

What materials DO I need?

There will be a lot of things you can use to teach your child these fundamental skills, but not a lot of things you *need*. That said, I will make some *potential* recommendations for each skill area. Remember - these are only *potential recommendations*, not a list of things you should purchase, unless you REALLY want to.

Bible Knowledge

- A good children's Bible or Bible story book, but go for one that has real Scripture told in simpler words with real artwork - not one with goofy rhyming stories and cartoon figures.
 - o Egermeier's Bible Storybook is a nice one.
 - o The Illustrated Children's Bible is nice too.
- Or, just a Bible is fine too!
- Scripture memory CDs, if you want some help in this area.
 - o "Sing the Word" albums from the Harrow family. "Sing the Word" has an "A to Z" album that is perfect for this age and for learning a letter each week.
 - o "Hide 'Em in Your Heart" albums from Steve Green.

Math Skills

- All you really need are some simple math manipulatives - counters (of any shape), small toys, stacking cups, stickers, etc.
- You need some paper (maybe some cardstock), markers, stickers, and basic school supplies.
- You will need some basic measuring tools which most people have in the house - ruler, tape measure, etc.
- A geoboard could be useful. This can be as simple as a square board with headless nails in it at regular intervals in a square configuration or as nice as a purchased geoboard.
- If you really want a workbook for your child to work in (or if your child really wants a workbook to work in) you can just pick up a simple math skills (or Kindergarten Skills) workbook at Wal-Mart or Sam's Club. If you want one that is more elaborate, Critical Thinking Press has a nice math skills workbook called Mathematical Reasoning for this age. But, this is only if you really want one. You don't need a workbook for this age.
- A clock with moveable hands. This could be as complicated as a "Judy" clock with gears and hands that move appropriately around the clock - or as simple as making your own with a paper plate and a brad connecting hands made of card stock. You decide.

Basic Phonics Skills

- Paper and pencil
- Old magazines or catalogs to cut up (and scissors)
- Something with pictures of various objects - this could be letter flash cards, a children's picture dictionary, or just your own imagination and a little work
- If you want a workbook for this skill, I recommend the Explode the Code Primer series by Educators Publishing Service. There are 3 books in the series and a teacher's guide. You need all 4, but the set is not very expensive. This series does not cover vowels, so you would need to do that separately. It is an excellent start in phonics, but there are many other good phonics workbooks out there as well. Whichever workbook you choose, try to introduce the letters in whatever order they are introduced in your workbook. Generally the workbooks will build as they go, having the child work with all the letters they have learned up to that point in the book - so introducing letters in that order is helpful. Again, you can do it all by yourself, if you are so inclined, so this is not necessary, just a suggestion if you want a workbook.
- You can create your own workbook from the internet with ease. There are many websites that have excellent worksheets on letter names and sounds - all for free! My favorite is www.learningpage.com. You can find a list of websites for the various skills in the appendix.

Early Writing Skills

- Paper and pencil. A chunky pencil or a pencil grip are best for now.
- Mazes (you can make these yourself or print them from the internet, or buy a book of simple mazes)
- I like the Ready Writer drills for early writing practice. These are reproducible and inexpensive and fun for the kids. You can get them at http://www.calculadder.com/intro/view_rw.htm.
- A large flip chart on the wall is helpful in this early stage. Using large arm motions helps solidify the letter shapes in children's developing minds. But, these are generally somewhat expensive. You can make your own by getting an end roll from a newspaper company (they often give them away free) and cutting 2-3 foot lengths from the roll and stapling them together into a big pad. Tape the top and nail it to your wall at the child's height. You can also achieve the same thing (but without the visual reinforcement) by writing in the air or on the wall with your finger.
- Letter sheets for practicing writing letters. Be sure these show the correct formation of the letters, as this is crucial at this stage. Poor habits now will wreak havoc later! You can certainly make your own on primary paper. But there are also sheets available to print online. See the appendix for ideas.

General Skills

- A calendar. You can pick one up inexpensively from a dollar store, or you can make your own on the computer.
- A phone (even an old dead one is good). If you don't have a phone, then this probably isn't a skill you need to work on, and you don't need one at all!
- Basic things you have around the house - see activities for more info.
- There is a book called "Language and Thinking for Young Children" by Ruth Beechick that is a wonderful resource on all sorts of general skills for children. For that matter, Ruth Beechick's "3 R's" series is another great resource for teaching the early grades without drowning your children in tedious paperwork and frustration.

General Knowledge

- Some really good books, especially living books, on animals, insects, plants, etc. You can get these from the library, or find many online in the public domain, if you don't mind printing them out. See appendix for a list of suggestions.
- A good children's poetry book, or nursery rhymes. (Be choosy. There are wonderful nursery rhymes, and there are some that have no business in a nursery whatsoever!)
- Some feet (or other means of mobility) and a sense of curiosity! Get outside and explore!
- Make lapbooks, a nature notebook or other craft project related to what you are reading about or related to your letter of the week. (See ideas in the Activities List.)
- If you are a video watcher, I am a fan of the Magic School Bus videos for science. I also like the Little Einsteins for social studies and fine arts. But, for great quality and no fluff - the Moody Science videos are excellent. However, don't go out of your way to buy any of these videos, unless you really want to. Borrow them from a library or a friend. PBS often carries the Magic School Bus and church libraries sometimes carry the Moody videos.