

Parent Resource

What We Know About Early Literacy and Language Development

This article will inform you of the connection between reading to your child and language development. It includes helpful tips for choosing and sharing books with Babies and Toddlers.

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What Young Children Like in Books

Infants 0-6 months

- Books with simple, large pictures or designs with bright colors.
- Stiff cardboard, "chunky" books, or fold out books that can be propped up in the crib.
- Cloth and soft vinyl books with simple pictures of people or familiar objects that can go in the bath or get washed.

Infants 6-12 months

- Board books with photos of other babies.
- Brightly colored "chunky" board books to touch and taste!
- Books with photos of familiar objects like balls and bottles.
- Books with sturdy pages that can be propped up or spread out in the crib or on a blanket.
- Plastic/vinyl books for bath time.
- Washable cloth books to cuddle and mouth.
- Small plastic photo albums of family and friends.

Young Toddlers 12-24 months

- Sturdy board books that they can carry.
- Books with photos of children doing familiar things like sleeping or playing.
- Goodnight books for bed time.
- Books about saying hello and good-bye.
- Books with only a few words on each page.
- Books with simple rhymes or predictable text.
- Animal books of all sizes and shapes.

Toddlers 2-3 years

- Books that tell simple stories.
- Simple rhyming books that they can memorize.
- Bed time books.
- Books about counting, the alphabet, shapes, or sizes.
- Animal books, vehicle books, books about play-time.
- Books with their favorite TV characters inside.
- Books about saying hello and good-bye.

Ways to Share Books with Babies & Toddlers

Make Sharing Books Part Of Every Day

Read or share stories at bedtime or on the bus.

Have Fun

Children can learn from you that books are fun, which is an important ingredient in learning to read.

A Few Minutes is OK—Don't Worry if You Don't Finish the Story

Young children can only sit for a few minutes for a story, but as they grow, they will be able to sit longer.

Talk or Sing About the Pictures

You do not have to read the words to tell a story.

Let Children Turn the Pages

Babies need board books and help turning pages, but a three-year-old can do it alone. Remember, it's OK to skip pages!

Show Children the Cover Page

Explain what the story is about.

Show Children the Words

Run your finger along the words as you read them, from left to right.

Make the Story Come Alive

Create voices for the story characters and use your body to tell the story.

Make It Personal

Talk about your own family, pets, or community when you are reading about others in a story.

Ask Questions About the Story, and Let Children Ask Questions Too!

Use the story to engage in conversation and to talk about familiar activities and objects.

Let Children Tell the Story

Children as young as three years old can memorize a story, and many children love to be creative through storytelling.

Visit www.zerotothree.org/BrainWonders for more information. BrainWonders is a joint project by BOSTON UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER, ERIKSON INSTITUTE, and ZERO TO THREE.



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