

Especially for parents of preschoolers!

Word Wise

Reading and Storytelling

Practice with words helps your preschooler get ready to later read and write. You can help by making written words a part of your child's day.

What is the practice?

Put things in print around the house where your child can see them. You can place labels you write by hand on things in each room. You can use index cards, or even small paper sheets with your child's own scribbling or writing. The labels will help your child best if they are read aloud and "used" each day.

What does the practice look like?

Everyday things are labeled with the child's name. Labels with matching pictures are used around the house to help show her where things go. A parent writes down a story the child tells and posts it, with a picture the child made, on the refrigerator or a wall. The parent lets the child add to the printed messages around the house.



How do you do the practice?

There are lots of ways to add print to your home. The print should fit with things your child uses or sees at home. When you use print each day, you child will learn all the uses of print.

- Start with you child's name, which is often the first word children are interested in. Label your child's clothes or toys and help her use your labels to copy the letters. That way she can learn to write her own name.
- Show that print is important by using it. For example, point out posters or read the labels around the house out loud: "Please get a shirt from the drawer that says 'shirts', which is the top drawer."
- Let your child add to the print at home. She can scribble or write letters and words she knows on a piece of paper to make a story. She can write her name on her story, and you can display it in the house.
- Make an activity board by letting her find labels and logos from favorite places. They can be places like McDonald's, Chuck E. Cheese's, and local fun spots. Put the labels on a bulletin board or glue them to piece of paper. Young children often know the labels and logos of places they like before they can actually read them. As your child links the words in the logos to the place itself, it helps her pays attention to letters and words. You can let your child use the labels on the board to choose places to go.
- Point out stop signs and street signs to your child to show her that print is all around her. These signs are easy for children to name.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child pay more attention to everyday print?
- Does she know more words and symbols?
- Does your child write her name or other letters or words?

Take a look at more play with words

Where Shall We Go?

Four-year-old Temika likes to use local magazines and the newspaper to tear out pictures of signs or logos of places she likes. Her mother lets her paste the pictures onto a poster board that she keeps in her room. One day, Temika's mom asks her if she'd like to get ice cream. "Yes!" exclaims Temika, heading for the door. "Wait" calls out her mother. "We need to pick the place where we will get it." Temika goes to her room and returns with the poster. She looks at it carefully, then sees a label and points to it. "Dream Cream Wagon" reads her mother. "Is that where you want to go for ice cream?" "Yes!" says Temika happily. "Then that's where we'll go," replies her mother.



Get Well Soon!

Jackson likes to draw pictures. His father helps him write his name on his drawings. Sometime Jackson prints with a pencil. Other times they use alphabet stamps, to make his name. When Jackson's friend next door is sick one day, his father asks if he wants to make a 'get-well' card. "Yes!" says Jackson as his father gets out letter shaped stamps and paint. Jackson dips the stamps in the paint. He presses them to a sheet of paper that his father has folded in half like a card. He makes the sponge marks in the places and order that pleases him. He tells his father what his note says, and his father prints it at the bottom of the card. They later take the card to his friend's house.

Time for a 'Word Walk'

Every week, Sarah's grandmother takes her on a "Word Walk" in the neighborhood. Sarah has limited mobility so Grandma pulls her in a wagon. A game they play on the walk is to notice all the words they can find. If Sarah doesn't know the word, Grandma reads it aloud to her. Sarah then speaks it into a recorder to remember later. The words can be on signs, buildings, even trash. Back home, Sarah and Grandma use the recorder to add new words to the list they keep of ones they've seen.

