



## Read to Me!

Ideas to help you raise a reader.

### For Babies:

- It's not too early to start reading to your child! Hold him on your lap and read for just a few minutes. When he starts squirming, stop.
- Start with books that have pictures of things that are familiar to your baby. In fact, you can make your own books with pictures from magazines, family photos or your own illustrations.
- When you cuddle your baby, she feels loved and nurtured. This is a good time to look at a book together. She'll learn to love books because she connects them to "cuddle time" with you.
- Get or make a couple of sturdy "board books" that your baby can handle himself—and chew on if he wants. Babies still learn a lot through their mouths at this stage!
- Making reading time a quiet time helps your baby learn to focus. Turn off the TV and music.
- Encourage others to give your child books as gifts. Hand-me-downs are great. Keep books on a low shelf or in a special "book box".

1998 MELD Hands on Help for Parents



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### For Toddlers:

- Keep your toddler's books simple. Good books have clear, uncomplicated pictures.
- Let your toddler set the pace for how long you stay on each page. If she wants to, it's also okay to "read" the book from back to front!
- Many are ready to start turning the pages. That's their job when you read together. Let them! It helps them develop coordination. Remember: thick pages make their job easier.
- Simple rhymes are popular with this age.
- Starting the routine of reading one or two books at bedtime is a good way to make bedtime more popular for even the most reluctant sleeper.
- Two-year-olds love pointing to objects in the pictures and naming them. Encourage them!
- Toddlers are ready to see that pictures represent something else that is real. For example, a drawing of a cat represents a real, live cat.
- Read with expression. Use different voices for different characters.
- Toddlers also are ready to choose their own books when you're reading together. You may get really tired of certain books, but when your child has a favorite, he'll want you to read it again and again and...!
- Choose stories you like, too. Don't read books you hate. (If one really drives you up a wall, maybe it can "disappear"!)



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## For Preschoolers:

- Three-year-olds like their books comfortable and familiar instead of scary and exciting (many start asking for “scary” as they near four).
- Stories about everyday life, families and animals are always popular. Some preschoolers will start getting interested in ABC and counting books.
- Story time keeps getting longer. That’s good. Their attention span is getting longer.
- Stories can also become more complicated. Preschoolers are more able to follow a simple story.
- Give your preschooler more and more opportunity to “read” the story to you.
- Make reading fun! Find a good time—when you’re both in a good mood—to read.

## For Moms and Dads:

Your child wants to be just like you. If you want your little one to grow up with the advantages of being a reader—be one yourself. Let your child see you read newspapers, books, cereal boxes, and more! If reading is difficult for you, consider contacting your community education office to learn more about tutoring, classes and reading material written at a level you might find comfortable.



## Read To Me

**It’s important to read to your children, but it’s equally important to listen to them read to you. Children thrive on having someone appreciate their developing skills.**

**What You’ll Need:** Books at your child’s reading level



### What To Do:

1. Listen attentively as your child reads.
2. Take turns. You read a paragraph and have your child read the next one. As your child becomes more at ease with reading aloud, take turns reading a full page. Keep in mind that your child may be focusing on how to read, and your reading helps to keep the story alive.

3. If your children have trouble reading words, you can help in several

ways:

- ◇ tell them to skip over the word, read the rest of the sentence, and ask what word would make sense in the story;
- ◇ help them use what they know about letters and sounds;
- ◇ supply the correct word

4. Tell your child how proud you are of their efforts and skills.

Listening to your children read aloud provides opportunities for you to express appreciation of their new skills and for them to practice their reading. Most importantly, it’s another way to enjoy reading together.