**Get Ready to Read: Screening Tool**

By: Reading Rockets

"Get Ready to Read" is a fast, free, research-based, and easy-to-use screening tool. It consists of 20 questions that parents and caregivers can ask a four-year-old to see if he or she is on track for learning how to read.

**Step-by-Step**

Because skills with sounds, language, and letters are so important, we encourage you to take a few minutes to use this tool to screen the four-year-olds you care about – children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or students. We recommend that you screen each child twice, first in the fall (a year before entering kindergarten) and then again before kindergarten starts.

To use the tool, all you do is read the question that appears on the screen. Your child will answer by pointing to one of four pictures. When you're finished with all 20 questions, a score will appear. This score will show if your child's pre-reading skills are weak, strong, or somewhere in between.

**Directions**

1. Don't coach your child. The purpose of the screening is to find out which skills your child has already mastered and which skills are not yet strong.
2. Find a quiet time to use the tool. Set aside about 10-15 minutes to complete it.
3. Sit side-by-side with your child in front of the computer screen. Give your child control of the mouse only if your child knows how to use it.

1. [Try a sample question](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/sample.php" \t "_blank). This will familiarize your child with how the screening tool works.
   * Point to the pictures on the page and say to your child: "Let's look at some pictures. I will ask you a question about them, and you point to (or click on) the picture that is the best answer. Let's try one."
   * Because this is a sample question, you may give hints and feedback to make sure your child understands the instructions.
2. When you're ready to start, get your child settled and then begin. Read aloud the question that appears at the top of each page slowly, clearly, and word for word. It's important to say the exact words on the screen. Do not rephrase the questions or put them into your own words.
3. Ask your child to point to or click on the best answer. Once your child has settled on an answer, don't change it. Don't give hints or second chances.
4. Keep your child focused with these tips. If your child:
   * *Wants to stop.* Say, "We have just a few more. Let's try to finish."
   * *Stops paying attention.* Take a short break. Start with the next unanswered item. If your child is not able to start again, restart the screening tool at the beginning a few days later.
   * *Asks for help.* Say, "Try to do it yourself." You can repeat a question, but don't offer more help.
   * *Says the answer instead of pointing to or clicking on it.* Say, "Can you show me? Put your finger on it."
   * *Points to more than one picture or changes an answer.* Say, "Can you pick just one?" Click on your child's final answer.
   * *Asks if the answer is right.* Give a vague answer: "You're doing a really good job." Respond the same way whether the answer is right or wrong.
   * *Answers too quickly, or points to the picture in the same position every time.* Say, "Take your time. Look at all the pictures before you decide." Your child may be tired. Take a short break.
5. From time to time, say encouraging things like, "You're doing a great job!" But don't let on that an answer is right or wrong. For example, don't say, "Good," for a correct response and nothing when the answer is wrong.

**Are you ready?**

* [Start the screening tool](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/1.php)

**Next steps**

The following are some resources to help you continue developing your child's skills.

**Activity cards**

The National Center for Learning Disabilities has created a set of [activity cards](http://www.getreadytoread.org/activity_card.php) you can print out. These cards relate directly to the skills in the screening tool – language awareness (look for activities coded with the seahorse); print knowledge (look for activities coded with the octopus); and emergent writing (look for activities coded with the starfish). The cards are formatted to print out on your choice of Avery postcards or regular paper.

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| Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "These are pictures of a book. Find the one that shows the back of the book." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| Say to your child: | |
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| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "Find the picture that has letters in it." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "Find the picture that has a word in it." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "These are pictures of a cereal box. Find the one that  tells you the name of the cereal." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "Find the letter R." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| Say to your child: | |
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| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "Find the letter that makes a*sss* sound." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "Find the letter that makes a *tuh* sound."  *Pronunciation note from Reading Rockets:* When pronouncing a consonant by itself, say only the consonant sound (i.e., pronounce *t* as /t/, not /tuh/). This will help your child when he or she starts blending other sounds into words. You'll want your child to sound out the word *tin* as /t/ /i/ /n/, for example, rather than /tuh/ /i/ /nuh/. | | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |

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| Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "Find the letter that makes a *buh* sound." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | *Pronunciation note from Reading Rockets:* When pronouncing a consonant by itself, say only the consonant sound (i.e., pronounce “t” as /t/, not /tuh/). This will help your child when he or she starts blending other sounds into words. You'll want your child to sound out the word tin as /t/ /i/ /n/, for example, rather than /tuh/ /i/ /nuh/. | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |

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| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "Some children wrote the letter F. Find the one that is written the best." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "Some children wrote their name. Find the one that is written the best." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "Some children wrote stories. Find the longest story." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | | |

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| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_13a.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/13.php?cur_page=12&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&selection_position=2&next.x=23&next.y=47) | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_13b.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/13.php?cur_page=12&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&selection_position=2&next.x=23&next.y=47) | | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_13c.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/13.php?cur_page=12&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&selection_position=2&next.x=23&next.y=47) | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_13d.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/13.php?cur_page=12&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&selection_position=2&next.x=23&next.y=47) | | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |

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| Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "These pictures are: ball, skate, apple, star. Find the one  that starts with the *buh* sound." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | *Pronunciation note from Reading Rockets:* When pronouncing a consonant by itself, say only the consonant sound (i.e., pronounce “t” as /t/, not /tuh/). This will help your child when he or she starts blending other sounds into words. You'll want your child to sound out the word tin as /t/ /i/ /n/, for example, rather than /tuh/ /i/ /nuh/. | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |

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| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_14a.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/14.php?cur_page=13&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&selection_position=2&next.x=26&next.y=48) | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_14b.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/14.php?cur_page=13&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&selection_position=2&next.x=26&next.y=48) | | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_14c.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/14.php?cur_page=13&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&selection_position=2&next.x=26&next.y=48) | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_14d.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/14.php?cur_page=13&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&selection_position=2&next.x=26&next.y=48) | | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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|  | Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "These pictures are: dog, kite, fan, snake. Find the one  that starts with the *duh* sound." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | *Pronunciation note from Reading Rockets:* When pronouncing a consonant by itself, say only the consonant sound (i.e., pronounce “t” as /t/, not /tuh/). This will help your child when he or she starts blending other sounds into words. You'll want your child to sound out the word tin as /t/ /i/ /n/, for example, rather than /tuh/ /i/ /nuh/. | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "This is a ball.http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ball.gif, and these pictures are zebra, shoe, wall, leaf. Does ball sound like zebra, shoe, wall, or leaf? Find the one that rhymes with ball." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |

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| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_16a.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/16.php?cur_page=15&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&Ans13=2&Ans14=1&selection_position=1&next.x=25&next.y=44) | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_16b.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/16.php?cur_page=15&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&Ans13=2&Ans14=1&selection_position=1&next.x=25&next.y=44) | | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_16c.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/16.php?cur_page=15&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&Ans13=2&Ans14=1&selection_position=1&next.x=25&next.y=44) | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_16d.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/16.php?cur_page=15&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&Ans13=2&Ans14=1&selection_position=1&next.x=25&next.y=44) | | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |

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|  | Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "These pictures are: seashell, racket, shoe, chimney. Find what you get when you put SEA and SHELL together. Find sea (pause) shell." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | | |

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| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_17a.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/17.php?cur_page=16&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&Ans13=2&Ans14=1&Ans15=1&selection_position=3&next.x=25&next.y=47) | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_17b.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/17.php?cur_page=16&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&Ans13=2&Ans14=1&Ans15=1&selection_position=3&next.x=25&next.y=47) | | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_17c.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/17.php?cur_page=16&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&Ans13=2&Ans14=1&Ans15=1&selection_position=3&next.x=25&next.y=47) | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_17d.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/17.php?cur_page=16&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&Ans13=2&Ans14=1&Ans15=1&selection_position=3&next.x=25&next.y=47) | | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "These pictures are: penguin, moon, carrot, dragon. Find what you get when you put PEN and GUIN together. Find pen (pause) guin." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "These pictures are: mouse, cloud, cow, moon. Find what you get when you put MMM and OON together. Find mmm (pause) oon." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| Say to your child: | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | | |
| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | "These pictures are: sun, key, frog, mop. Find turkey without *tur*." | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
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| http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_20a.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/20.php?cur_page=19&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&Ans13=2&Ans14=1&Ans15=1&Ans16=3&Ans17=1&Ans18=1&selection_position=4&next.x=25&next.y=49) | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_20b.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/20.php?cur_page=19&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&Ans13=2&Ans14=1&Ans15=1&Ans16=3&Ans17=1&Ans18=1&selection_position=4&next.x=25&next.y=49) | | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_20c.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/20.php?cur_page=19&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&Ans13=2&Ans14=1&Ans15=1&Ans16=3&Ans17=1&Ans18=1&selection_position=4&next.x=25&next.y=49) | [http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/ncld_ill_20d.gif](http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/20.php?cur_page=19&Ans0=&Ans1=4&Ans2=4&Ans3=3&Ans4=2&Ans5=3&Ans6=1&Ans7=2&Ans8=3&Ans9=4&Ans10=3&Ans11=4&Ans12=2&Ans13=2&Ans14=1&Ans15=1&Ans16=3&Ans17=1&Ans18=1&selection_position=4&next.x=25&next.y=49) | | http://www.readingrockets.org/content/getready/images/shim.gif |
| * Tally the child’s score here:   Make detailed notes of the child’s mistakes here: | | |