

How to Read to Your Infant

Early reading is about creating a love of words, stories, and experience. There is no pressure to do more than share a few words on a page together and follow your baby's lead.

- Try reading to your baby at least twice a day. Don't force him or her to listen to you read when they aren't in the mood. Getting through a couple of pages of a book is a success! Keep in mind that reading before nap and bed times, when your baby is mellow and relaxed, are much more likely to be successful than at other times when your baby is high energy and wants to explore.
- Remember, this about experience. You don't need to actually read the words from the page, feel free to make things up as you go along. Make reading fun and informal!
- If possible, create a cozy reading corner in your home. A cozy corner is a comfy spot with a soft item such as a carpet, stuffed animal, or pillow that your baby can go to and read. Having a low hanging book shelf or open baskets with books works well — the key is that the books are easy to get a hold.
- Respond to sounds that your baby makes as if you are having a conversation. When your baby begins to gesture and babble, notice: "Yes, that's a dog," when your baby is looking at a dog and making any sound or gesture).
- Repeat, repeat, repeat. One way to be responsive to young children is to have routines that provide stability in their schedule and allow them to predict and practice what their day is going to be like. Research suggests that children who experience familiar routines and repeat familiar actions and words have stronger brain connections in areas that are responsible for learning language and reading skills.
- When you are writing or reading, try to do so in front of your baby so that they have a sense of how "literary" grown-ups are.
- Sing anything and everything. Make up words but try to rhyme (even nonsense).
- Reading includes putting visual symbols together with sounds. Your baby will love reading storybooks again and again until they soon will be able to "read" from memory. Point to the pictures and label them and soon you will find your baby doing it too.