

## What Can I Do at Home? Parent Guide #16

**As your child's first teacher you have a key role. You can help your child prepare for school and life success.**

*The quantity and quality of time you spend with your child matters. You can do some things to help your child be better prepared for school while having fun.*

- **READ every day.** Share your love of books with your child. Research shows there are benefits from reading to your child for 30 minutes a day. It does not have to be done all at once.
- **TALK and LISTEN.** When you talk and listen with your child, he/she builds language and learns needed skills.
- **WORDS. Use as many words as possible to describe things in your child's world.** The number of words your child knows relates to his/her later reading success. Don't use 'baby talk.' If your child makes mistakes in grammar, repeat the word correctly.
- **RESPECT.** Be respectful with your child and others. Your child learns from watching you. Make sure your actions are ones you want your child to repeat.
- **PLAY with your children.** Let them see you as a playful person. Remember that play *is* a child's work. Children solve problems and learn new skills through play.

- **HELP your child see herself/himself as a capable person.** Help build self-esteem by pointing out all the things your child does 'right.' Make an effort to look for the good in your child. Help your child see how wonderful she/he is.
- **COOK with your child.** Measure, pour, stir, read the recipe, clean up, and eat with your child. Cooking activities are good ways to work small muscles. These muscles are used later to write.
- **COLOR and draw with your child.** This will improve his or her fine motor skills and help prepare the muscles in the fingers for writing.

**ASK for help.** If you are concerned about your child's development in any area, and he or she is under the age of three, call 1-800-*Early On*. If your child is over the age of three, contact [Build Up Michigan](http://buildupmi.org) (<http://buildupmi.org>), your local school district, or the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education, at 1-888-320-8384.