



Creating a Reading Rich Environment at Home: A Family Guide for Kids with Disabilities

Helping your child enjoy reading starts at home. Here are some simple ways to make reading fun and easier for children with different learning needs:

Create a Cozy & Calm Reading Spot

- **Comfy Seating:** Use bean bags, cushions, or a soft chair to make a relaxing place to read.
- **Soft Lighting:** Use lamps with adjustable lighting to avoid lights that are too bright or too dim.
- **Quiet Area:** Pick a quiet spot in the house. You can also use noise-canceling headphones to help block out sounds.

Use Materials That Touch All the Senses

- **Touch-and-Feel Books:** Choose books with different textures, raised pictures, or braille to help with touch.
- **Sound Books:** Pick books that play sounds or music to keep your child interested.
- **Big and Bright Pictures:** Look for books with large print and high-contrast images for kids who learn by seeing.

Change How You Read Together

- **Use Simple Words:** Read books with clear and easy language.
- **Add Pictures:** Use picture cards or boards with symbols to help your child understand the story.
- **Read It Again:** Reading the same story more than once can help your child learn new words and ideas.

Make Stories Fun & Interactive

- **Use Props:** Bring the story to life with puppets, toys, or real items from the story.
- **Get Your Child Involved:** Ask your child to guess what happens next or act out parts of the story.
- **Use Your Voice:** Read with expression—change your tone and make faces to show the emotions in the story.

Creating a Reading Rich Environment at Home: A Family Guide for Kids with Disabilities

Add Reading to Everyday Life

- **Label Items at Home:** Put labels on things like doors, chairs, or the fridge to help your child learn new words.
- **Read on the Go:** Read signs, menus, or labels when you're out together.
- **Try Technology:** Use audiobooks or reading apps for fun and different ways to read.

Set Goals and Celebrate Every Step

- **Start Small:** Set simple reading goals that your child can reach.
- **Celebrate Progress:** Praise your child or give small rewards to keep them excited about reading.
- **Be Flexible:** It's okay to change your plans as your child grows and learns.

For older students to support Executive Function Challenges

(Focus and Organization)

- **Break it into smaller parts:** Big reading assignments can feel like too much. Use sticky notes or bookmarks to split the reading into shorter sections.
- **Use simple helpers:** Try tools like story maps or lists of words from the book. These can help your child understand and remember what they read.
- **Make a reading plan:** Some kids do better with a set routine. A timer or a daily reading schedule can help them stay on track without feeling stressed.

Collaborate with School

- **Stay in Touch:** Talk with special education teachers about strategies that work in school and can be mirrored at home.
- **Share Successes:** Let teachers know what types of books or formats are most engaging at home.
- **Incorporate IEP Goals:** If literacy or comprehension is part of your child's IEP, ask how you can support it informally at home.

Sources:

- Reading Rockets. [Home Literacy Environment Checklist](#)
- Paths to Literacy. [Tips for Creating Tactile Books and Literacy Materials for Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired](#)
- Sesame Workshop. [Strategies for Creating a Reading-Friendly Environment](#)