

Early Talk = School Readiness

Toddlers and Preschoolers

Back-and-forth interactions help prepare young minds for future success at school. Help your child make friends, solve problems, and enjoy learning in kindergarten — by talking with them now!



Language skills help young children tell someone what they think, want, or need.

At school, these skills support:

- Communication: Playing with friends, listening to and understanding stories.
- Reading: Identifying letter sounds, understanding that sounds combine to make words.



Engage in pretend play.

"I hurt my arm. Can you help me, doctor?"

"What are you going to do next, firefighter?"

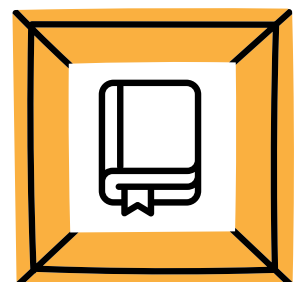
Use a variety of words to describe the same thing.

"That tree is so big! It's huge! Much taller than mommy."

Ask questions while reading books together.

"What do you see in the picture?"

"What happens next?"



Executive functioning skills are the “thinking” skills that help young children navigate their world.

At school, these skills support:

- Focus: Paying attention, completing an activity, following directions.
- Memory: Remembering information and instructions, connecting ideas.
- Self-control: Waiting turns, solving problems, adapting to routines.

Encourage problem-solving.

“What do you think we need to do first to build this tower?”

“Time to clean up! Where do these toys go?”

Ask open-ended questions. Wait for a response.

“What did you do at the park today?”

“How does your snack taste?”

Strengthen memory skills.

“Do you remember when...”

“What do we need to wash our hands?”



Social-emotional skills help young children understand who they are and appropriately express what they feel...

At school, these skills support:

- Self-regulation: Managing emotions, understanding how others feel.
- Relationships: Making friends, cooperating, working in a team.

Acknowledge their feelings.

“I see you’re feeling sad. It’s okay to feel that way.”

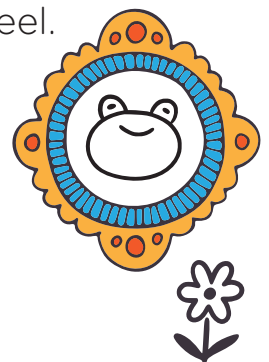


Encourage children to express their feelings, even if they don’t use words you can understand yet.

“Why are you feeling sad?”

Teach children strategies to help manage their emotions.

“When I feel sad, I like to take a walk. Would you like to go for a walk with me?”



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It’s never too early (or too late) to help your child start school stronger! For more fun ways to build brains with early talk, visit [LENA.org/resources](https://lena.org/resources).