Reading with Your Child

What are the Benefits of Reading to Children?
Research has shown that reading aloud is the most important activity for language development. It stimulates literacy and language skills even before a child can talk. Reading aloud also helps children cope with stress and promotes school success. It's a way for parents and other important adults to interact with babies and children and build strong relationships.

General Tips for Reading with Your Child
- Make reading part of every day, even for just a few minutes.
- Talk about the pictures – you do not need to read the book to tell a story.
- Make silly sounds, like animal noises.
- Make the story come alive by creating voices for the characters.
- Have fun! Having a positive attitude towards reading helps to promote love of reading in children.

Reading with your baby (6-12 months):
What books should I read with my baby?
- Small books sized for small hands.
- Brightly-colored board and cloth books to touch and explore.
- Books with pictures of babies.
- Books with pictures of familiar objects - balls, bottles, dogs.

How should I read with my baby?
- Hold your baby on your lap while you read.

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• Allow your baby to explore the book—this may mean putting it in their mouth.
• Point at and name things, such as nose, ball, cat, and baby.
• Respond when your baby makes sounds or taps a picture.

Reading with your younger toddler (12-24 months):
What books should I read with my young toddler?
• Sturdy board books they can handle and carry.
• Books with only a few words on the page.
• Books with simple rhymes.
• Books that show kids doing familiar things, such as sleeping, eating, and playing.

How should I read with my young toddler?
• Let your toddler move around while you are reading.
• Let you toddler choose and hold the book.
• Point and label objects in the book.
• Ask your child to identify common objects on the page.

Reading with your older toddler (24-36 months):
What books should I read with my older toddler?
• Books with board pages— but also books with paper pages.
• Silly and funny books.
• Books with rhyme and rhythm, and repeated text they can learn by heart.
• Books about children and families.
• Books about food, animals, trucks and other favorite objects.
How should I read with my older toddler?

- As you read, talk about the pictures.
- Ask “Where’s the dog?” or “What is that?”
- Allow your child to complete the rhymes.
- Be willing to read the same book many times.

Reading with your preschool child (3–5 years):

What books should I read with my preschool child?

- Books that tell stories.
- Books with simple text they can memorize.
- Counting books, alphabet books, search and find books.
- Books about going to school and making friends.

How should I read with my preschool child?

- Ask “What happens next?” in familiar stories.
- Let your child try to tell the story.
- Relate the story to your child’s experiences.
- Point out words and pictures that begin with the same sound.

Resource: Reach Out and Read –  http://www.reachoutandread.org