

# PLAYING WITH WORDS

*Any Child Can*



*S. Celia Jaipaul*



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**Any Child Can**

## Also by Celia Jaipaul

*The World Of Words: any parent can*

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# **Playing With Words**

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*S. Celia Jaipaul*

Words in Action Publishing

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## Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I encourage you to read and enjoy “Playing With Words.” This book is a follow-up to the “World Of Words” and is an excellent tool for parents and educators to use with children in the development of literacy skills. Reading with young children is the best possible way to support them in becoming full participants in a reading world. Making it fun is even better!

Early involvement with words and reading is essential for the development of all aspects of a child’s life. This book provides many practical ideas on how to make this fun through everyday, ordinary activities. Learning to read through PLAY is an ingenious way to make learning fun and effective. Learning that is fun stays with you forever. So play at reading with your children, and the time you spend will be an enduring memory for them. As you yourself play and have fun with your children, you will see them grow as this wonderful world of words becomes second nature to them.

Well done, Celia, on this your second book dedicated to helping parents and educators help children to engage in this serious, but fun, task of using words and learning to read. You are making an important contribution to literacy and reading development in our young children.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ron Woodward'.

Ron Woodward  
President & CEO  
Red Deer College

# Introduction

**Dear Parent,**

We play with language all the time. Songs, poems, stories, rhymes, games and puzzles allow us to play with words, and to use words in many ways. Play is an important part of a



child's life. It is how they learn. They play with their toys, books, fingers, and toes. Just as you have toys for your baby, you can have books for him too. Because you are your child's first and most important teacher, you need to teach your baby the language he will speak as he grows.

Most of the books you read will tell you to talk, sing, say rhymes and laugh with your child, even though he cannot use words himself. These books will tell you how important it is to spend time with your child. In other words, just using your voice and making signs with your hands can help your child to learn, and to grow close to you. By spending time with your child and by helping him to develop a love for words, you can prepare him for success in school.

This book helps you to teach your child by playing with words. You do not need any special skills, materials or money. It does not matter if you are a teen parent, single or divorced, have a low income or low education, or speak English as your second language. You can carry on with your daily jobs while you teach your child

and have fun together. You can do this even if you have more than one child in your home. All you need is to spend time together, playing and having fun with words.

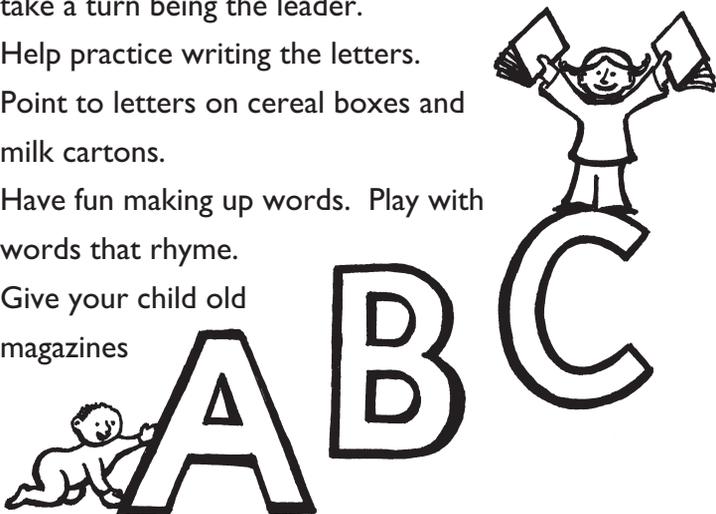
**Many parents worry about what to do to help their child to grow and to get ready for school. The most important thing you can do to prepare your child for school is simple and does not have to cost you money – it is reading with your child.**

# Play With Your ABCs

**Always remember – your home is your child’s first school, and you are your child’s first teacher.**

Every child likes to sing the ABC song. This alphabet is the basis of our language. It is from these 26 letters that we make up all the words we use, no matter where we are or what we are doing. All the wonderful stories you read with your child are made up of words using these 26 letters. So help your child to remember them. Sing along with him and have fun. Here are some ways you can play and have fun with the alphabet:

1. Point to things in your home and say which letter they start with. For example, you can point to an apple, and say the letter “A”. Let your child say this after you. Let your child know letters are all different and have different sounds. Make it a game and your child can take a turn being the leader.
2. Help practice writing the letters. Point to letters on cereal boxes and milk cartons.
3. Have fun making up words. Play with words that rhyme.
4. Give your child old magazines



or flyers. Point out words and say the letters in each word. If your child is old enough, you can cut out letters and have her make up her own words. Remember, knowing the alphabet will give her the start she needs when she starts school.

5. If you have alphabet blocks at home, you can use them to play with the letters by making up words. You can sit on the floor with your child, or at a table to do this. Be comfortable and have fun.
6. Make an alphabet book – use scrap paper to put one letter on each page. Draw a picture of something that starts with that letter.
7. Help your child to learn her name. Say the letters in her name and try to write them down.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P  
Q R S T U V W X Y Z

# Play Around The House

**We cannot get away from words – they are all around the house.**

When we look around our home, words and letters and numbers are everywhere: in the telephone book, on the telephone, on the clock, on games and puzzles, maybe even on the cups and plates we use. When we answer the telephone, take messages, go through the mail or look at the television guide, we are using our skills in speaking and reading. Reading is an everyday skill and the more we practice, the better readers we become. We can practice our reading skills by playing with words in many fun ways around the house. Here are some ideas you can try without going out to buy any special supplies:

1. Have a family treasure hunt. For example, hide a toy or book in your house and leave simple clues which your child can follow to find the prize.
2. Play dress-up and pretend games. Use old clothes to play doctor, and to pretend going to the store, post office, hospital, or school. Talk about what you are doing.
3. Choose a word for the day. Take turns to choose a word, then look for the word around your house in the newspaper, books or flyers. Try to use the word often for that day.
4. Read as a family. Set aside a special time to do this, and take turns to read. Have a special shelf for books.
5. Act out the stories you read. You can make up the words

that tell the story as you act it out. You can also make up stories from picture books. Some of the stories can be funny.

6. Talk about the different shapes of objects. Try cutting out squares, circles and other shapes.
7. Talk about different colors. Sort the laundry together and say why you need to wash clothes this way. Make up a funny song about this. Show your child a picture of a rainbow.
8. Use objects around the house to count numbers. Make a game of counting the number of doors, windows, pillows and chairs.
9. Practice saying your telephone number. Tell your child how the telephone works and that people have different numbers.
10. Pets can be good listeners. Let your child read to your dog, cat or goldfish.



11. Play peek-a-boo and hide and seek with younger children.
12. Have family nights for playing games and puzzles. This is great for learning and practicing new words.

You are likely doing many of these things with your children. The important thing is that they are learning while spending time with you. They will always remember these times of fun and games. They will always have the skills they have learnt while spending time with you.

**Your home is your child's first school  
– make it a fun place to learn.**

# Play With Baby

## **Let your older child be a teacher and helper.**

Your older child can be a teacher by trying out words and rhymes with a younger child.

Here is a story that shows how this can happen:

When I fell and broke my ankle I had to wear a cast. When the time came to have the cast removed, I went to the hospital. While I was waiting at the reception counter, a family consisting of Mom, Dad, a baby in a car seat, and a little girl came into the room. Dad set the seat on the floor while he and Mom talked with the lady at the counter. In the meantime, the little girl stood in front of the car seat and began to sing very softly to their little baby. She was singing “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”.

This is a great example of how good reading and learning skills are developed in your family. Two wonderful things are happening at the same time. Your baby is learning from birth, and your older child is a helper and a teacher.

It is often hard for a parent to have young children at home, as it takes a lot of time and attention to take care of them. So if you are changing baby’s diaper, your older child can help by just singing or talking to baby while you do this. This is what happens when your other child helps:

1. You will not have to worry about your older child getting into danger or trouble.
2. A baby will often stop crying just by hearing a different voice. Another face and another tone of voice will attract baby's attention. This will also help you to change baby more easily.
3. As baby listens, he too is learning words and responding. You will see his arms reach out, and his eyes light up. He will coo and babble. This is baby's first step towards learning the language he will speak.

Join in the fun after you change the diaper. Look into your baby's face and move his arms and legs as you and your other child sing, talk, and play. Do the actions as you say the words and rhymes.

### **Play and laugh together.**



# Play At Mealtimes

**You can teach your child while you prepare for meal time.**

Your child can learn many new words as she listens to you and watches what you do. Here are some things you can do that are all part of what you do during the day.

1. Say what you are doing. For example, if it is lunch time, say you are making lunch. Talk about the different meal times. Name and point at all the things you will have to eat. You can even show how to eat certain foods, such as peeling a banana before you eat it.
2. Talk about why you need to eat proper foods. Your child needs energy to learn, and healthy brains help to learn better. When your child is healthy, she will not miss school, and will be able to keep up with her class in learning. Your child will also learn good eating habits.
3. Set the table and have your child help you. Talk about the things you need to have your meal, such as plates, cups, glasses, spoons, and other items. Show your child how to set these on the table. Talk about the right and left side.
4. Give your child some paper and crayons and let her draw pictures of food.
5. Explain what you are doing. Explain what a recipe means. If your child is old enough, she could help to read the directions. Show her how to do this. It is a fun way to practice reading and to learn new words.

6. Talk about your own meal times from when you were growing up. Did you help your parents? Did you help to shop for food? How was meal time different in your own family? Talk about your favorite foods. Let your child tell you what she likes best. Touching and tasting help in learning.
7. If you have two or more children, they can sit at the table and tell each other stories while you make the meal. They can sing songs, tell jokes, or take turns doing rhymes. You too can join in this.



8. Allow your child to pretend she is cooking. Give her some old plastic dishes and pans. Let your child play on the floor with these. My son used to take all the pots from our cupboard, put them on the floor in his room, and pretend he was cooking for us.

9. Have a pretend picnic indoors if you cannot go outside. Say what you need. For example, prepare some snacks and let your child help. Put the food in a basket and decide which room you will use for the picnic.

All these activities help your child to learn new words and what they mean. Your child learns to listen and follow directions, to take turns, to work with other children, and to have fun. Your child will learn skills in doing everyday tasks, while helping you. It is all right if the fork is not set quite straight, or if the job takes a little longer. Remember, the important thing is to give your child the chance to practice. In this way you are also preparing your child for school, and for doing well in life.

**Cook together and have fun playing at mealtimes.**

# ***Play At The Grocery Store***

**Shopping can be so much fun. Whenever you can, take your child with you to the store to buy food and other items for the home.**

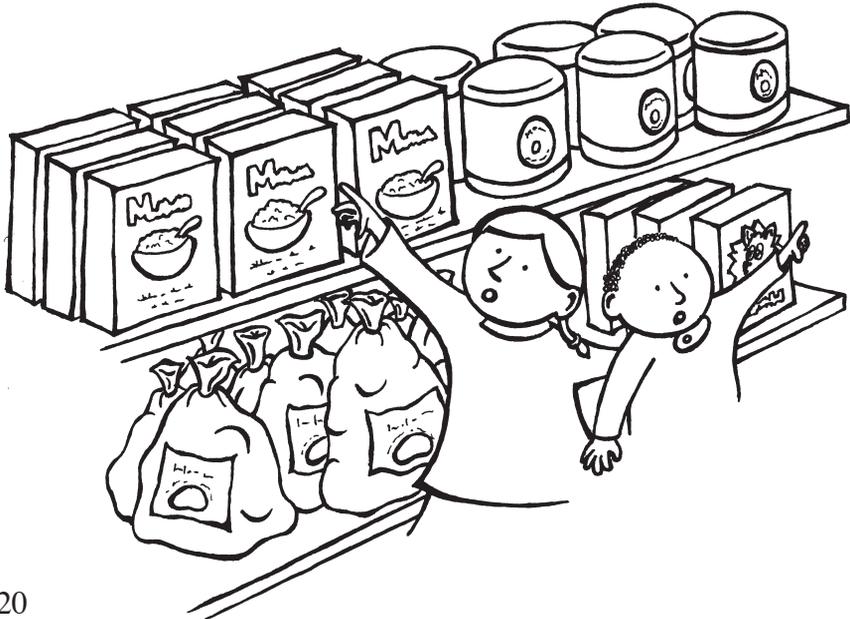
The best way to teach your child is through real life experience. This can also be a chance to spend some special time together. Here are some ways you can teach your child new words and have fun together. Once again, you do not need any special materials.

1. You can prepare for your trip before you leave home by writing a shopping list. Your child can help with this. Ask him what you need to buy. For example, if the cereal box is empty, he can tell you to buy some more cereal. If your child is old enough, he can help to write the list. You can spell the words together and write them on the list.
2. You can also look through grocery flyers to see what is on sale. In this way your child learns the names of food, and the amount of what you need to buy.
3. In the store, go to the sections you need and encourage your child to tell you the names of what he sees. Say the names with him. Have a game where you look for a new item whenever you go to the store. Ask your child to guess the name of the item.
4. Talk about how money works. Explain that you need money to buy the items you want before you can take them home. Show your child paper money and coins. You

can even do this at home before your trip to the store. It is all right if your child does not understand everything at once as this is only the starting point from which he will develop a lifetime of skills.

5. Take your child with you to the Bank. Each time I go to the bank to pay bills or do other banking, I remember the times I went with my Mom when I was a child. She showed me how to be careful about counting, and putting away my money safely. I started going to the bank by myself when I was ten years old, and the skills I learned are still useful in what I do.

**Shopping together can be an exciting adventure as you explore the great number of things that can be found in even the smallest store.**



# Play In The Car

**Many parents do not look forward to taking a long car trip with young children.**

It is no fun to have a crying child while you are driving. Children want to run and jump in the park, not sit in a car seat with nothing to do.

A very young child does not know as yet about streets, towns, cities, and countries. They may hear these words but do not know what they mean in relation to our physical space. We need to teach them this a little bit at a time. I remember our young son asking if we were still in Edmonton on one of our trips. We had just gone on a short trip to visit friends who lived in another area of the city! This gave us the chance to explain how places are arranged.

Before you go on your trip, tell your child about it, and make plans together. If you have a map, show her how it works, and where you are going. Talk about the things you will see along the way. Make your trip more fun by packing together – clothes, blanket, food and snacks, coloring books, and travel games. Here are some other ways your child can “play” in the car, and also have fun with words:

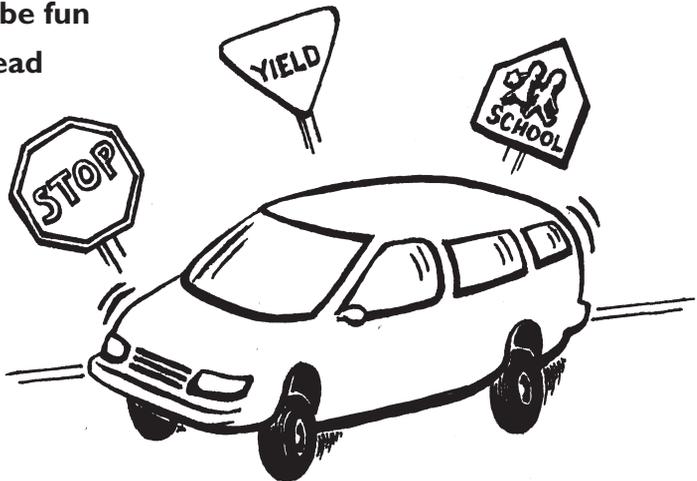
1. Teach your child your home address. As you are leaving, show her the number on your home.
2. As you go down the street, show her the numbers on

the other houses. Make it a game. Tell her to read the numbers to you because you have to watch the road.

3. Have a game where you count the number of signs on your left side and the number of signs on your right side.
4. Count how many start with the same letters of the alphabet.
5. Go through a car wash and talk about what is happening.
6. Talk about other signs you see and what they mean.
7. Sing songs and say rhymes. Make up songs and rhymes about what you see.
8. Make up stories. My family did this all the time when we went on trips.

It is also fine if your child just wants to sit and look outside, color or play by herself. Give your child a chance to decide what she would like to do, as this also helps in her growth as a person and feelings about herself. The less you have to do, the more relaxing your trip will be.

**Traveling can be fun  
if you plan ahead  
and prepare  
your child.**



# Play In The Park

**The park is a great place for children to run, jump, play and learn.**

Going to the park gives your child the chance to exercise and meet other children. Spending time with other children is very important as they learn behavior which will help when they start school. Your child will also be able to speak and practice language skills. Here are some things you can do to help your child learn while having fun:

1. Sing songs and do action rhymes. If other children are present, invite them to join and make it a game.
2. Talk about the kind of day it is – is it sunny, cool, bright, cloudy, windy? Are there clouds? What color is the sky? Is there a rainbow?
3. Ask questions about what you see – do you see birds, dogs, squirrels, butterflies, flowers, grass?
4. Repeat some of the sounds you hear – if a dog is barking, allow your child to repeat the sound. Chirp like a bird. You can even pretend there are other animals and make these sounds.
5. If you have a ball, play a game and talk about the rules.
6. Have a picnic. You can plan ahead what to bring and let your child help. Say the names of the food you brought.
7. Sit on a blanket and read a book together.
8. On the way home, talk about your day together, and how

your child is feeling. Was it fun, boring, or just okay? Was it nice to meet and play with other children? Is your child happy, tired or hungry? Is he glad to go home and have a bath?

There are so many things you can do with your child so he learns, and feels comfortable with others. You may be doing many of these things already and it does not have to cost much.

**Sunshine and songs will make your day  
with your child very special.**



# Play Around Town

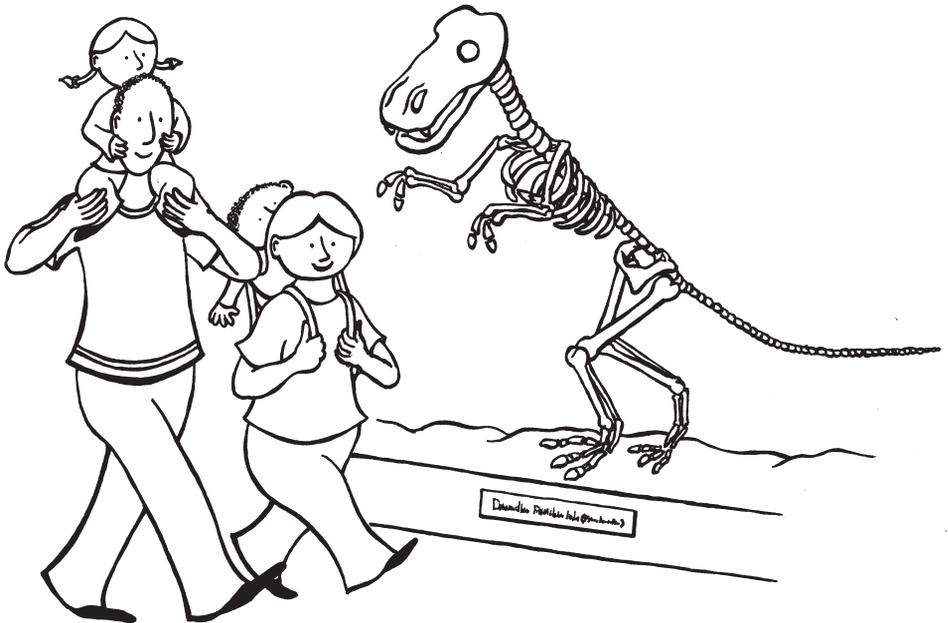
**Most communities have free and fun family events during the year.**

Most events are held in places where families can get to easily. This is a great time for children to get together, and play and learn together. Here are some places where you can visit and take part in the activities:

1. **The Public Library.** In many communities, children can get free library cards. Parents and children can attend free storytimes, borrow a large number of books, tapes and other materials. Library staff can help if you have questions about what would be good for your child. You also get a chance to meet other parents to share ideas and concerns.
2. **The Museum.** There are often free tours, and sometimes there are special artists, authors, and speakers you can meet and talk with.
3. **Street fairs and festivals.** These are very common during the summer. There are many free shows, face painting, coloring, storytelling, singing, and sometimes even free food. Children learn to watch, listen, and enjoy different activities. They get a chance to feel excited about what is going on around them. This all helps them to prepare for school.

Parents have as much fun as children at these events. It is very special to share these with your child. Your child's excitement could last for days.

**Take every chance you have to find out what is happening in your town or city, and be a part of it with your child.**



# Play Up Above The World So High

**An airplane ride can be difficult even for adults.**

Not too long ago I took an airplane to visit my sister in another city. As the plane started to take off, a small girl a few rows behind me began to cry. I could hear her mom speaking to her in a soft voice, trying to calm her. But the girl still cried. When it was safe to do so, the mom got up, took a bag from the overhead bin, and sat again with the little girl who was still crying. Then I heard the mom reading a story quietly, and not long after the girl stopped crying. She did not cry again for the rest of the time we were in the air. After the story, I could see she was busy with her coloring book. As soon as we started to land, the girl cried again. The mom read to her, and sang some songs. It did not take long for the girl to stop crying as she listened to the voice of her mom reading quietly to her.

The power of a parent with a book is clear. The magic of words in a story or rhyme goes a long way to comfort your child. As they listen to your voice their pain goes away, and they cuddle into you with love. There is nothing better for a child, and this is what they will remember. To prepare for your trip:

1. Talk about where you are going. Explain why you are going, and who you will see.
2. Say how many days you will be away. This is a good time

to look at the calendar. Name the months, and count the days and weeks in each month.

3. Talk about what you will need and allow your child to pack her bag.
4. Tell your child what happens on the airplane. For example, you need to wear a seatbelt, just like in a car. Will you get food? Some children are excited about eating in an airplane.
5. Pack books, puzzles, games, coloring books and crayons.

Let your trip be a special time for you and your child. Talk, read, do rhymes, share jokes, or do a puzzle. It is all right if your child just wants to sleep. Or just hug your child if this makes her feel better.

**Let your children know  
you are always there  
to share  
what  
they  
feel.  
This will  
help  
them to  
face  
challenges  
in life with  
confidence.**



## **Red Deer Public Library – Family Literacy**

Our Mission is to foster greater literacy development in children and parents by:

- early intervention
- building on the strengths within families
- providing information, materials and personal support.

**All of our programs are completely free and are delivered in a fun and friendly way.**

Our Family Literacy programs are intended to increase awareness of the importance of reading, and of developing literacy skills at an early age. At Red Deer Public Library we assist parents and children through the following programs:

**Read Early And Discover (READ)** – In a number of schools, kindergarten children and their parents have fun learning through stories, rhymes, songs, and activities to help improve literacy skills and to help them when they enter Grade 1. Involving parents is a way of helping them to improve their own literacy skills so they can continue to help their children at home.

**Red Deer Firefighters’ Reading Pals** - This program is offered during July and August to Elementary school age students who are referred by their teachers, and need additional support in reading and/or writing. Students are paired with a “pal” and are taught

by a tutor. The program encourages the whole family to read together.

**Kids Club** - This is a partnership program between Family Literacy and Parkland Mall shopping center. The Kids Club is held once every month for parents and caregivers with pre-school children. The program consists of stories, rhymes, songs, and other activities, and encourages families to read at home. Free refreshments are provided and registration is not required.

**Family Reading Fun** - This program is offered through local agencies where there are parents who need help improving their literacy skills. Family Literacy provides a staff member who goes to the agency and talks with parents about literacy during the agency's regularly scheduled program. The children are sometimes present and parents are able to practice reading with them.

**Books For Babies** – Family Literacy provides book bags and other resources to the Healthy Families program of Family Services of Central Alberta. During their home visits, Home Visitors give these bags to families so parents and children can read together.

For additional copies of this book, or for more information, please contact Red Deer Public Library, Family Literacy at:

Phone : (403) 309-3488

E-mail: [cjaipaul@rdpl.org](mailto:cjaipaul@rdpl.org)

This book can also be accessed from Red Deer Public Library website in the Adobe Acrobat format at <http://www.rdpl.org/family-literacy>





**This book provides parents and caregivers with ordinary, everyday activities on how to help their children learn about words and books through play.**

*This book helps you to teach your child by playing with words. Maybe you are already doing many of these things. You do not need any special skills, materials or money. All you need is to spend time together, playing and having fun with words.*

*This book is a follow-up to Celia Jaipaul's previous book, "The World Of Words." It is her second book dedicated to helping parents and educators in the important process of teaching children to use words and to read.*

## **About the Author**

*Celia Jaipaul is Family Literacy Manager at Red Deer Public Library. Her experience in education is extensive, and this book reflects her love of language and learning. She strongly believes that parents have a critical role in the early development and learning of their children. She also believes that this process of teaching and learning develops a strong bond between parent and child that will continue to grow throughout both of their lives.*



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