_\_?”
- Pretend Conversation: Using an old phone, carry on a pretend phone conversation with your child.
- Language through Play: Initiate pretend play with your child and act out roles. Encourage language through play. Prompt your child to describe and explain the things he does.
- Modeling Language: When your child uses spoken language that is not consistent with grammar rules, model the correct language back to him. For example, a child might say, “Where is it at?” A parent could respond, “I don’t know where it is. Let’s go look for it together.”
- Teaching and Repeating: Teach your child a short song or nursery rhyme, and have her repeat it. “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” is a good example: Row, row, row your boat; Gently down the stream; Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily; Life is but a dream.
- Using Gestures: For children with language disabilities, pair gestures with spoken language.

## DIFFERENTIATES SOUND

- Silly Sentences: Make up silly sentences using words that all begin with the same sound: “My mother made me munch mushy meatballs.”
- Book Rhymes: Read books that include rhyming words.
- Sing Along: Teach your child songs, chants, cheers, poems, and nursery rhymes.
- Grocery Rhyme Game: While in the grocery store, have your child choose a fruit or vegetable, and recite its rhyming words – the sillier the better.
- Name Rhymes: Change the first letter of your child’s name to make a rhyming word (e.g., Ted/Med, Lamar/Samar). Continue with other names of family members, pets, or places. Have fun playing with silly, made-up names.
- Listening Walk: Take a “listening walk” outside with your child. Have her share sounds she hears (e.g., a dog barking, a bird chirping, a horn honking, an airplane).
- Same Sounds: Have your child choose a family member’s name, then help him come up with other words that start with the same sound (e.g., Matt: mop, mad, mom).

## DIFFERENTIATES SOUND continued

- Rhyming with Furniture: Take turns pointing to furniture in your house and naming words that rhyme. You might say, “Bear and chair rhyme, but bear and cat do not.”
- Syllable Clapping: While taking a walk outside, ask your child to identify animals or plants, and practice clapping out the syllables (e.g., grass/hop/per, hor/net, sun/flow/er).

## USES WRITING TOOLS

- Personalized Nameplates: Have your child create paper nameplates for each family member’s bedroom. Tape the nameplate on each door. You may need to write out each name for her to copy.
- Squeezing the Tweezers: Have your child use plastic tweezers to pick up cotton balls and move them to a bowl. Squeezing the tweezers strengthens the same muscles used in holding a writing tool correctly.
- Make a List: Have your child help you write a list of errands to run or activities for the day. Keep an ongoing grocery list that you help your child write.
- Play with Clay: Provide your child with clay or Play-Doh®. Manipulating and shaping clay strengthen the muscles in a child’s hand and fingers.
- Fun with Journaling: Provide your child with a journal or notebook to write about his day. He can use pencils, markers, or crayons to draw pictures and write a few words. Provide different topics for your child to journal about. The beginning stages of journal writing may be pictures and scribbles. Your child may hold the writing tool with his fist. Model how to hold the pencil correctly, with a tripod grasp. In a tripod grasp, the pencil is held between the thumb and the index finger, and it rests on the side of the middle finger.

## TRACK WORDS

- Reading and Tracking: Choose one of your child’s favorite books. Encourage your child to use his index finger to follow along from left to right and top to bottom as you read to him. You may need to demonstrate and track the words as you read. Moving your finger under each word as you say it will model this concept for him.
- Where to Next: As you read to your child, ask her to point to the top of the page and to the bottom of the page. At the end of each page, ask her where you should read next. If she is unsure what to do, model for her that the story continues on the next page by turning the page.
- Reading Helper: Read stories to your child with large print and predictable or repetitive text. Point to the words on the page as you read, and invite him to turn the page for you when necessary.
- Guided Reading: While reading, tell your child that you are going to begin reading at the top of the page, and when you reach the bottom you will start at the top of the following page to find out what happens next.
- Reading Together: Have your child read to a younger child and invite the younger child to turn the page or point out where to read next.
- Descriptive Reading: Use direct phrases such as: “This is the first page.” “Where would I read next?”