

# **It's never too early to read to your baby/child**

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**Y**our baby's/child's early years are critical to developing a lifelong love of reading.

Here are some fun ways to read to your baby/child.

## **Read together everyday**

Read to your baby/child every day throughout the daytime when the baby/child is awake and alert. Make the experience most loving so go ahead and cuddle. While reading. Additionally, bedtime stories are great to help the baby/child fall asleep slowly.

## **Give everything a name**

Build your baby/child's vocabulary by talking about interesting words, for example, "Look at that train, choo-choo! Those are the wheels of the train. Why do you think they are called wheels?" Keep it simple when you start reading to a baby. Use a few words at any time! ('big train,' 'yellow bus'). Do not overwhelm your baby/ child with a long story filled with long sentences. Adapt the story to keep it simple when you are reading to your baby/child.

## **Talk about loving to read**

Tell your child how much you love books and reading books together. Talk about "story time" as a fun activity. To add interest, let the child unwrap a book whether you borrowed or purchased the book. Make it super interesting when a new book is introduced.

## **Read with fun in your voice**

Read to your child with humor and lots of expression. Use different voices. Introduce finger puppets with each story, if any are available. Make it interactive and engaging.

## **Know when to stop**

Start with a few simple pages and a few simple words and slowly increase to more to maintain attention and interest. Put the book away for awhile if your baby/child loses interest or is having trouble paying attention

### **Read it over and over again**

Read your baby's/ child's favorite book for a gazillion times because your child will start to remember the words and events in the story. One day, when you mess up such as skip a word, your child will correct you. That is what we call emerging literacy.

### **Talk about written words**

As your child matures, talk about how you read from left to right (say, "See here is where we start.") Also show spacing between the words (show with your finger the spacing and then use your child's finger to show you, too.).

### **Point out words indoors and outdoors**

Talk about the written words you see in the community. Show your child signs such as the Stop sign. Ask your child to read other common signs on outings while walking or driving. Make it a game because children love games!!

### **Get your child evaluated**

Please be sure to see your child's pediatrician to discuss a referral to a **speech-language pathologist** as soon as possible if you suspect a concern about your child's speech and language development.

Be sure your child's hearing and vision are evaluated.