

Tips for Working with Preschoolers

1. **Listen to Me:** “Private speech” is the kind of talking aloud children and adults do when they talk to themselves.

- Modeling private speech encourages preschool children to practice it.
- Offer suggestions of what you might tell yourself when you are having trouble with something.
- Praise the children when you see them using private speech.
- Encourage the playful use of private speech.

2. **Talk is Fun:** Playing verbal word games is an engaging way for young children to build early literacy skills.

- “I Spy” is a great game to play on field trips or even in the library during story time.
- Games such as “Mother, May I?” and “Simon Says” can be good gross motor activities for outside time.
- Word games can be played during shared book reading, particularly with books that are familiar to children.
- Preschoolers are often just starting to learn about opposites, which can be the source of other fun games.

3. **Talk it Up:** Talking with children about things that interest them and actively engaging them in conversation helps develop language and literacy skills that last a lifetime.

- Encourage role playing by asking questions and making suggestions.
- Snack times are great times for conversation and asking questions about what they are tasting.
- Story time is another great time for conversation by asking who, what, when, where and why questions and allowing them to share ideas about what they think will happen next in the story.
- During group time, ask the children to participate by talking about things that have happened when they are not at the library.

4. **Tales for Talking:** While reading together, encourage the child to ask questions, talk about the illustrations, and speculate about what is going to happen next.

- Start by choosing stories with topics and characters that are interesting to the children.
- Read during a time when you are not hurried or needing to transition to another activity.
- Pause periodically and ask open-ended questions to make sure the children are following the story and that they understand its meaning.
- Pose increasingly more challenging questions. Expand on a child's answers, making them part of a conversation.

5. **Read and Repeat:** Repeated readings help young children master the storyline, ideas, and language of a story.

- Encourage the children to take an active role in repeated book reading.
- Ask questions about the story as you read and help them make connections between the story and their own life.
- Let the children pick the story. Be excited about the story even when you're reading it for the umpteenth time.
- Let children "read" or tell the story to you.

6. **One for the Books:** Reading word books with preschoolers helps them learn word recognition, vocabulary, and print concepts.

- When you read a word book with children, point to each picture and read its label.
- Find oversized word books to read during story time.
- Ask questions that encourage the children to use the pictures to make up their own stories.
- Create your own word books by taking photographs of the children or objects in the library and write their names or the objects name under each picture.

Sources:



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