



HELPING YOUR CHILD LEARN TO READ

BOOKS BUILD
CONNECTIONS
TOOLKIT



Here are some tips for helping your child learn to read. You want to teach your child to love books and so you should not try to force them to learn to read. The most important things to remember are to be patient, to have fun and to praise early and often.

How Can I Help My Child Learn To Read?

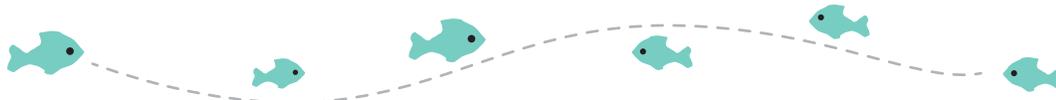
Reading books aloud together is one of the best ways you can help your child learn to read. This can be fun for you, too. The more delight you show when you read a book, the more your child will enjoy it. The most important thing is to let your child set her own pace and have fun at whatever she is doing. When reading to your child, you can:

- Run your finger under the words as you read to show your child that the print carries the story.
- Use funny voices and animal noises. Do not be afraid to ham it up! This will help your child get excited about the story.
- Stop to look at the pictures. Ask your child to name things she sees in the pictures. Talk about how the pictures relate to the story.
- Invite your child to join in whenever there is a repeated phrase in the text.
- Show your child how events in the book are like events in your child's life.
- If your child asks a question, stop and answer it. The book may help your child express her thoughts and feelings and solve her own problems.
- Keep reading to your child even after she learns to read. A child can listen to and understand stories that are too hard to read on her own.

Listening To Your Child Read Aloud

Once your child begins to read, have him read out loud. This can help build his confidence in his ability to read and help him enjoy learning new skills. Take turns reading with your child to model more advanced reading skills and to give him a rest.

If your child asks for help with a word, give it right away so that he does not lose the meaning of the story. Do not force your child to sound out the word. On the other hand, if your child wants to sound out a word, do not stop him.



TALK



READ



SING



FAMILY RESOURCE: Helping Your Child Learn To Read



If your child uses a word that is different from the written word while reading, see whether it makes sense. If he uses the word *dog* instead of *pup*, for example, the meaning is the same. Do not stop to correct him. If your child uses a word that makes no sense (such as *road* for *read*), ask him to read the sentence again, because you are not sure you understand what he just read.

Recognize your child's energy limits. Stop each session when or before he gets tired or frustrated.

Most of all, make sure you give your child a lot of praise for his effort and tell him how happy you are to watch his skills grow! You are your child's first, and most important, teacher. The praise and support you give your child as he learns to read will help him enjoy reading and learning even more.

Learning To Read In School

Most children learn to read by the time they are 6 or 7 years old. Some children learn when they are 4 or 5 years old. Even if a child has a head start, she may not stay ahead once school starts. The other students most likely will catch up during the second or third grade. Pushing your child to read before she is ready can get in the way of your child's interest in learning. Children who really enjoy learning are more likely to do well in school. This love of learning cannot be forced.

As your child begins elementary school, she will begin her formal reading education. There are many ways to teach children to read.

- One way emphasizes word recognition and teaches children to understand a whole word's meaning by how it is used.
- Phonics—sounding out or pronouncing the letters in words—is another way children learn to read. Phonics is used to decode or sound out words.
- Focusing on the connections between spoken and written words is another technique.

Most teachers use a combination of methods to teach children how to read.

Reading is an important skill for children to learn. Most children learn to read without any major problems. Pushing a child to learn before she is ready can make learning to read frustrating. But reading together and playing games with books make reading fun. Children learn best when their parents are involved in their learning. Fostering a child's love of learning will go a long way toward ensuring success in school.

Reading Tips

The following are a few tips to keep in mind as your child learns to read:

- Set aside time every day to read together. Many children like to have stories read to them at bedtime. This is a great way to connect with your child, to wind down after a busy day, and to get ready for sleep.
- Leave books in your child's room for her to enjoy on her own. Make sure her room is reading friendly with a comfortable bed or chair, bookshelf, and reading lamp.



FAMILY RESOURCE: Helping Your Child Learn To Read



- Read books that your child enjoys. Let her choose the books she wants to read with you. After a while, your child may remember the words in her favorite book. When this happens, let your child complete the sentences or take turns reciting the words.
- Do not drill your child on letters, numbers, colors, shapes, or words. Instead, make a game out of it and find ways to support her curiosity and interests.

Adapted from *Helping Your Child Learn to Read* (Copyright © 1999 American Academy of Pediatrics), Revised by the AAP Council on Early Childhood (COEC), 2014

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- Sharing Books With Your Baby up to Age 11 Months
- Sharing Books With Your 1-Year-Old
- Sharing Books With Your 2-Year-Old
- Sharing Books With Your Preschooler
- Sharing Books With Your School-Age Child
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SHARING BOOKS WITH YOUR BABY UP TO AGE 11 MONTHS

What's the best way to share books with your baby up to age 11 months? Use the following tips, which cover 4 stages in your baby's life:

- **Birth to 3 months**
- **4 to 5 months**
- **6 to 8 months**
- **9 to 11 months**

Babies are born ready to interact with their parents and caregivers. Their eyes open widely to watch parents' faces and movements and to listen to their voices. Over the first year of life, babies learn to sit, to stand, and to explore objects with their eyes, ears, mouth, nose, and hands. They also learn to understand and respond to your words and your emotions. Most important, they learn to trust. Looking at and talking about books with babies in the first year of their life strengthens all of these abilities.

For each age range, there are examples of what your child can do and tips you can do to help you share and enjoy books with babies in their first year of life.

Sharing Books With Your Baby From Birth Up To Age 3 Months

- Babies enjoy sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your baby.
- Looking at and talking about books with babies help teach them to talk.
- Reading books with babies helps them start learning to love books.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- This may become the best time of your day!



TALK



READ



SING





Newborn babies to age 3 months can:

- Look at the book you are holding for them and talking about.
- Watch the looks on your face and begin to copy them.
- Listen to the sounds you make and begin to copy some of them.
- Start to smile, coo, or move their arms and legs to let you know that they want to keep playing.
- Pay attention for a minute or 2 at a time.

You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with a sturdy book or two.
- Name and point to the pictures your baby is looking at.
- Turn the pages following your baby's interest and your own.
- Act out pictures using your face, hands, and voice.
- Copy the sounds your baby makes and the looks on his face. This kind of back-and-forth *conversation* lets your baby know you care about what he likes and how he feels.

Sharing Books With Your 4- To 5-Month-Old

- Babies enjoy sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your baby.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with babies help teach them to talk.
- Reading books with babies helps them start learning to love books.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines started with babies help prevent future struggles at bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your baby how to fall asleep alone by putting her in bed sleepy but awake without a bottle. This helps prevent future night waking and dental problems.
- This may become the best time of your day!

4- to 5-month-olds can:

- Reach toward a book and pat the pictures in it.
- Copy some of the sounds you say and the looks on your face.
- Pay attention to a book for only a few minutes at a time.





- Begin to have favorite books they get more excited about when they see.
- Smile, laugh, squeal, coo, babble, or reach for you or the book to let you know that they want to keep talking, reading, and playing.

You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with a sturdy book or two.
- Name and point to the pictures your baby shows interest in.
- Turn the pages, following her interest.
- Act out pictures using your face, hands, and voice.
- Copy the sounds your baby makes and the looks on her face.
- This kind of back-and-forth *conversation* lets her know you care about what she likes and how she feels.

Sharing Books With Your 6- To 8-Month-Old

- Babies enjoy sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your baby and builds his self-esteem.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with babies help teach them to talk.
- Reading books with babies helps them start learning to love books.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines started with babies help prevent future struggles at bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your baby how to fall asleep alone by putting him in bed sleepy but awake without a bottle. This helps prevent future night waking and dental problems.
- This may become the best time of your day!

6- to 8-month-olds can:

- Hold onto a book and pat the pictures.
- Explore a book by feeling it, turning it upside down, putting it into their mouth, or dropping it.
- Copy some of the sounds you say, the looks on your face, and the gestures you make.
- Smile, laugh, squeal, babble, or reach for you or the book to let you know that they want to keep talking, reading, and playing.
- Pay attention to a book for only a few minutes at a time, until they learn how much fun it is to read with you.





You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with a sturdy book or two.
- Name and point to the pictures your baby shows interest in.
- Help your baby turn pages, following his interest.
- Act out the story or pictures using your face, hands, and voice.
- Talk about how your baby is enjoying the book. You can say: *It is a doggie. Doggie says woof woof. Or: You like putting that book into your mouth. Mmmmm. How does it taste?*
- Make a game of copying your baby while he is playing with books.
- This kind of back-and-forth play lets him know you care about what he likes and how he feels.

Sharing Books With Your 9- To 11-Month-Old

- Babies enjoy sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your baby.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with babies help teach them to talk.
- Reading books with babies helps them start learning to love books.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines started with babies help prevent future struggles at bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your baby how to fall asleep alone by putting her in bed sleepy but awake without a bottle. This helps prevent future night waking and dental problems.
- This may become the best time of your day!

9- to 11-month-olds can:

- Reach for their favorite of 2 books you offer.
- Hold onto a book and pat the pictures they like.
- Explore a book by putting it in their mouth, turning it upside down, opening and closing it, or dropping it and listening for the sound this makes.
- Copy some of the sounds you make, the looks on your face, and the gestures you make.
- Pay attention to a book for only a few minutes at a time, until they learn how much fun it is to read with you.





You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with a sturdy book or two.
- Name and point to the pictures your baby is looking at, touching, or talking to. You can say: *Yes, a kitty. Nice kitty. The kitty is purring.*
- Follow your baby's interest by helping her turn pages.
- Act out the story or pictures using your face, hands, and voice.
- Talk about how your baby is enjoying the book. You can say: *You like that car you are patting. The car goes beep beep!*
- Make a game of copying your baby while she is playing with books.
- This kind of back-and-forth play lets her know you care about what she likes and how she feels.

Adapted from AAP Literacy Promotion Toolkit Web site (2008), Pamela C High, MD, FAAP, Natalie Golova, MD, FAAP, Marita Hopmann, PhD, and the AAP Council on Early Childhood, 2014

Other family resources related to early literacy and early learning include the following:

- Helping Your Child Learn to Read
- Sharing Books With Your 1-Year-Old
- Sharing Books With Your 2-Year-Old
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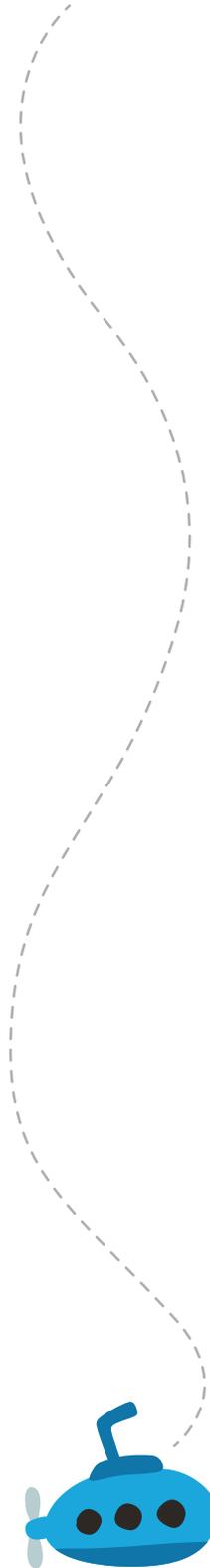


FAMILY RESOURCE: Sharing Books With Your Baby up to Age 11 Months



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THE SECRET TO A SMARTER BABY

How do you raise a smart baby? Talk to her, play with her, walk with her, sing to her, imitate sounds, cuddle her, read to her every day, and turn off the television and other electronic devices.

As parents, we all want happy, healthy babies. Not only that, we want them to be smart. For anyone entering parenthood today, this desire seems to translate into a trip to the toy store and a big dent in the family budget. The truth is that you don't need any make-your-baby-brilliant products that line store shelves these days. You don't need to spend a penny to help your baby be smarter.

That's right. Despite the hype and the ads, we're not buying it. There just isn't convincing scientific evidence that these expertly marketed, hi-tech baby toys, with all of their bells and whistles, lead to more advanced brain development.

As you think about what kinds of activities will support your baby's early learning, you can start by remembering that the real baby Mozart never had a CD, a DVD, or an iPad! What, then, is the secret to a smarter baby? The answer is, above all else, the loving interactions that you (and your baby's other caregivers) will share with your baby over the upcoming days, weeks, and months. Perhaps the most important message is that you don't need to put too much pressure on yourself when considering what to do with your baby. The best types of activities are simple. Here is a short list to get you started:

- **Talk to your baby whenever you can.** Sound simple? That's because it is. Some new parents feel funny about talking to babies who can't talk back, but this isn't the same as talking to yourself. Take the time to talk to your baby. Talk while changing his diaper and giving him a bath or during meals and bedtime routines. Tell him about your plans for the day or just comment on whatever comes to mind. Even before your baby can talk, back-and-forth conversation will help your baby learn the meaning of words and later be more ready to start school. So, ask him questions and then answer them; name and label what you see inside and outside your home. The details may be lost on him for a while, but he'll definitely be listening and learning.



TALK



READ



SING



FAMILY RESOURCE: The Secret To a Smarter Baby



- **Take a walk.** By taking a walk, you'll both get some fresh air and you'll get some exercise. It will also give you many more interesting things to talk about with your baby. Front-pouch carriers offer you the close contact that will help you carry on a *conversation* with your baby. Make sure that when you take your baby for a walk in a stroller you continue to talk with her. Stop from time to time to tell her about what you see together—and wait to see whether she has something to say about it too!
- **Sing, sing a song.** One of the classic *Sesame Street* songs says it perfectly: *Don't worry if you're not good enough for anyone else to hear, just sing, sing a song!* Your baby or toddler not only will cut you some slack if you happen to sing off key, but will become your biggest fan right away.
- **Imitate.** Start by sticking your tongue out; you may be surprised to find that your newborn copies you. Move on to making other funny faces and repeating the sounds your baby makes. Before long you'll find that he'll imitate you too.
- **Stay in touch.** Babies and toddlers love having close physical contact with their parents and caregivers. Your baby can be calmed by being held and rocked. Your toddler will probably adore rough and tumble play but also will want to cuddle with you. Massage is another great way to stay in touch with your baby. Beyond just being relaxing, touch is an important way babies experience the world. This close physical contact can help you connect.
- **Read a book.** The entire reading-with-your-baby experience fosters fun and appeals to many of her senses. Reading together provides her close contact from being held, comfort from the sound of your voice, and pictures and pages to watch go by. Don't worry if your baby pays attention to books for only a short time at first. It's the time you share and the sound of your voice that your baby will care about most. So cuddle together and make reading a warm and wonderful experience! Babies are born learning, and the amount of language they are exposed to in the earliest months and years has everything to do with how they develop and succeed.
- **Play pretend games together.** Along with reading aloud and talking, playing pretend games with children can be one of the best ways they learn language and good behavior and become ready to start school. Pretending can be as simple as you and your child becoming characters and making up a story or adventure together. Stories can be based on the books that you have read together or a place you have visited. Simple toys such as dolls and play food, for example, can be very helpful as you take part in pretend play. Surprisingly, expensive and sophisticated iPads and electronic toys with bright lights and sounds can get in the way of pretending together!
- **Turn off the television and other devices.** Your baby learns the most from you—the time you spend together, the words and sounds you make together, the activities you enjoy together such as singing, reading aloud and pretending. Time spent in front of a screen makes it harder for parents and caregivers to have





high-quality learning time with their children. So turn off the television and other electronic devices whenever you can. But when the television or device is on, make sure that the program is for young children and that it is educational and not violent. Watch the program with your child and talk to your child about the program.

Adapted from *Heading Home with Your Newborn*, 2nd Edition (Copyright © 2010 American Academy of Pediatrics), Revised by the AAP Council on Early Childhood, 2014

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BOOKS BUILD
CONNECTIONS
TOOLKIT



TALK



READ



SING



What's the best way to share books with your 1-year-old? Use the following tips, which cover 3 stages in your baby's life:

- 12 to 14 months
- 15 to 17 months
- 18 to 24 months

One-year-olds are “on the go” learning to walk, run, climb, and jump. One-year-olds are starting to point to objects of interest and learning to name them too. They have developed their personality. Some are quiet and shy. Others are active and fearless. One-year-olds are very attached to their parents and caregivers. Looking at and talking about books with 1-year-olds strengthen all of these abilities.

One-year-olds often have very strong preferences and wishes. Never force your child to share a book together when your child makes it clear that he does not wish to do so. Instead, find another activity you can do together, like talking, singing, or pretend play, that he may find more interesting.

For each age range, there are examples of what your child can do and tips you can do to help you share and enjoy books with your 1-year-old.

Sharing Books With Your 12- To 14-Month-Old

- Babies enjoy sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention you get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your baby.
- It teaches her how important she is to you. It increases her self-confidence.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with babies help teach them to talk.
- Reading books with babies helps them get ready to listen and learn in school.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.



FAMILY RESOURCE: Sharing Books With Your 1-Year-Old



- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines help prevent struggles at bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your baby how to fall asleep alone by putting her in bed sleepy but awake without a bottle or sippy cup. This helps prevent night waking and dental problems.
- This may become the best time of your day!

12- to 14-month olds can:

- Choose a favorite book to read with you.
- Point to pictures in a book they want you to look at, too.
- Explore a book by putting it in their mouth, turning it upside down, opening or closing it, or dropping it and listening for the sound this makes.
- Copy your reactions to the book you are enjoying together.
- Pay attention to a book for a few minutes at a time, until they learn how much fun it is to read with you.

You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with a few sturdy books.
- Name the pictures your baby is pointing to or looking at.
- Follow your baby's interest by helping her turn pages.
- Read with joy and enjoyment. Use different voices for different characters.
- Ask your child questions she can answer by pointing. You can say, *Where's the doggie?* or *Where's the happy baby?* or *Who says meow?*
- Imitate the sounds your child makes while looking at a picture. Then add a very short phrase, such as, *Moo, the cow says moo.*

Sharing Books With Your 15- To 17-Month-Old

- Babies enjoy sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your baby.
- It teaches him how important he is to you. It increases his self-confidence.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with babies help teach them to talk.
- Reading books with babies helps them get ready to listen and learn in school.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.



FAMILY RESOURCE: Sharing Books With Your 1-Year-Old



- Regular bedtime routines started with babies help prevent struggles at bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your baby how to fall asleep alone by putting him in bed sleepy but awake without a sippy cup. This helps prevent night waking and dental problems.
- This may become the best time of your day!

15- to 17-month-olds can:

- Choose a favorite book to read with you.
- Look at familiar pictures in books and make their own sounds for some of them.
- Point to an animal and make that animal's sound.
- Pay attention to a book for a few minutes at a time, until they learn how much fun it is to read with you.
- Laugh, squeal, and point while enjoying a favorite book with you.

You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with a few sturdy books.
- Let your toddler choose which books to read with you.
- Read the same book again if he wants this. Toddlers learn by repeating things over and over again.
- Name and say a few words about the pictures your child is pointing to or looking at.
- Read with joy and enjoyment. Use different voices for different characters.
- Copy the sounds or words he says while looking at a picture. Then add a few more words like: *Yes, eyes. The girl has pretty eyes.*
- Make up games while looking at pictures like: *Where's the girl's nose? Where's Mommy's nose? Where's your nose?*
- Name and then demonstrate actions or emotions in a book, such as: *Laughing. Look at the boy laughing.* Then laugh with your toddler!

Sharing Books With Your 18- To 23-Month-Old

- Toddlers enjoy sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your toddler.
- It teaches her how important she is to you. It builds her confidence and interest in learning.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with toddlers help teach them to talk.



FAMILY RESOURCE: Sharing Books With Your 1-Year-Old



- Reading books with toddlers helps them get ready to listen and learn in school.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines started with young children help prevent struggles at bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your toddler how to fall asleep alone by putting her in bed sleepy but awake without a sippy cup. This helps prevent night waking and dental problems.
- This may become the best time of your day!

18- to 23-month-olds can:

- Choose a book to share and tell you they want *More book* or *'Nother book*.
- Point to a favorite picture and say a word or two about it.
- Look at familiar animals and make their sounds.
- Finish some sentences from books they know very well, such as: *Happy faces. Sad... (faces) or Twinkle twinkle little... (star)*.
- Enjoy a trip to your local public library for story time or to borrow some books.

You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with some sturdy books.
- Use reading together as a way to calm and comfort your child.
- Read the same book again if she wants this. Toddlers learn by repeating things over and over again.
- Help your toddler understand by speaking in slow, short sentences and waiting for her to take a turn talking.
- Make up games while looking at pictures, like: *Where's the girl's nose? Where's Mommy's nose? Where's your nose?*
- Copy the name your toddler gives a picture and then add a comment like: *Yes, a plane! The plane is flying. The plane is flying in the sky.*
- Read with joy and enjoyment. Use different voices for different characters.
- Help your child pretend to be a character in a book. You can pretend to feed a baby or be puppies, barking and running after each other.

Adapted from AAP Literacy Promotion Toolkit Web site (2008), Pamela C High, MD, FAAP, Natalie Golova, MD, FAAP, Marita Hopmann, PhD, and the AAP Council on Early Childhood, 2014





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- Helping Your Child Learn to Read
- Sharing Books With Your Baby up to Age 11 Months
- Sharing Books With Your 2-Year-Old
- Sharing Books With Your Preschooler
- Sharing Books With Your School-Age Child
- The Secret to a Smarter Baby
- Why It Is Never Too Early to Start Reading With Your Baby

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SHARING BOOKS WITH YOUR 2-YEAR-OLD

BOOKS BUILD CONNECTIONS TOOLKIT



Use the following tips, which cover two stages if your child is 2 years old:

- 24–29 months
- 30–35 months

Two-year-olds are busy, active, and into everything. Two-year-olds are pointing and using their words to ask for things. They can understand and follow simple directions. Two-year-olds like to imitate, pretend, and laugh at silly things. Two-year-olds like to “do it myself,” but they are very attached to their parents and caregivers. Reading and talking about books with 2-year-olds strengthens all of these abilities.

Two-year-olds often have very strong preferences and wishes. Never force your child to share a book together when your child makes it clear that she does not wish to do so. Instead, find another activity you can do together, like talking, singing, or pretend play, that she may find more interesting.

For each age range, there are examples of what your child can do and tips you can do to help you share and enjoy books with your 2-year-old.

Sharing Books With Your 24- To 29-Month-Old

- Toddlers enjoy books and learn from sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your toddler.
- It teaches her how important she is to you. It builds her confidence and her interest in learning.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with toddlers teach them to talk and build their vocabulary.

TALK



READ



SING



FAMILY RESOURCE: Sharing Books With Your 2-Year-Old



- Reading books with toddlers helps them get ready to listen and learn in school.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines started with young children help prevent struggles at bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your toddler how to fall asleep alone by putting her in bed sleepy but awake without a sippy cup. This helps prevent night waking and dental problems.
- This may become the best time of your day!

24- to 29-month-olds can:

- Choose a book to read together.
- Love reading the same book over and over and over again!
- Repeat some of the words and phrases you say or read.
- Love laughing at silly stories, like the horse who could only say *quack, quack*.
- Ask you questions about the pictures or story, such as: *What's that?*

You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with some sturdy books.
- Use reading together as a way to calm and comfort your child.
- Start a conversation by repeating an important word your child has just said. You can say, *Yes, balloons. Lots of balloons. The girl has lots of balloons.* Then wait for your child to say something more.
- Read with joy and enjoyment! Use different voices for different characters.
- Respond with excitement to your child's questions and comments.
- Count pictures and wait for your child to repeat the numbers after you.
- Take your child to your local public library to borrow books or to enjoy story time.

Sharing Books With Your 30- To 35-Month-Old

- Toddlers enjoy books and learn from sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your bond with your toddler.
- It teaches him how important he is to you. It builds his confidence and his interest in learning.



FAMILY RESOURCE: Sharing Books With Your 2-Year-Old



- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with toddlers teach them to talk and build their vocabulary.
- Reading books with toddlers helps them get ready to listen and learn in school.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines started with young children help prevent struggles around bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your toddler how to fall asleep alone by putting him in bed sleepy but awake without a sippy cup. This helps prevent night waking and dental problems.
- This may become the best time of your day!

30- to 35-month-olds can:

- Tell you the names of the stories they want to share.
- Remember which book they read last night.
- Tell you about pictures and stories in longer sentences.
- Tell you their version of the story in a favorite book.
- Ask you questions about the characters or story in a book.
- Pretend to be a character in a favorite story.

You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with a few good picture books.
- Use reading together as a way to calm and comfort your child.
- Talk about how things that happen in books are like things your child has done or seen.
- Talk about the feelings of characters books. Ask if your child has ever felt like this.
- Count pictures and wait for your child to repeat the numbers after you.
- Read with joy and enjoyment! Use different voices for different characters.
- Ask your child to show you all the things in a picture that are alike in some way. You could say: *Where are all the animals?* or *Can you find all the things that are yellow?*
- Take your child to your local library to enjoy story time or to borrow books.

Adapted from AAP Literacy Promotion Toolkit Web site (2008), Pamela C High, MD, FAAP, Natalie Golova, MD, FAAP, Marita Hopmann, PhD, and the AAP Council on Early Childhood, 2014





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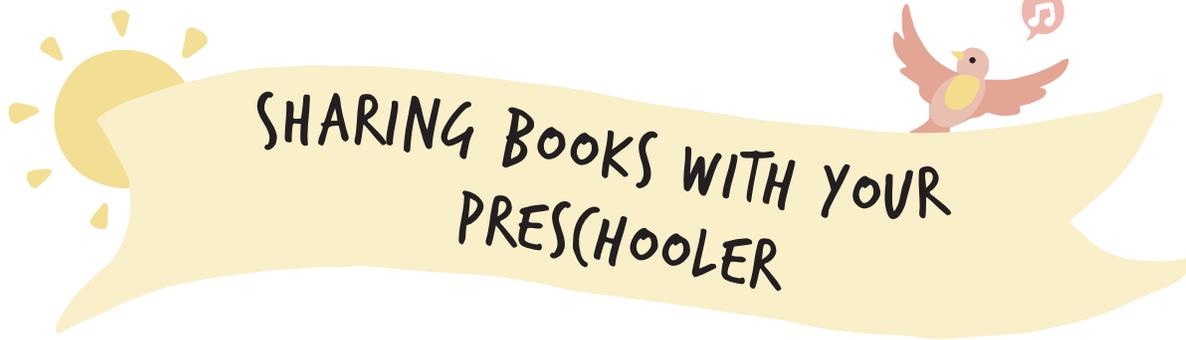
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SHARING BOOKS WITH YOUR PRESCHOOLER

BOOKS BUILD CONNECTIONS TOOLKIT



TALK



READ



SING



Use the following tips, for children in the preschool ages:

- 3 years old
- 4 years old

Preschoolers are chatty, curious, and full of themselves. Preschoolers are full of questions like: *Why does the sun shine? What makes the car go? Why can a bird fly, but I can't fly?* They are full of imagination and use play to work out challenges. Preschoolers are getting ready to read.

Preschoolers are very attached to their parents and caregivers. Reading and talking about books with preschoolers help strengthen all of these abilities.

For each age, there are examples of what your child can do and tips you can do to help you share and enjoy books with your preschooler.

Sharing Books With Your 3-Year-Old

- Preschoolers enjoy books and learn from sharing books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time helps strengthen your bond with your preschooler.
- It teaches her how important she is to you. It builds her self-confidence and her interest in learning.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with preschoolers build their vocabulary.
- Reading books with preschoolers helps them get ready to listen and learn in school.
- Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.



FAMILY RESOURCE: Sharing Books With Your Preschooler



- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines started with young children help prevent struggles around bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your preschooler how to fall asleep alone by putting her in bed sleepy but awake without a sippy cup. This helps prevent night waking and dental problems.
- This may become the best time of your day!

3-year-olds can:

- Name the books they want to read with you.
- Pretend to read a favorite book out loud to you.
- Tell you how a story is like things they have seen or done.
- Ask you questions about books you are enjoying together.
- "Correct" you if you skip a page or even a word in a favorite book.
- Tell you what they like about a book.
- Tell you the story in a favorite book in their own "words."

You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up with a few good picture books.
- Ask your child to tell you about the pictures and the story.
- Respond with enthusiasm to your child's questions and comments.
- Read with joy and enjoyment! Use different voices for different characters.
- Ask your child to show you all the things in a picture that are alike in some way. You can say: *Can you find all the blue things?* or *Show me all the things that can fly.*
- Talk about emotions in pictures and stories. You can say, *Look at that bear! He looks sad. Why do you think he is sad? What makes you sad?*
- Point out colors, shapes, and numbers in their books.
- Take your child to your local public library to borrow books or to enjoy story time.

Sharing Books With Your 4-Year-Old

- Preschoolers enjoy books and learn from reading books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time helps strengthen your relationship with your child and builds his self-confidence, interest in learning, and ability to handle small stresses.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with preschoolers help build their vocabulary.



FAMILY RESOURCE: Sharing Books With Your Preschooler



- Reading books with preschoolers helps them get ready to listen and learn in school.
- Set aside 10 to 20 minutes for reading together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines help prevent struggles around bedtime.
- At the end of your routine, teach your preschooler how to fall asleep alone by putting him into bed relaxed, but awake without a sippy cup. This helps prevent night waking and dental caries.
- This may become the best time of your day!

4-year-olds can:

- Tell you which books they want to read with you.
- Pretend to read a favorite book out loud to you.
- Tell you how a story is like things they have seen or done.
- Ask you questions about books you are reading together.
- “Correct” you if you skip a word or page in a favorite book.
- Tell you the story in a favorite book in their own words.
- Begin to name the first letters in some of the words you are reading together.

You can:

- Find a quiet, cozy place to cuddle up together with a few good books.
- Ask your child to tell you about the pictures and the story.
- Respond with interest to your child’s questions and comments.
- Read with joy and enjoyment! Use different voices for different characters.
- Ask your child to show you all the things in a picture that are alike in some way. You can say: *Can you find all the things that live in the ocean?* or *Show me all the things that can jump.*
- Point out colors, shapes, numbers, and letters and ask him to find them in the books you are reading together.
- Point out written words in the world around you, like on traffic signs and on food labels in the grocery store . Ask your child to find a new word each time you go out together.
- Take your child to your local public library to borrow books or to enjoy story time.

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SHARING BOOKS WITH YOUR SCHOOL-AGE CHILD

BOOKS BUILD CONNECTIONS TOOLKIT



TALK



READ



SING



What's the best way to share books with your school-age child? Use the following tips, if your child is turning 5-years-old or older.

Children must learn to read to succeed in school. Learning to read is easy for some children and harder for others, but reading aloud with those you love is fun for all children and all parents. Your children are never too old or too young to love reading books with you. Reading together and talking about books with children can give you a special way of connecting with them.

For each age, there are examples of what your child can do and tips you can do to help you read, share, and enjoy books with your school-age children.

Sharing Books With Your 5-Year-Old

- Five-year-olds are getting ready for kindergarten.
- Kindergarteners love books. They learn from reading books with you, the most important person in their world.
- They love the special one-on-one attention they get when you read, talk, sing, and play with them.
- This special time strengthens your relationship with your child.
- It teaches her how important she is to you. It builds her self-esteem, her interest in learning, and her ability to handle small stresses.
- Looking at, reading, and talking about books with kindergarteners help build their vocabulary. It teaches them about letters and the sounds that they make.
- Reading books with kindergartners helps them get ready to listen and learn in school.
- Set aside 10 to 30 minutes every day for reading together, perhaps as part of your bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- Regular bedtime routines help prevent struggles around bedtime.



FAMILY RESOURCE: Sharing Books With Your School-Age Child



- At the end of your routine, teaching kindergartners how to fall asleep alone by putting them into bed relaxed, but awake, is important. This helps prevent night waking.
- This may become the best time of your day!

5-year-olds can:

- Tell you which books they want to read with you.
- Tell you how a story makes them feel or is like things they have seen or done.
- Ask you questions about books you are reading together.
- Begin to name the first letters in some of the words you are reading and start to learn the sound that letter makes.
- Predict (before turning the page) what might happen next in a story.
- Make a favorite story into a play. Put that play on for you.

You can:

- Find a quiet, comfy place to cuddle up together with a few good books.
- Ask your child to tell you about the pictures and the story or to guess what may happen next.
- Respond with interest to her questions and comments.
- Read with joy and enjoyment! Use different voices for different characters.
- Talk about the emotions in pictures and stories. You can say: *Look at her face! She looks mad. Why do you think she is mad? What makes you mad?*
- Ask her to solve problems in stories. You can say: *Oh, no! That boy won't share his cars. How would you feel if someone did that? What would you do?*
- Count the characters or objects in the pictures with her.
- Point out and name colors, shapes, numbers, and letters in books with her.
- Point out written words in the world around you, like on traffic signs and on food labels in the store. Ask her to find a new word each time you go out together.
- Take your child to your local public library to borrow books or to enjoy story time.

Sharing Books With Your 6–10-Year-Old

- Young school children who read with their parents regularly learn to love books.
- They treasure their special time reading with you, the most important person in their world.
- There is no reason to stop reading together when children begin to read themselves. In fact, there are many reasons why reading together will continue to be both fun and rewarding.
- Children in elementary school are well on their way to becoming independent readers, yet you can read at a much higher level than they can.



FAMILY RESOURCE: Sharing Books With Your School-Age Child



- The adventure, excitement, imagination, and humor in many children’s books appeal to children and to their parents.
- Some children must work harder than others to learn to break the “code” connecting letters to sounds, words, and ideas. Reading great stories aloud with these children pushes them to want to put in the extra effort they will need to master the code and learn to read on their own.
- Reading and talking about the books you read with young children build their vocabulary.
- Talking about the books you read will boost their reading comprehension and expand their knowledge of the world.
- This special one-on-one time will continue to strengthen your bond with your child. It can build his self-confidence, increase his motivation to learn, and help him develop the ability to handle small stresses.
- Continue setting aside 10 to 30 minutes every day for reading books aloud together, perhaps as part of your regular bedtime routine.
- This time should be free of TV, texting, and other distractions.
- This can be the time of day that you both look forward to the most.

6–10-year-olds can:

- Choose a book from school, from the library, or with you that they want to read together.
- Begin to sound out some of the words in books or they may be able to read fluently, depending on their age and ability.
- Predict (before turning the page) what might happen next in a story.
- Retell a part of or the entire story you are reading.
- Tell you what they think about the story and imagine how they might have changed some parts of it, if they had written it themselves.
- Talk about how the story reminds them of things they have done or how they have felt.

You can:

- Find a quiet, comfy place to cuddle up together with a good book because you just love being with your child!
- If your child needs to practice reading skills or loves to read aloud himself, you can take turns reading a page or a chapter with him.
- Stop and ask your child to tell you what he thinks about the story or how he thinks the people in the story are feeling or to guess what may happen next.
- Read with joy and enjoyment! Respond with interest to your child’s questions and thoughts.
- Ask your child to imagine how he might have told this story differently or what message this story may have given him.



FAMILY RESOURCE: Sharing Books With Your School-Age Child



- Take your child to your local public library and help him choose books to borrow that you both want to read together.
- Remember that reading together starting when children are young is a powerful way to build healthy habits that can last a lifetime. There is a huge return on this investment!

Adapted from AAP Literacy Promotion Toolkit Web site (2008), Pamela C High, MD, FAAP, Natalie Golova, MD, FAAP, Marita Hopmann, PhD, and the AAP Council on Early Childhood, 2014

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WHY IT IS NEVER TOO EARLY TO READ WITH YOUR BABY

BOOKS BUILD CONNECTIONS TOOLKIT



Here are some tips from doctors on reading with very young children, including the 5 Rs of early education.

When parents talk, read, and sing with their babies and toddlers, connections are formed in their young brains. These connections build language, literacy, and social-emotional skills at an important time in a young child's development. These activities strengthen the bond between parent and child. Pediatricians know this and urge parents to start reading with their babies from the start.

So what are some tips for reading with the very young?

- **Cuddle up and read with emotion.** Infants as young as a few days or weeks old can know and prefer their parents' voices and faces. Although they may not understand the words or story in a book, they will respond to the emotion in your voice and the expression on your face when you read or talk with them. They love to look at pictures with bright colors and are happiest in your arms.
- **Choose colorful and sturdy books.** As babies get older, they will reach out to hold a book and then put it into their mouths to explore it.
- **Plan a special reading time.** Active young children may lose interest in a book after only 1 to 2 minutes. So follow their lead, but keep reading, talking, and singing WITH your baby regularly and his interest and attention span will grow. Make this time special by giving your baby your full attention. Turn off the TV and computers and take a break from texting.
- **Read together every day.** As babies grow into toddlers, reading aloud together can be a very helpful routine, especially when it is part of your regular calming bedtime. Young children love having choices, so letting them pick the book to read together can be a big hit. Toddlers quickly develop favorites and may ask you to read the same story over and over, so offer choices that you like too.
- **Make time to talk about feelings.** Toddlers can point to pictures of objects (*Show me the car.*) and characters (*Which one says meow?*) in books. As their language grows, they may be able to name the pictures that you

TALK



READ



SING



FAMILY RESOURCE: Why It Is Never Too Early to Start Reading With Your Baby



point to or finish the sentences in favorite books such as *Twinkle, twinkle little... (star)*. Sometimes they even pretend to read the book themselves. Talking about the emotions characters in books are having can give you a chance to talk to young children about their own feelings, like being mad, sad, or happy.

- **Ask your child questions.** Preschoolers are often chatty, curious, and full of themselves. By this age, they can probably tell you part of the stories in their favorite books or the stories that they have imagined. As print becomes more interesting, some learn to point to letters in the alphabet or to count some of the pictures. Asking your child questions about the story (*What are the characters thinking? What might happen next?*) is a fun way for them to learn. These kinds of conversations build language, a desire to learn, and early reading skills.
- **Keep reading together, even when your child can read.** Children are never too young or too old to enjoy reading with you. When they are learning to read themselves, you can still read stories to them that are at a higher reading level than those they can read on their own. There are many great children's books. Your local librarian can help you find just the right books to enjoy during your special time reading together.

This time together has a powerful impact on children's development because it strengthens their relationships with their parents and caregivers, the most important people in their world. A great deal of research supports this statement, yet fewer than half of children younger than age 5 in the United States are read to daily. This has not changed in the past 10 years, despite recent support for early education.

Pediatricians are promoting the 5 Rs of early education with young families:

- **Reading** together as a daily, fun, family activity
- **Rhyming**, playing, talking, singing, and cuddling together often throughout the day
- Building **Routines** for meals, play, and sleep, which help children know what to expect and what is expected of them
- Giving **Rewards** for everyday successes (especially for effort toward goals like helping), understanding that praise from those closest to a child is a very potent reward
- Developing **Relationships** that are nurturing, reciprocal, purposeful, and lasting, which are the foundation of healthy early brain and child development

Pediatricians are taking a stand to spread the news that reading aloud, talking, and singing with young children are both fun and rewarding. The benefits are so clear and so important that promoting reading at young children's check-ups has become an essential part of pediatric care. Starting a daily routine of reading with young children, perhaps to settle down at bedtime, is a powerful way to build healthful habits that last a lifetime. The return on this investment is huge!





Adapted from 2014 AAP Policy Statement, *“Literacy Promotion: An Essential Component of Pediatric Primary Care Practice,”* and expanded by Pamela C High, MD, FAAP, and the AAP Council on Early Childhood, 2014

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