

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING EARLY LITERACY AND EARLY LEARNING

BOOKS BUILD
CONNECTIONS
TOOLKIT



Dig deeper and explore the evidence demonstrating that early shared-reading experiences build language, literacy, and social-emotional skills and strengthen the bond between parent and child during the critical early childhood years. You can also examine the evidence base supporting practice-based literacy promotion in the medical home. Below are abstracts from two American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) documents. The first abstract is the AAP policy statement “Literacy Promotion: An Essential Component of Primary Care Pediatric Practice.” The second abstract is from “School Readiness,” an AAP technical report that links early literacy with readiness for school. Pediatric professionals can also promote the “5 Rs” of early education, a simple and useful framework for families to support their children’s early literacy and early learning.

“Books are part of our lives. We read at bedtime, in waiting rooms, and whenever we just want sometime to cuddle together. Having a doctor give a book to my children shows them just how important reading is.”—Brenda Wells, mother of a 3-year-old and a newborn

Why Early Literacy Promotion Is So Important

Research shows that reading, talking, and singing regularly with young children from birth stimulates brain development. This stimulation in turn builds language, literacy, and children’s motivation to learn. A young child’s early language experience predicts her early academic skill; however, national data reveal that many parents have not heard about or acted on this important message.

- More than 1 in 3 American children start kindergarten without the language skills they need to learn to read.
- Each year, approximately 2/3 of children in the United States and 80% of those living below the poverty threshold fail to develop reading proficiency by the end of third grade.
- About 60% of American children from birth to age 5 who live in high-income families are read to daily; almost 2/3 of them hear stories or sing with their parents every day.
- By comparison, 1/3 of children from low-income families are read to daily and fewer than half of them hear stories or sing with their parents every day.
- Parents are more likely to sing with or tell stories to their children than they are to read together. In families dealing with economic hardship, children are less likely to engage in any of these activities as compared with children in more economically advantaged families.
- When pediatricians provide guidance about the importance of reading and talking with young children and provide children’s books, the necessary tools to young families, parents listen. They read more with their young child and their child’s early language and early literacy skills grow.

Citation: National Survey of Children’s Health 2011–2012, <http://childhealthdata.org/learn/NSCH>; and AAP Policy Statement, “Literacy Promotion: An Essential Component of Primary Care Pediatric Practice” (see next page).

Abstract of AAP Policy Statement “Literacy Promotion: An Essential Component of Primary Care Pediatric Practice”

Reading regularly with young children stimulates optimal patterns of brain development and strengthens parent–child relationships at a critical time in child development, which, in turn, builds language, literacy, and social–emotional skills that last a lifetime.

Pediatric providers have a unique opportunity to encourage parents to engage in this important and enjoyable activity with their children beginning in infancy. Research has revealed that parents listen and children learn as a result of literacy promotion by pediatricians, which provides a practical and evidence-based opportunity to support early brain development in primary care practice.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that pediatric providers promote early literacy development for children beginning in infancy and continuing at least until the age of kindergarten entry by doing the following:

1. Advising all parents that reading aloud with young children can enhance parent–child relationships and prepare young minds to learn language and early literacy skills
2. Counseling all parents about developmentally appropriate shared-reading activities that are enjoyable for children and their parents and offer language-rich exposure to books, pictures, and the written word
3. Providing developmentally appropriate books given at health supervision visits for all high-risk, low-income young children
4. Using a robust spectrum of options to support and promote these efforts
5. Partnering with other child advocates to influence national messaging and policies that support and promote these key early shared-reading experiences

The AAP supports federal and state funding for children’s books to be provided at pediatric health supervision visits to children at high risk living at or near the poverty threshold and the

integration of literacy promotion, an essential component of pediatric primary care, into pediatric resident education.

This policy statement is supported by the AAP technical report “School Readiness” (see the abstract below) and supports the AAP policy statement “Early Childhood Adversity, Toxic Stress, and the Role of the Pediatrician: Translating Developmental Science Into Lifelong Health.”

The full policy statement includes data related to the need for early literacy promotion, the connection between early reading and early brain and child development, and the relation of early literacy to health and school readiness.

Full citation: Council on Early Childhood. Literacy Promotion: An Essential Component of Primary Care Pediatric Practice. *Pediatrics*. August 1, 2014;134(2): 404-409. doi: 10.1542/peds.2014-1384

Abstract of AAP Technical Report “School Readiness”

School readiness includes the readiness of the individual child, the school’s readiness for children, and the ability of the family and community to support optimal early child development.

It is the responsibility of schools to be ready for all children at all levels of readiness. Children’s readiness for kindergarten should become an outcome measure for community-based programs, rather than an exclusion criterion at the beginning of the formal educational experience.

Our new knowledge of early brain and child development has revealed that modifiable factors in a child’s early experience can greatly affect that child’s learning trajectory.

Many US children enter kindergarten with limitations in their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development that might have been significantly diminished or eliminated through early identification of and attention to child and family needs.

Pediatricians have a role in promoting school readiness for all children, beginning at birth, through their practices and advocacy. The American Academy of Pediatrics affords pediatricians many opportunities to promote the physical, social–emotional, and educational health of young children, with other advocacy groups.

PEDIATRIC PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE: EVIDENCE SUPPORTING EARLY LITERACY AND EARLY LEARNING

This technical report supports American Academy of Pediatrics policy statements “Quality Early Education and Child Care From Birth to Kindergarten” and “The Inappropriate Use of School ‘Readiness’ Tests.”

Full citation: High PC; for the Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care and the Council on School Health. School readiness technical report. *Pediatrics*. April 1, 2008; 121(4):e1008-e1015.
doi:10.1542/peds.2008-0079

Reaffirmation for this policy was published in *Pediatrics*. December 1, 2013; 132(6):e1715.

The 5 Rs for Early Education

As recommended in both the policy statement and the technical report summarized above, pediatricians are encouraged to promote the **5 Rs** of early education with young families:

1. **Reading** together as a daily, fun, family activity
2. **Rhyming**, playing, talking, singing, and cuddling together often throughout the day
3. Building **Routines** for meals, play, and sleep, which help children know what to expect and what is expected of them
4. 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
5. Developing **Relationships** that are nurturing, reciprocal, purposeful, and lasting, which are the foundations of healthy early brain and child development

By making these statements, pediatricians are getting the word out that reading aloud, talking, and singing with young children, beginning at birth, 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!

Other pediatric professional ePubs in this AAP series include the following:

- Finding the Right Book for Every Child
- Selecting Books for Your Program
- What Every Pediatric Professional Can Do to Promote Early Literacy and Early Learning

Family resources related to early literacy and early learning include the following:

- Helping Your Child Learn to Read
- 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
- The Secret to a Smarter Baby
- Why It Is Never Too Early to Start Reading With Your Baby

Please visit aap.org/literacy for further information about resources mentioned within this publication and additional resources on early literacy.

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Here you can find examples of a range of children’s books sorted by age or developmental level and topic, including medical conditions affecting children. These lists will help you identify the types of books you are comfortable recommending to parents and children in your program. There is also a short list of reference materials that contain longer lists of developmentally appropriate books.

“I love using books as a developmental assessment tool during clinic visits. I allow the children to help choose their own which helps them feel invested in the book and look forward to reading after the visit. I also encourage parents to read with their children, as the experience can prove to be an invaluable opportunity to open lines of communication as various themes and issues are broached. The warm bond that develops with reading together is a gift in itself, not only to parents and their children, but also to us pediatricians observing over time!”—Naba Sharif, MD

Books by Age or Developmental Level

<p>For Infants to 11 Months</p>	<p><i>Baby Faces Board Book: HUGS & KISSES</i>, by Roberta Grobel <i>Baby Faces Board Book #1: PEEK-A-BOO!</i> by Roberta Grobel <i>Baby Faces Board Book #2: SMILE!</i> by Roberta Grobel <i>Carry Me (Babies Everywhere)</i>, published by Star Bright Books <i>Eating the Rainbow (Babies Everywhere)</i>, published by Star Bright Books</p>
<p>For 1-Year-Olds</p>	<p><i>Blankie!</i> by Leslie Patricelli <i>Counting Farm</i>, by Kathy Henderson <i>No, No, Yes, Yes</i>, by Leslie Patricelli <i>Pat-A-Cake</i>, by Tony Kenyon <i>Up and Down</i>, by Catherine Hnatov</p>
<p>For 2-Year-Olds</p>	<p><i>Barnyard Dance!</i> by Sandra Boynton <i>Duckie’s Splash</i>, by Frances Barry <i>Flora McDonell’s ABC</i>, by Flora McDonell <i>Mr. Brown Can Moo, Can You?</i> by Dr Seuss <i>The Poky Little Puppy</i>, by Janette Lowery and Gustaf Tenggren</p>
<p>For 3-Year-Olds</p>	<p><i>Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type</i>, by Debbie Cronin, Betsy Lewin, and Randy Travis <i>Have You Seen My Duckling?</i> by Nancy Tafuri <i>It’s Mine!</i> by Leo Lionni <i>Miss Rumphius</i>, by Barbara Cooney <i>Sylvester and the Magic Pebble</i>, by William Steig</p>

For 4-Year-Olds	<i>The Adventures of Taxi Dog</i> , by Debra and Sal Barracca <i>The Gingerbread Man</i> , by Catherine McCafferty <i>The Little Red Hen</i> , by Diane Muldrow and JP Miller <i>One Morning in Maine</i> , by Robert McCloskey <i>The Snowy Day</i> , by Ezra Jack Keats
For 5-Year-Olds	<i>Bea and Mr. Jones</i> , by Amy Schwartz <i>First Day Jitters</i> , by Julie Danneberg <i>Mama Don't Allow</i> , by Thatcher Hurd <i>Millions of Cats</i> , by Wanda Gag <i>Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present</i> , by Charlotte Zolotow
For 6-Year-Olds	<i>Frog and Toad Are Friends</i> , by Arnold Lobel <i>Nate the Great</i> , by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat <i>Tough Boris</i> , by Mem Fox <i>What Do You Do With a Kangaroo?</i> by Mercer Mayer
For 7-Year-Olds	<i>Dear Mrs. Larue: Letters from Obedience School</i> , by Mark Teague <i>The Dot</i> , by Peter Reynolds <i>Martha Speaks</i> , by Susan Meddaugh <i>Night Noises</i> , by Mem Fox <i>Three Stories You Can Read to Your Dog</i> , by Sara Swan Miller
For 8-Year-Olds	<i>The Boxcar Children</i> series, by Gertrude Chandler Warner <i>Cinderella's Rat</i> , by Susan Meddaugh <i>Flat Stanley</i> , by Jeff Brown <i>Geronimo Stilton</i> series, by Geronimo Stilton <i>Magic Tree House</i> series, by Mary Pope Osborne

Children's Books by Topic

Pediatricians are often asked to help parents talk with their young children about issues like the birth of a sibling, where babies come from, or going to the dentist. To help parents begin to talk with their child about these and other subjects, the following is a short list of picture books for young children addressing a number of these kinds of topics.

ABC Books	<i>Alphabet City</i> , by Stephen T. Johnson <i>Chicka Chicka Boom Boom</i> , by Bill Martin, Jr <i>The Dinosaur Alphabet Book</i> , by Jerry Pallotta <i>The Guinea Pig ABC Book</i> , by Kate Duke <i>Penguins ABC</i> , by Kevin Schaffer
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<p>Adoption Books</p>	<p><i>A Mother for Choco</i>, by Keiko Kasza <i>My Mei Mei</i>, by Ed Young <i>The Red Blanket</i>, by Eliza Thomas <i>Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born</i>, by Jamie Lee Curtis <i>We Belong Together</i>, by Todd Parr <i>You're Not My Real Mother</i>, by Molly Friedrich</p>
<p>Bedtime Books</p>	<p><i>Bedtime for Frances</i>, by Russell Hoban <i>Can't You Sleep Little Bear?</i> by Martin Waddell <i>Good Night Gorilla</i>, by Peggy Rathmann <i>Grandfather Twilight</i>, by Barbara Helen Berger <i>How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight?</i> by Jane Yolen <i>Just Go to Bed</i>, by Mercer Mayer <i>Ten, Nine, Eight</i>, by Molly Bang <i>Time for Bed</i>, by Mem Fox <i>Time to Say Goodnight</i>, by Sally Lloyd-Jones and Jane Chapman</p>
<p>Classic Children's Picture Books</p>	<p><i>Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day</i>, by Judith Viorst and Ray Cruz <i>Blueberries for Sal</i>, by Robert McCloskey <i>Caps for Sale</i>, by Esphry Slobodkina <i>The Carrot Seed</i>, by Ruth Krauss <i>Corduroy</i>, by Don Freeman <i>The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash</i>, by Trinka Hakes Noble <i>Dial Each Peach Pear Plum</i>, by Allan Ahlberg <i>George and Martha: The Complete Stories of Two Best Friends</i>, by James Marshall <i>Jingle Dancer</i>, by Cynthia Leitich Smith <i>Lily's Purple Plastic Purse</i>, by Kevin Henkes</p>
<p>Color & Shape Books</p>	<p><i>Color Farm</i>, by Lois Ehlert <i>A Color of His Own</i>, by Leo Lionni <i>Color Zoo</i>, by Lois Ehlert <i>Mouse Paint</i>, by Ellen Stoll Walsh <i>Planting a Rainbow</i>, by Lois Ehlert</p>
<p>Counting Books</p>	<p><i>Baby Learns to Count</i>, by Beverly Blacksheep <i>Count with Maisy</i>, by Lucy Cousins <i>Mouse Count</i>, by Ellen Stoll Walsh <i>Penguins 123</i>, by Kevin Schaffer</p>

<p>Death/Dying Books</p>	<p><i>I Miss You: A First Look at Death</i>, by Pat Thomas and Leslie Harker <i>The Saddest Time</i>, by Norma Simon and Jacqueline Rogers <i>A Taste of Blackberries</i>, by Doris Buchanan Smith and Michael Wimmer <i>What’s Heaven?</i> by Maria Shiver and Sandra Speidel <i>When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death</i>, by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown</p>
<p>Death of a Pet Books</p>	<p><i>Cat Heaven</i>, by Cynthia Rylant <i>The Day Scooter Died: A Book about the Death of a Pet</i>, by Kathleen Long Bostrom and Cheri Bladholm <i>Dog Heaven</i>, by Cynthia Rylant <i>I’ll Always Love You</i>, by Hans Wilhelm <i>The Tenth Good Thing About Barney</i>, by Judith Viorst and Erik Blegvad</p>
<p>Dentists Books</p>	<p><i>Berenstain Bears Go to the Dentist</i>, by Jan and Stan Berenstain <i>Dr. DeSoto</i>, by William Steig <i>Just Going to the Dentist</i>, by Mercer Mayer</p>
<p>Divorce Books</p>	<p><i>Amber Brown Is Feeling Blue</i>, by Paula Danziger <i>Dinosaurs Divorce</i>, by Marc Brown and Laurie Krasny Brown <i>I Don’t Want to Talk About It</i>, by Jeanie Franz Ransom and Kathryn Kunz Finney <i>My Family’s Changing</i>, by Pat Thomas <i>Two Homes</i>, by Claire Masurel and Kady MacDonald Denton</p>
<p>The Five Senses Books</p>	<p><i>Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?</i> by Bill Martine Jr and Eric Carle <i>Eye Spy Colors (Peephole Books)</i>, by Debbie MacKinnon and Anthea Sieveking <i>Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?</i> by Bill Martine Jr and Eric Carle</p>
<p>Friends Books</p>	<p><i>Amos & Boris</i>, by William Steig <i>A Best Friend for Frances</i>, by Russell Hoban and Lillian Hoban <i>Caleb & Kate</i>, by William Steig <i>Frog and Toad Are Friends</i>, by Arnold Lobel</p>
<p>Good Nutrition Books</p>	<p><i>Bread and Jam for Frances</i>, by Russell Hoban and Lillian Hoban <i>Eating the Alphabet</i>, by Lois Ehlert <i>Eat Your Peas, Ivy Louise!</i> by Leo Landry <i>Everybody Cooks Rice</i>, by Norah Dooley and Peter J Thornton <i>Gregory the Terrible Eater</i>, by Mitchell Sharmat, Jose Aruego, and Ariane Dewey <i>The Gulps</i>, by Rosemary Wells and Marc Brown <i>Lunch</i>, by Denise Fleming <i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i>, by Eric Carle <i>Ugly Vegetables</i>, by Grace Lin</p>

<p>Human Body/ Where Babies Come From Books</p>	<p><i>Arthur’s New Baby</i>, by Marc Brown <i>A Baby Sister for Frances</i>, by Russell Hoban and Lillian Hoban <i>How You Were Born</i>, by Joanna Cole and Margaret Miller <i>It’s Not the Stork! A Book About Girls, Boys, Babies, Bodies, Families and Friends</i>, by Robie H. Harris and Michael Emberley <i>It’s Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex and Sexual Health</i>, by Robie Harris and Michael Emberley <i>It’s So Amazing! A Book About Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families</i>, by Robie Harris and Michael Emberley <i>Julius, The Baby of the World</i>, by Kevin Henkes <i>The New Baby</i>, by Mercer Mayer <i>The New Baby</i>, by Fred Rogers <i>“What’s Happening to Me?” An Illustrated Guide to Puberty</i>, by Peter Mayle and Arthur Robins</p>
<p>New Home/ Moving Books</p>	<p><i>Alexander, Who’s Not (Do You Hear Me? I Mean It!) Going to Move</i>, by Judith Viorst, Ray Cruz, and Robin Preiss Glasser <i>The Berenstain Bears’ Moving Day</i>, by Stan Berenstain and Jan Berenstain <i>Goodbye House</i>, by Frank Asch <i>Ira Says Goodbye</i>, by Bernard Waber <i>We’re Moving</i>, by Heather Maisner and Kristina Stephenson</p>
<p>Reluctant Readers Books</p>	<p><i>Amber Brown Is Not a Crayon</i>, by Paula Danziger and Tony Ross <i>Flat Stanley</i>, by Jeff Brown and Macky Pamintuan <i>Frog and Toad Together</i>, by Arnold Lobel <i>Hatchet</i>, by Gary Paulsen <i>The Mouse and the Motorcycle</i>, by Beverly Cleary and Jacqueline Rogers</p>
<p>Safety Books</p>	<p><i>Dinosaurs, Beware! A Safety Guide</i>, by Stephen Kensky <i>Fire! Fire!</i> by Gail Gibbons <i>I Can Be Safe: A First Look at Safety</i>, by Pat Thomas and Lesley Harker <i>Officer Buckle and Gloria</i>, by Peggy Rathmann <i>Stop, Drop, and Roll: A Book about Fire Safety</i>, by Margaret Cuyler and Arthur Howard</p>
<p>School Books</p>	<p><i>Bea and Mr. Jones</i>, by Amy Schwartz <i>First Day Jitters</i>, by Julie Danneberg <i>Miss Nelson Is Missing</i>, by Harry Allard and James Marshall <i>Off to School Baby Duck!</i> by Amy Hest and Jill Barton <i>Vera’s First Day of School</i>, by Vera Rosenberry</p>

<p>Siblings Books</p>	<p><i>Big Sister and Little Sister</i>, by Charlotte Zolotow and Martha Alexander <i>I'm a Big Brother</i>, by Joanna Cole and Rosalinda Kightley <i>I'm a Big Sister</i>, by Joanna Cole and Rosalinda Kightley <i>Seven Chinese Brothers</i>, by Margaret Mahy, Jean Tseng, and Mou-sien Tseng <i>Sisters</i>, by David MacPhail <i>The Wildest Brother</i>, by Cornelia Funke</p>
<p>Toilet Training Books</p>	<p><i>Everyone Poops</i>, by Taro Gomi and Amanda Mayer Stinchecum <i>Going to the Potty</i>, by Fred Rogers <i>My Big Boy Potty/My Big Girl Potty</i>, by Joanna Cole and Maxie Chambliss <i>Once Upon a Potty—Girl/Boy</i>, by Alona Frankel <i>Where's the Poop?</i> by Julie Marques and Susan Kathleen Hartung</p>

Books About Going to the Hospital or Doctor

These books are also primarily picture books for children who need to go to the doctor or hospital or those with siblings or young friends who are ill.

<p>Going to the Hospital Picture Books</p>	<p><i>Clifford Visits the Hospital</i>, by Norman Bridwell <i>Curious George Goes to the Hospital</i>, by Margret and HA Rey <i>Do I Have to Go to the Hospital?</i> by Pat Thomas and Lesley Harker <i>Franklin Goes to the Hospital</i>, by Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda Clark <i>Going to the Hospital</i>, by Anne Civardi, Michelle Bates, and Stephen Cartwright <i>Going to the Hospital</i>, by Fred Rogers <i>Good-bye Tonsils</i>, by Craig Hatkoff, Juliana Hatkoff, and Marilyn Mets <i>Little Critter: My Visit to the Hospital</i>, by Mercer Mayer <i>Madeline</i>, by Ludwig Bemelmans</p>
<p>Books for Children With Serious Illnesses</p>	<p><i>Chemo Girl: Saving the World One Treatment at a Time</i>, by Christina Richmond <i>H is for Hair Fairy: An Alphabet of Encouragement and Insight for Kids (and Kids at Heart!) with Cancer</i>, by Kim Martin and Wend Boomhower <i>Kathy's Hats: A Story of Hope</i>, by Trudy Kisher and Nadine Bernard Westcott <i>What About Me? When Brothers and Sisters Get Sick</i>, by Allan Peterkin and Frances Middendorf <i>When Molly Was in the Hospital: A Book for Brothers and Sisters of Hospitalized Children</i>, by Debbie Duncan and Nina Ollikainen</p>
<p>More Minor Illness/Health Supervision Books</p>	<p><i>Berenstain Bears Go to the Doctor</i>, by Jan and Stan Berenstain <i>Katie Caught a Cold (Dr. Hippo)</i>, by Charlotte Cowan and Katy Bratun <i>The Little Elephant with the Big Earache (Dr. Hippo)</i>, by Charlotte Cowan and Elaine Garvin <i>Peeper Has a Fever (Dr. Hippo)</i>, by Charlotte Cowan and Susan Banta <i>Sadie's Sore Throat (Dr. Hippo)</i>, by Charlotte Cowan and Katy Bratun</p>

<p>Books About a Hospital Stay, an Operation, or a Procedure</p>	<p><i>Becky’s Story: A Book to Share</i>, by Donna Baznik</p> <p><i>A Big Operation</i>, by Richard Scarry</p> <p><i>Chris Gets Ear Tubes</i>, by Betty Pace and Kathryn Hutton</p> <p><i>Curious George Goes to the Hospital</i>, by Margret and HA Rey</p> <p><i>David’s Story: A Book About Surgery</i>, by Benjamin Brink</p> <p><i>Koko Bear’s Big Earache: Preparing Your Child For Ear Tube Surgery</i>, by Vicki Lansky</p> <p><i>Let’s Talk About When Someone You Love Is in the Hospital</i>, by Marianne Johnston</p> <p><i>Let’s Talk About When You Have Your Tonsils Out</i>, by Melanie Apel Gordon</p> <p><i>Maggie and the Emergency Room</i>, by Martine Davison</p> <p><i>My Brother Needs an Operation</i>, by Anna Marie Jaworski, Linda Ball, and Sarah Lualdi Moran</p> <p><i>Surgery For Me?</i> by Sara Jane Books</p> <p><i>Tubes in My Ears: My Trip to the Hospital</i>, by Virginia Dooley and Miriam Katin</p> <p><i>Why am I Going to the Hospital?</i> by Carole Stuart-Livingston</p> <p><i>Your Doctor, My Doctor</i>, by Joan Drescher</p>
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Reference Resources (available at libraries and bookstores)

The books listed are in English; bilingual books are available through Scholastic Books and Reach Out and Read, among other publishers.

Baby Read Aloud Basics: Fun and Interactive Ways to Help Your Little One Discover the World of Words
by Caroline J Blakemore & Barbara Weston Ramirez
AMACOM Books

The Essential Guide to Children’s Books and their Creators
edited by Anita Silvey
Houghton Mifflin

How to Get Your Child to Love Reading
by Esme Raji Codell
Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill

The New York Times Parent’s Guide to the Best Books for Children
by Eden Ross Lipson
Three Rivers Press/Random House

Raising Bookworms: Getting Kids Reading For Pleasure and Empowerment
by Emma Walton-Hamilton
Beech Tree Books

The Read-Aloud Handbook
by Jim Trelease
Penguin

Valerie & Walter’s Best Books for Children: A Lively, Opinionated Guide
by Valerie V Lewis and Walter M Mayes
Quill/HarperCollins

Adapted from AAP Literacy Promotion Toolkit Web site (2008), Diane DerMarderosian, MD, FAAP, Pamela C High, MD, FAAP, Jackie Miller, and the AAP Council on Early Childhood, 2014

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- Selecting Books for Your Program
- What Every Pediatric Professional Can Do to Promote Early Literacy and Early Learning

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- 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

Please visit aap.org/literacy for further information about resources mentioned within this publication and additional resources on early literacy.

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SELECTING BOOKS FOR YOUR PROGRAM

BOOKS BUILD
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Pediatric professionals in the medical home play a vital role in promoting reading to children and their parents. Selecting books that are developmentally, culturally, and thematically appropriate, as well as affordable, can be a challenge. To simplify this important task, this document provides some things to consider when selecting books for your program.

“Giving out a book has become one of the most important, tangible, and joyous parts of my daily routine as a pediatrician. Nothing can compare to how much fun it is to watch a child’s face light up when you hand them a book. It’s cute to see the child immediately ask the parent to read to them. It’s pure satisfaction to see that same child later reading their new book themselves. That’s because you can tell that the parents really take what you encourage to heart and go home and read to their kids. As Xochi, a 5-year-old girl in my practice said, ‘Books can take me to faraway places.’ Books are fun for anyone who is involved—the kids, parents, nurses, volunteers, and even ... us doctors!”—Ingrid Martinez-Andree, MD

Books, especially for children, are meant to encourage a joy in reading, which in turn will lead to a proficiency in a vital educational skill. Sometimes that joy, for an individual child, will be found in a classic children’s book and at other times in an inexpensive book featuring a popular cartoon character. In either case, the important thing is that a child is reading or sharing a book with a beloved adult. It is that experience that is the true measure of quality.

When looking for books, look for visual appeal, content, and message. Books should also have interesting language and illustrations that are attractive and colorful. Books with a humorous tone often become favorites.

An additional publication in this American Academy of Pediatrics series (*Finding the Right*

Book for Every Child) provides examples of a few books by developmental ages and some common topics to help you begin finding appropriate books. Review these additional guidelines for further tips.

Developmental Guidelines by Age Group

The developmental stage of the child should determine the type and length of the books he is given. As children grow up and their attention span increases, they like longer stories. At each developmental stage, the following characteristics for books are relevant:

Infants

- Photographs and images of other babies and familiar objects (eg, balls, bottles): Pointing and naming images for infants help language development.
- Strong contrasts and brightly colored designs.
- Durable books: Board books have pages that are heavy, sturdy, and laminated. Infants and toddlers can chew on these books without damaging them. They are perfect for little hands. Board books have designs that are bright, pictures that are simple and clear, and stories that are short. Cloth books have pages made out of heavy-duty cloth. The pages are not as easily turned as those in board books, but they are durable.

Toddlers

- Photos and images (eg, animals sleeping or playing).
- Topics (eg, going to sleep for bedtime, saying hello and good-bye, recognizing animals).
- Engaging and rich text: To encourage learning new vocabulary, good choices for the youngest readers include books with only a few words per page.
- Repetitive phrases, simple rhymes, predictable text, or questions: Books that involve the reader are ideal.
- Sturdy board books: By age 2½ most children have learned to handle paperback or hardcover books well, but board books are still a good idea for toddlers with their new found mobility.

Preschoolers

- Topics (eg, going to school or the doctor, having brothers and sisters, making friends): Children enjoy books about others their own age who have similar, familiar experiences and books that open new worlds up to them.
- Paperback books with longer stories: Children can be asked to guess what will happen next in the story.
- Books that have simple texts they can memorize.

Early Readers—Grades 1–3

Learning to read is a difficult task. Children entering school still enjoy being read to using books with complex language, but they also need books with simple, but engaging, language that they can master. Books like *Nate the Great* or *Hop on Pop* are good choices for early readers.

Chapter Books—Grades 3–5

Chapter books offer longer stories for children. There are books on almost any subject, fiction or nonfiction, for any reader. Children should help choose their own books. Series are popular with children in these grades, and adults should understand the value in these books. Reading, above all, should be pleasurable.

Grades 6 and Up

Young adult novels range from the light stories like *The Princess Diaries* to powerful fiction such as *Letters from the Inside*. A goldmine of books for teenagers is available to compete with many other distractions like television or computers for their leisure time.

Having a doctor suggest a book can encourage a teenager to rediscover the joy of reading. Books should be selected with both parents and children in mind. Books must be interesting and appealing to both for family reading time to be enjoyable.

Cultural Appropriateness

Books need to be carefully evaluated for the messages they give to children, especially as they relate to racism or sexism. Examine books for the following elements:

Illustrations

- Are characters stereotypically drawn?
- Do people of color have Caucasian features except for tinted skin?
- Do the illustrations depict cultures, abilities, genders, and families in positive ways?

Story Lines

- Are people of color or girls in subservient roles?
- Are cultural beliefs and practices portrayed accurately?
- Are negative judgments implied in depicting diverse lifestyles?
- Does the text depict cultures, abilities, genders, and families in positive ways?

Characters

- Are girls and people of color represented equally in all character roles?
- How are individual characters presented?
- Who has the power?
- Who are the heroes?
- Who are the villains?

Self-Image

- What messages, overt or covert, are children receiving from the story?
- How does the story support or undermine a child's self-esteem?

Variety

It is important to have a variety of books available to account for children's different interests. Children like characters, situations, and topics to which they can relate; they also enjoy learning about new things. Stories can be fictional or nonfictional. Books can be about people, animals, imaginary characters, the environment, folktales, sports, or nursery rhymes.

Cost

Many high quality, sturdy children's board books and most paperback children's books range in cost from \$2 to \$3 wholesale per book. Hardcover books, while more durable than paperbacks, usually cost between \$5 and \$7 per book at wholesale rates. Most paperback children's books range in cost from \$2 to \$3 wholesale per book. Hardcover books usually are more durable and cost between \$5 and \$7 per book based on wholesale rates. Discounts often are available when books are ordered in bulk, and pediatric early literacy programs may qualify for publisher discounts.

Reach Out and Read programs have access to a specially discounted book ordering system.

Book vendors often offer discounts to non-Reach Out and Read pediatric literacy efforts. Contact books@reachoutandread.org for more information on vendors that can provide low-cost books to interested medical practices.

First Book is another organization that distributes low-cost children's books to literacy-promoting programs and prioritizes programs that serve disadvantaged children.

Adapted from the AAP Literacy Promotion Technical Assistance Toolkit (1999), and the AAP Literacy Promotion Toolkit Web site (2008), Diane DerMarderosian, MD, FAAP, Pamela C High, MD, FAAP, Jackie Miller, and the AAP Council on Early Childhood, 2014

Other pediatric professional ePubs in this AAP series include the following:

- Evidence Supporting Early Literacy and Early Learning
- Finding the Right Book for Every Child
- What Every Pediatric Professional Can Do to Promote Early Literacy and Early Learning

Family resources related to early literacy and early learning include the following:

- Helping Your Child Learn to Read
- 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
- The Secret to a Smarter Baby
- Why It Is Never Too Early to Start Reading With Your Baby

Please visit aap.org/literacy for further information about resources mentioned within this publication and additional resources on early literacy.

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Inclusion in this publication does not imply an endorsement by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The American Academy of Pediatrics is not responsible for the content of the resources mentioned in this publication.

WHAT EVERY PEDIATRIC PROFESSIONAL CAN DO TO PROMOTE EARLY LITERACY AND EARLY LEARNING

BOOKS BUILD CONNECTIONS TOOLKIT



Here's a list of things pediatric professionals in the medical home can do to promote early literacy in their practices and communities.

"One of the reasons my kids love coming to their doctor's appointments is because they love receiving great books!"—Dennisse Reyes, mother of 2

1. **Familiarize yourself with the evidence on the importance of reading, singing, talking, and playing with young children and how practice-based literacy promotion creates and reinforces optimal synapses in children's developing brains.** These connections build language, literacy, and social-emotional skills at a critical time in a child's development and secure the bond between parent and child.
2. **Implement a literacy promotion program in your practice. Share anticipatory guidance regarding early literacy and early learning to foster a love of books at each visit beginning at birth.** A wealth of helpful information on establishing and supporting practice-based literacy promotion is available in this toolkit and from Reach Out and Read (ROR).
3. **Encourage parents and other caregivers to read, talk, sing, and play with their young children beginning at birth.** Ask about family beliefs and practices regarding early learning and literacy. Specific guidance for parents about reading and sharing books with their children is available in the family resources publications listed below.
4. Promote 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 foundations of healthy early brain and child development.
5. **Welcome children by entering the exam room with a book in your hand. Role model sharing books during the visit and use that book as a component of your developmental surveillance.** The Literacy Milestone chart developed by ROR can be your road map to helping families share books, and ROR's videos for pediatric providers demonstrate inclusion of books and literacy promotion in practice.
6. **Encourage parents of preschoolers to find high-quality early educational opportunities for their children such as preschool or Head Start.** The National Association for the Education of Young Children has lists of preschools with voluntary accreditation. Head Start provides high quality preschool programs for 3 and 4 year olds in economically disadvantaged

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families. Child Care Aware helps families learn more about the elements of high-quality child care and how to find programs in their communities.

7. **Encourage parents of 4-year-olds to go to the Get Ready to Read Web site to learn about family activities and resources supporting early literacy.** Developed by the National Center for Learning Disabilities, this Web site provides many literacy skill-building activities, including a preschool reading readiness test for parents to use with their 4-year-olds.
8. **Encourage parents of kindergarteners and elementary school-age children to go to Reading Rockets and other Web sites for ideas about how to support early readers.** Colorín Colorado, a sister project of Reading Rockets, is a bilingual site that offers a range of resources for Spanish-speaking and English-language-learning parents, including family literacy activities. The Reading Is Fundamental Web site is a rich source of information about reading with young children, including ways of combating summer learning loss in young school-age children.
9. **Encourage parents and other caregivers to visit their local library with their children to borrow books and participate in story time.** Provide a list of the locations and hours of local libraries to help them make these connections.
10. **Provide culturally and developmentally appropriate books and magazines in your waiting room.** Families benefit from being in a literacy-rich waiting area or exam room. The American Academy of Pediatrics publication on selecting books for your program offers guidelines based on children's ages and other considerations (see the list of other pediatric professional ePubs below). Lists of multicultural children's books can be found on the Reading Is Fundamental and on the American Library Association's Notable Books for Children Web sites.
11. **Display posters or show DVDs of parents and other caregivers and children reading together.** The American Library Association store and the National Literacy Trust have great materials for this purpose.
12. **Connect families with the greatest need to evidence-based home visiting programs in your community.** Home visiting programs can foster early learning and support parents as their child's first and most important teacher. The Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Web site provides information about these programs and links to grantees in your state.
13. **Hold a book drive with community partners to provide books to children and families in your practice.** The event can provide an ideal opportunity for schools or faith-based organizations seeking worthwhile service projects to partner with you.
14. **Collaborate with local child care providers and child advocates to promote the importance of reading, talking, and singing with young children.** Work with these groups to develop and support literacy-rich environments and experiences for young children. For more information, refer to the National Association for the Education of Young Children Web site and to AAP's Early Brain and Child Development Web page, which has PowerPoint slides that can get you started. One possible source of support for this work is an AAP Community Access to Child Health (CATCH) grant. Ideas about literacy promoting CATCH grants can be found at <http://www2.aap.org/catch/funding.htm>.
15. **Solicit volunteers to read aloud in the waiting area to model how parents and caregivers can read with their children.** Volunteers can truly enhance the experience children have visiting their pediatricians. Volunteers can read aloud, decorate bulletin boards with literacy-rich material, or assist children with educational activities in the waiting area. Reading Is Fundamental has

PEDIATRIC PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE: WHAT EVERY PEDIATRIC PROFESSIONAL CAN DO TO PROMOTE EARLY LITERACY AND EARLY LEARNING

a wealth of support and information about reading and children. Its Web site provides information for volunteers, teachers, and parents on current trends in education, down-to-earth suggestions on reading in the home, and no-nonsense strategies to improve children's reading. The Corporation for National and Community Service can post your program to recruit volunteers for your practice.

16. **Encourage parents and caregivers with low literacy levels to share picture books with their children, talk with them about what is happening in the pictures, and possibly even act out the stories with them.** Telling and retelling favorite stories and singing songs together are also fun family activities that build early learning skills. Refer interested parents and caregivers to adult literacy programs. Helping parents improve their reading will certainly benefit their children. America's Literacy Directory Web site has a list of literacy and educational resources that allows users to type in a city, state, or ZIP code to find a program near them.
17. **Read with the children in your life.** Read with your children, your grandchildren, your nieces and nephews, your friends' children, and the children in your practice. Read with children whenever you can. **Read because you love reading, adore children, and want to share this joy with them.**

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- Selecting Books for Your Program

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- 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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