

Reading To Your Young Child

Reading to your child is one of the most important things you can do to help your child learn. Even before your child can talk, reading can prepare her to start talking. Even before your child is old enough to go to school, reading to her can help her to be successful when she starts school.

But reading can do much more than this; reading can:

- ☆ teach your child letters, colors, shapes, numbers, animals, and foods;
- ☆ calm your child before nap time and bedtime;
- ☆ teach your child about expressing his feelings;
- ☆ provide a special time for you and your child to bond;
- ☆ keep your child occupied in waiting rooms, on the bus, and in the car.



Find your child's age on the next two pages and use the tips listed when you read to her.

Tips for Reading Aloud to Young Children

Babies: 6 to 18 months

- ✓ Read to your child often. She loves to hear your voice.
- ✓ Choose books with simple, bright pictures and only a few words on each page.
- ✓ Hold your child on your lap. Make sure he can see the pictures.
- ✓ Your child will touch, grab, and taste the book. That is how he learns.
- ✓ Let your child help hold the book and turn the pages.
- ✓ Point to the pictures as you talk about them.
- ✓ Start by reading one or two pages at a time and gradually read more pages at one time.
- ✓ Stay on a page as long as your child is interested. Put the book away when she seems fussy or bored.

Toddlers: 18 months to 3 years

- ✓ Your toddler may enjoy having the same book read to him many times. You'll know when he is bored with a book.
- ✓ Relate pictures and words in books to the real world.
- ✓ Read rhyming books. Your toddler can learn and repeat the words.
- ✓ Read picture books with simple stories and only a few words on each page.
- ✓ Toddlers like books about new people and new places.
- ✓ Change your voice for each character in the story.
- ✓ Stop often to ask questions and look at the pictures.
- ✓ Let your child turn pages, name pictures, repeat words, and guess what will happen next.



Preschoolers: 3 to 5 years

- ✓ Your preschooler likes books about other children, new places, people, and things.
- ✓ Read the title and author. Look at the cover and ask your child what she thinks the book is about.
- ✓ Your preschooler has a longer attention span than a toddler. He may enjoy short chapter books.
- ✓ Talk about the characters, places and stories. Help your child relate them to her life.
- ✓ Run your fingers under the text as you read it.
- ✓ Ask your child to look at the pictures and guess what is going to happen next.
- ✓ Your preschooler has a good memory. Let him retell the story in his own words.
- ✓ Provide crayons and paper for your child. She may enjoy writing and drawing while she listens.

