

Sharing Books with Babies and Young Toddlers

Share Books Every Day

Read or share stories throughout the day: at playtime, bathtime, naptime and bedtime, on outings, even when waiting at appointments—any time is the right time for a book!

Have Fun!

Keep book-sharing times fun so that your child learns that books and reading are enjoyable. Let your baby skip pages or look at the book in a different way, such as back to front, if she wants. All children want to hear their favorites over and over again—the repetition helps them recognize and identify objects and repeated words. Children have short attention spans, so watch for cues that they are finished listening. You can always come back to the book later.

Talk About the Story and the Pictures

When your young toddler can talk, ask simple questions about the story, and have him identify familiar objects. It's also fine to skip the words on the pages and talk about the pictures. Point to the illustrations and photographs and make up stories, or ask your child simple questions about what he sees.

Help Your Child Learn How a Book Works

When your child becomes accustomed to book sharing, start introducing some simple concepts about book and print. Show your child which side of the book should be up, the front of the book, and how to turn pages. Also show her that print is read from left to right and from top to bottom, and that the squiggly lines on the page are words that have meaning.

Make the Story Come Alive

Be expressive when reading. Create different voices for the characters, change the volume of your voice, and add motions and facial expressions.

Make It Personal

After reading a book with your child, talk about your own family, pets, or neighborhood for additional story sharing.

A Few Minutes Is Okay

Don't worry if you can't finish a story in one sitting. Babies and young toddlers may listen for only a few minutes. As your child gets older and you continue to read to him regularly, he will listen longer.