

# Reading with Your Child

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## **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.

- 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 your 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>**

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