

# LITTLEST LEARNERS:

FOR AGES BIRTH-24 MONTHS

12 WEEKS OF PLAYFUL ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE  
GROWTH AND LEARNING TO DO TOGETHER

EACH WEEK INCLUDES:

- A FUN RHYME OR FINGERPLAY
- A SONG TO SHARE
- A NEW BABY SIGN TO HELP YOU AND YOUR CHILD COMMUNICATE TOGETHER
- FUN ACTIVITIES TO TRY TOGETHER TO PROMOTE EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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Find video versions of  
our songs, rhymes,  
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# Build fantastic learners when you Read, Write, Talk, Sing, and Play TOGETHER.

Try some of these early literacy practices every day:

Children who enjoy being read to are more likely to enjoy reading themselves.



Tips: Keep reading a fun and positive experience. Choose both fiction and factual books based on interests. Explain and talk about new or unfamiliar words as you read them.

Children learn that printed letters and words have sounds and meaning.



Tips: Provide opportunities to scribble, draw, and write. Use materials like playdough, shaving cream, or snow to make shapes or letters. Point out words and letters in books, signs, and around town.

Children learn about language by listening and talking.



Tips: Talk as you play. Respond to your child's noises and babbles. Choose books with interesting words and subjects. Use baby signs to help reinforce language and vocabulary skills.

Children learn the rhythm and rhyme of language through singing.



Tips: Sing songs with letters or rhymes that highlight word sounds. Choose books based on songs. Change the lyrics to popular songs to reflect interests or activities.

Children develop language skills by playing with others.



Tips: Act out a favorite book. Retell favorite stories using every day objects. Play "I-Spy" using colors and shapes.



**WEEK 1: SUPERHEROES**  
**EARLY LITERACY PRACTICE: PLAY**  
**DEVELOP: SOCIAL SKILLS**



**SONG OF THE WEEK:**  
**IF YOU'RE HAPPY AND YOU KNOW IT**

**RHYME OF THE WEEK:**  
**ICKY BICKY**

If you're happy & you know it,  
 Clap your hands  
 If you're happy & you know it,  
 Clap your hands.  
 If you're happy & you know it,  
 Then your face will  
 surely show it  
 If you're happy & you know it,  
 Clap your hands.

lcky bicky soda cracker  
 lcky bicky boo!  
 lcky bicky soda cracker  
 Up goes you!  
 lcky bicky soda cracker  
 lcky bicky boo!  
 lcky bicky soda cracker  
 I love you!

Additional Verses:  
 ...Tickle your toes  
 ...Beep your belly

**PLAY TOGETHER:**

- Mirrors are a great way to help your child explore. Hold your child in front of a mirror. Point to their nose, eyes, and ears. As they grow older, they will recognize their reflection.
- Create a sensory bin using non-chokeable props and a base such as water. Sensory bins help your child develop fine motor skills, creativity, and independence.

**SOCIAL SKILLS:**

- Talk to your baby about their emotions. Label feelings as you talk.
- Play with your facial expression and label your emotions. Smile and say happy. Frown and say sad.

**SIGN IT: BABY**

Pretend you are cradling a baby in your arms. Then gently move your arms from side to side.



**Why sign language?**

Sign language is an effective communication tool to help babies and toddlers express their needs before speaking.

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**WEEK 2: PALACE PALS**  
**EARLY LITERACY PRACTICE: TALK**  
**DEVELOP: COMMUNICATION SKILLS**



**RHYME OF THE WEEK:**  
**JACK IN THE BOX**

*(Personalize this rhyme - Replace "baby" with your child's name)*

Baby is a JACK IN THE BOX!  
Baby is a JACK IN THE BOX!  
    Baby is a...  
    Baby is a...  
Baby is a JACK IN THE BOX!

**SONG OF THE WEEK:**  
**SHAKE AND STOP!**

We shake and we shake  
    And we STOP!  
We shake and we shake  
    And we STOP!  
We shake and we shake.  
We shake and we shake.  
We shake and we shake  
    And we STOP!

We dance...  
We jump/bounce...

**TALK TOGETHER:**

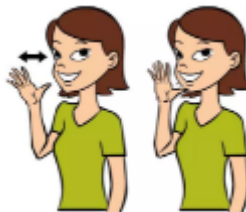
- Talk to your child! Keep a running conversation during diaper changes, bath times or as you prepare meals. They will learn about speaking including inflections and intonations. As babies grow older, they will begin responding.
- Offer a toy and describe it. Is a ball bumpy or smooth? What colors are it?

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

- Talking is a whole body experience. As your baby begins to move, respond to their movements by talking to them.
- Sing songs and say rhymes with movements to them.

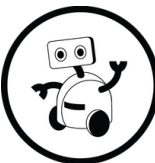
**SIGN IT: MOMMY**

Spread your fingers apart. With your pinkie facing forward, tap your thumb on your chin.



**Why sign language?**

Learning sign language is similar to learning a spoken language. Sign as much as you can.



**WEEK 3: ROBOTS**  
**EARLY LITERACY PRACTICE: READ**  
**DEVELOP: SCIENCE SKILLS**



**SONG OF THE WEEK:**  
**OPEN THEM, SHUT THEM**

Open them, shut them  
Open them, shut them  
Give a little clap, clap, clap

Open them, shut them  
Open them, shut them  
Put them in your lap, lap, lap

Creep them, creep them  
Right up to your chin  
Open your mouth — ahhh!  
But don't let them in

**RHYME OF THE WEEK:**  
**BANANAS UNITE**

First we:  
Peel bananas  
Peel, peel bananas  
Next we:  
Chop bananas  
Chop, chop bananas  
Then we:  
Smash bananas  
Smash, smash bananas  
And we:  
Eat bananas  
Eat, eat bananas  
Finally, we:  
Go bananas!

**READ TOGETHER:**

- Read a book more than once to increase your child's vocabulary. Books have three times as many rare words than conversation.
- Starting around 9 months, babies may open books and begin to turn pages. Board book pages are easier for babies to grasp. Remember, it's OK to skip pages!

**SCIENCE SKILLS:**

- For babies, hide objects under a blanket or a cup. Have them find them.
- As your child begins to crawl and walk, play hide and seek, taking turns to find each other.

**SIGN IT: EAT/FOOD**

Touch the tip of your thumb to the tips of your fingers (like a hand puppet). Then tap your mouth.



**Sign Language Tip**

Signing is about your whole body - include emotion. When teaching your child, don't focus on your hand but on what your face is telling them.



# WEEK 4: WEATHER

## EARLY LITERACY PRACTICE: WRITE

### DEVELOP: SCIENCE EXPLORATION



### RHYME OF THE WEEK: ITSY BITSY SPIDER

The itsy bitsy spider  
climbed up the water spout.  
Down came the rain and  
washed the spider out.  
Out came the sun and  
dried up all the rain.  
And the itsy bitsy spider  
climbed up the spout again.

### SONG OF THE WEEK: MISTER SUN

Oh, Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun  
Please shine down on me  
Oh, Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun  
Hiding behind a tree  
These little children are asking  
you to please come out  
so we can play with you  
Oh, Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun  
Please shine down on me

### WRITE TOGETHER:

- Even babies can do some pre-writing activities. Practice some finger drawing. Put some whipped cream or pudding on a surface then have babies run their fingers through it.
- Big crayons, large pencils, and other specially-designed writing instruments are great tools to help little fingers practice writing and scribbling.

### SCIENCE SKILLS:

- Create different rain shakers. Add a food item (rice, dried beans, pasta, etc) to an empty plastic bottle or food storage container. Talk about how they sound alike and different.

### SIGN IT: DADDY

Extend and spread  
out your five fingers.  
Tap your hand on  
your forehead.



### Sign Language Tip

A child may not be able to do a sign immediately, but that's expected. Practice makes perfect.



**WEEK 5: MUSIC**  
**EARLY LITERACY PRACTICE: SING**  
**DEVELOP: MATH SKILLS**



**SONG OF THE WEEK:**  
**WHERE IS THUMBKIN?**

Where is thumbkin?  
Where is thumbkin?  
Here I am. Here I am.  
How are you today, sir?  
Very well, I thank you.  
Run away. Run away.

Where is pointer?...  
Where is tall man?...  
Where is ring man?...  
Where is pinkie?...

**RHYME OF THE WEEK:**  
**TICK TOCK**

Tick tock, tick tock  
I'm a little cuckoo clock  
Tick tock, tick tock  
Now I'm striking one o'clock!  
CUCKOO!  
Tick tock, tick tock  
I'm a little cuckoo clock  
Tick tock, tick tock  
Now I'm striking two o'clock!  
CUCKOO! CUCKOO!

**SING TOGETHER:**

- Sing about your day. Make up different lyrics to common songs about what you are doing. Songs like *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* or *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* are some simple melodies to start with.
- Clap your hands to the rhythm of any song you sing or softly tap the rhythm on baby's hands or tummy as long as they enjoy it.

**MATH SKILLS:**

- Babies begin to recognize patterns from birth. As your baby grows, they may repeat favorite songs or actions to a song.

**SIGN IT: LOVE**

Make your hands into fists and cross your arms across your chest, as if giving your self a big squeeze.



**Why sign language?**

Earlier communication can provide psychological benefits, such as self-esteem and confidence.



## WEEK 6: CELEBRATE ME EARLY LITERACY PRACTICE: TALK DEVELOP: SOCIAL SKILLS



### RHYME OF THE WEEK: CHEEK CHIN

*Point out the body parts as you say them. Start slow and get faster as you get used to them.*

Cheek chin cheek chin  
Cheek chin NOSE  
Cheek chin cheek chin  
Cheek chin TOES  
Cheek chin cheek chin  
Up we go!

### SONG OF THE WEEK: HEAD, SHOULDERS, KNEES, AND TOES

Head, shoulders, knees and toes  
(knees and toes)  
Head, shoulders, knees and toes  
(knees and toes)  
Eyes and ears  
And mouth and nose  
Head, shoulders, knees and toes  
(knees and toes)

### TALK TOGETHER:

- Take turns naming common items. Build on what your child says. If your toddler names a cup, describe it's color, shape, or function.
- When asking a question, give your child five seconds to respond. They're strengthening synapses in their brain each time you ask a question and they respond.

### SOCIAL SKILLS:

- Have a baby look at both of you in a mirror. Point out baby's nose and eyes then point out yours. Talk about how you are the same and different.

### SIGN IT: MILK

Pretend to milk a cow (or goat). Take your dominant hand, make it into a fist, relax and repeat.



### Why Sign Language?

When you and your child are able to communicate, you create a closer bond.





**WEEK 7: SPORTS**  
**EARLY LITERACY PRACTICE: PLAY**  
**DEVELOP: LARGE MOTOR SKILLS**



**SONG OF THE WEEK:**  
**THE HOKEY POKEY**

You put your right foot in  
 You put your right foot out  
 You put your right foot in  
 And you shake it all about  
 You do the Hokey-Pokey  
 And you turn yourself around  
 That's what it's all about!

You put your left foot in,  
 ...your right hand in  
 ... your left hand in

**RHYME OF THE WEEK:**  
**THIS IS THE WAY**

This is the way we  
 bounce the ball,  
 bounce the ball,  
 bounce the ball,  
 This is the way we  
 bounce the ball,  
 when we play basketball.

Kick the ball...When we play soccer.  
 Jump in the pool...when we go swimming.  
 Hike the ball...When we play football.  
 Twirl around..When we dance ballet  
 Swing the bat...When we play baseball.

**PLAY TOGETHER:**

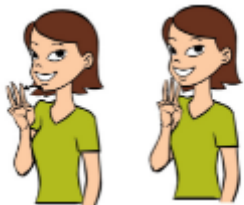
- Roll a ball to your baby. Let them explore the texture. If older, invite them to roll or throw it to you. Take turns.
- Encourage tummy time! Set up fun activities like mess-free paint. Place paint in a sealable food storage bag. Let them "paint" while doing tummy time.

**MOTOR SKILLS:**

- Get your baby moving. Put on a variety of music on for them to shake and bounce to.
- Give babies board books with bold illustrations. They'll be tempted to turn the page and see what's on the other side.

**SIGN IT: WATER**

Take your dominant hand, extending and separating the three middle fingers. Tap your index finger on your chin.



**Why sign language?**

It helps develop language and reasoning skills.



## WEEK 8: ROAR ROAR DINOSAUR

### EARLY LITERACY PRACTICE: WRITE DEVELOP: MOTOR SKILLS



#### RHYME OF THE WEEK:

#### THIS IS BIG, THIS IS SMALL

This is big big big  
*Hold arms out to side*

This is small small small  
*Cup hands together*

This is short short short  
*Hold hands with palms facing each other*

This is tall tall tall  
*Reach one hand above head*

This is fast fast fast  
*Circle fists quickly*

This is slow slow slow  
*Circle fists slowly*

This is yes yes yes  
*Nod*

This is no no no  
*Shake head*

#### SONG OF THE WEEK:

#### ONE DINOSAUR

One dinosaur went out to play  
In a giant swamp one day  
She had such enormous fun  
That she called for another  
dinosaur to come:  
Oh, Diiiiiiiiinosaur!

Two dinosaurs...  
Three dinosaurs...  
Four dinosaurs...  
Five dinosaurs went out to play  
In a giant swamp one day  
They had such enormous fun  
That they played until the day was done

#### WRITE TOGETHER:

- Write out your child's name. Point out the different letters in their name on the page and as you find them in your environment.

#### MOTOR SKILLS:

- Give your child lots of different items to grab. This will help develop the fine motor skills to grab markers and crayons.
- For babies, a tissue box is the ultimate toy. When a box is almost empty let them pull out tissues. Add fabric or small objects for them to continue the fun.

#### SIGN IT: MORE

Bring your thumb and fingers together on each hand. Then, bring your hands together and pull them apart repeatedly.



#### Sign Language Tip

To help your baby learn quickly, say the word as you make the sign in a real-world setting.



**WEEK 9: ANIMALS**  
**EARLY LITERACY PRACTICE: SING**  
**DEVELOP: CURIOSITY**



**SONG OF THE WEEK:**  
**OLD MACDONALD**

Old MacDonald had a farm  
E-I-E-I-O  
And on that farm he had a pig  
E-I-E-I-O  
With an oink oink here  
And an oink oink there  
Here an oink  
There an oink  
Everywhere an oink oink  
Old MacDonald had a farm  
E-I-E-I-O  
  
...had a cow  
...had a horse  
... had a dog

**RHYME OF THE WEEK:**  
**A HIPPOPOTAMUS**

A hip, a hip, a hippopotamus  
Got up, got up, got up on a bus  
And all the people on the bus said,  
"Oh, you're squishing me."  
A cow, a cow, got up on the bus  
A cow, a cow, got up on the bus  
And all the people on the bus said,  
"Mooooooove over."  
A sheep, a sheep, got up on the bus.  
A sheep, a sheep, got up on the bus.  
And all the people on the bus said,  
"Baaaaack up."  
A snake, a snake, got up on the bus.  
A snake, a snake got up on the bus.  
And all the people on the bus said,  
"Ssssit down."

**SING TOGETHER:**

- Use your child's name instead of Old Macdonald
- Try singing a book - there are many book versions of favorite nursery rhymes and songs!
- Stop just before the end of phrases in favorite songs – your child can try joining in with little noises now!

**SCIENCE SKILLS:**

- Babies and toddlers are natural scientists. Let them use all senses to explore the world around them. As they grow older let them use objects as tools. Can they hit two blocks together?

**SIGN IT: ALL DONE**

Start with palms facing in, then turn the hands so that they are facing out.



**Sign Language Tip**

Stay patient with your child when they are learning new signs.



**WEEK 10: FOOD**  
**EARLY LITERACY PRACTICE: READ**  
**DEVELOP: MATH SKILLS**



**RHYME OF THE WEEK:**  
**PATTYCAKE**

*Change the letter to first letter of your child's name. Have older babies and toddlers clap try to clap along*

Pattycake, pattycake,  
baker's man  
Bake me a cake  
as fast as you can  
Roll it and pat it  
and mark it with a B  
And throw it in the oven  
for baby and me

**SONG OF THE WEEK:**  
**APPLES AND BANANAS**

I like to eat, eat, eat  
apples and bananas  
I like to eat, eat, eat  
apples and bananas

A lake to ate... ayyples and baynaynays  
E leke to eat...eeples and beeneenees  
I like to ite...ipples and bininis  
O loke to ote...opples and bononos  
U luke to ute...upples and bununus

**READ TOGETHER:**

- Read food labels or recipes out loud as you are preparing meals.
- As babies get more active, they may want to sit less for stories but they are still listening and learning new words. Keep reading during those times. Everyone learns in different ways.

**MATH SKILLS:**

- Count! There are so many ways to introduce numbers. Count items on the page of a book. Count toys as you bring them out. Count down as you put toys away. Count types of food on a plate.

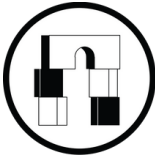
**SIGN IT: PLEASE**

Take you hand with fingers extended and together, thumb extended. With your palm facing in, rub your hand in a circle on your chest.



**Sign Language Tip**

It's never too early to introduce signs. When your baby starts paying attention to their hands, they're ready to start signing.



**WEEK 11: CONSTRUCTION**  
**EARLY LITERACY PRACTICE: PLAY**  
**DEVELOP: FINE MOTOR SKILLS**



**SONG OF THE WEEK:**  
**SEE THE DUMP TRUCK**

*Tune: Twinkle, twinkle little star*

See the dump truck going slow.  
It must have a great big load  
full of dirt or maybe rocks.  
Working hard, it never stops.  
See the dump truck going slow.  
It must have a great big load

**RHYME OF THE WEEK:**  
**CRANES**

*See how far you can stretch as you say the rhyme. Slow down the words as you stretch.*

Cranes reach up  
Cranes reach down  
Cranes reach out  
And all around.

**PLAY TOGETHER:**

- Have a pretend car wash. Fill large tupperware with bubbles, soap, and sponges then let your baby explore.
- Encourage your child to play with puzzles and shape sorters
- Cardboard boxes are great for playing - they can become cars, buildings, and the basis for craft projects.

**MOTOR SKILLS:**

- Small motor skills are important. From eating to learning how to write, use those hands! Build towers together - then have fun knocking them down.
- Introduce baby sign language - not only does it build language but hand strength.

**SIGN IT: THANK YOU**

Extend your fingers and thumb. Touch you fingers to your chin and bring your fingers forward.



**Sign Language Tip:**

Begin with just a few signs. Start with the ones you think will be most useful, like "eat," "please," and "more."



**WEEK 12: ART**  
**EARLY LITERACY PRACTICE: READ**  
**DEVELOP: SOCIAL SKILLS**



**RHYME OF THE WEEK:**  
**MAKE A CIRCLE**

Criss cross applesauce  
(draw an x)

Spiders crawling up your back  
(walk finger tips on arm)

Cool breeze  
(blow on back of neck)

Tight squeeze  
(hug)

And now you've got the shivers  
(tickle)

**SONG OF THE WEEK:**  
**MAKE A CIRCLE**

*Tune: Oh, My Darling*

Make a circle, make a circle,  
draw it in the sky  
Use your finger, use your finger,  
make it round as pie  
Make a square, make a square,  
make the lines so straight  
Draw a square, draw a square,  
draw one or draw eight  
Draw a triangle, draw a triangle,  
always start at the top  
Make a tent, make a tent,  
use three lines and then stop!

**READ TOGETHER:**

- Keep story time a positive experience. Like everything, developing a love of reading can take time. Start slowly and incorporate books into quiet times.
- Model positive reading behavior. Read something for yourself - a book, a magazine, a piece of mail. Your reading will become a motivating factor for your child to learn to read.

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS:**

- Introduce your child to a variety of books, activities, music, and foods. Having a variety will allow them to develop favorites.
- As they get older, let them choose between two items (snacks, books, clothes).

**SIGN IT: BED**

Put two hands together,  
palm to palm. Rest your  
hands on your cheek as if it  
were a pillow



Find more baby sign  
language resources at  
[www.babysignlanguage.com](http://www.babysignlanguage.com)  
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# BOOKS WE LOVE!

Here are 30 of our favorite books to spark your baby's love of reading. You can request copies to pick up at [bit.ly/SCLB-24](http://bit.ly/SCLB-24)

**Baby Bear Sees Blue**



**Baby Play/  
Jugando con bebe**



**Big Little**



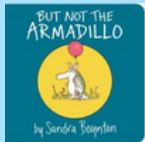
**Bizzy Bear  
Race Car  
Driver**



**Bumblebee  
Boy Loves...**



**But Not the  
Armadillo**



**Bye-bye  
Bottles  
Zebra**



**Colors in  
the Cold**



**Construction  
Site**



**Dinosaurs**



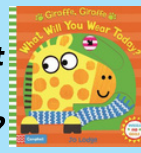
**First Words  
With a  
Ladybug**



**Friends/  
Amigos**



**Giraffe,  
Giraffe What  
Will You  
Wear Today?**



**Happy, Sad,  
Mad, and  
Glad**



**I Am Just  
Right**



**I'm a Robot!**



**If You're  
Happy & You  
Know It**



**In My Heart**



**Let's Learn  
4/4 Time**



**Library  
Babies**



**Look at  
Baby's House**



**Love You  
Head to Toe**

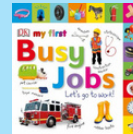


**Love You  
Head to Toe**

**My First  
Elements**



**My First  
Busy Jobs**



**My First Out  
and About**



**No, David!**



**Nita's First  
Signs**



**Skeletitos**



**Will Ladybug  
Hug?**

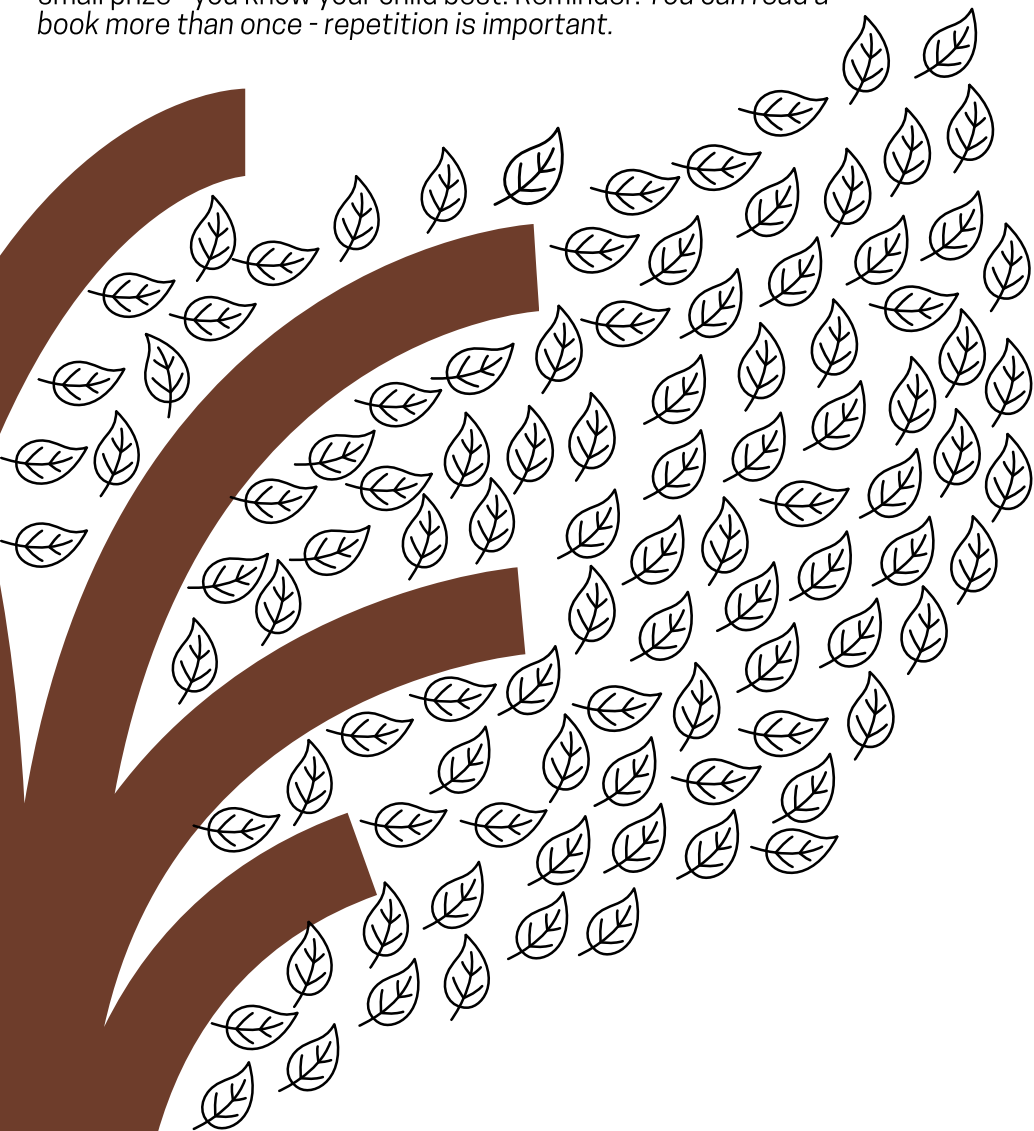


**You Are  
Light**



# *Fall in love with reading!*

Color in a leaf for each book you read. Create your own reward for completing your reading together! Pick a special snack or small prize - you know your child best! Reminder: *You can read a book more than once - repetition is important.*



**Finished reading 100 books? Try our online  
1000 Books Before Kindergarten challenge:**

**<https://bit.ly/SCL1000books>**