

Reading to a Child

Learning to read is a childhood milestone that parents eagerly await. Parents everywhere want to do their best to help their children prepare for reading success. Reading is a complex task. Think about all of the skills that go into learning to read:

- Recognizing and naming letters
- Understanding the way speech sounds make up words
- Focusing on printed marks (letters and words)
- Connecting speech sounds to letters
- Blending letter sounds
- Controlling eye movements across the page
- Building images and ideas
- Storing the ideas in memory

How can I help my child achieve success in reading?

- **Read to your child everyday.** Try to make it part of your routine. Many parents choose to read before bedtime, but you should choose a time that works for your family. This should be a time to connect and bond with your child. Choose books you enjoy!
- **If possible, read with one child at a time.** This will help ensure that the child can choose books that interest him and gives the child the chance to ask a lot of questions.
- **During reading time, turn off the TV and the phone.** Eliminate distractions to help your child focus and to show how important reading is.
- **Children are never too young to enjoy books.** Babies and toddlers can explore sturdy board books and practice turning pages.
- **Read expressively.** Use different voices for the various characters. Don't be afraid to act silly!
- **Let your child explore a variety of reading materials.** Age-appropriate magazines, poetry and even comic books may increase your child's interest in reading!
- **Let your child see you read.** It shows the child that you think reading is important. Children copy their parents, and they want to do what "big people" do.
- **Sing songs to your child.** Encourage your child to sing with you. Read nursery rhymes and do finger play. The Itsy Bitsy Spider, Where is Thumbkin? and The Hokey Pokey are familiar favorites that will get your child actively involved.



Tips to Remember:

1. Read to your child every day.
2. Point to words while reading.
3. Help your child recognize her name in print.
4. While looking through picture books, talk about the pictures.
5. Ask your child questions about the things you read.
6. Recite nursery rhymes.
7. Sing songs.
8. Have conversations with your child; talk about things that interest him.

Reading to a Child (continued)

- **Point out words in the environment.** For example, while driving in the car, point out names of familiar stores, restaurants, traffic signs, and billboards. Encourage your child to locate specific letters on menus, cereal boxes, junk mail, or in magazines. Name things as you see them.
- **Visit the library—this is a way to enjoy new books without spending any money.** It also allows your child to select books of interest to her. In addition, most libraries offer age-appropriate story times so that you and your child can participate together.
- **Read the same books over and over.** You may think this is boring but young children learn from and enjoy repetition. In fact, you will find that after a few readings of the same book, your child will finish sentences for you, and notice if you leave a word out.
- **With a school-age child, don't limit your book choice.** If your child wants you to read what you consider to be a difficult book, read it! Children can listen to and understand more complex text than they can read on their own.
- **As your child gets older and begins to read alone, you can take turns reading to one another.** Alternate reading pages or paragraphs. If your child doesn't know a word, tell it to him. This helps keep the flow of the reading, so your child does not lose meaning while trying to read

What are the benefits of reading aloud?

- Builds listening skills
- Increases attention span
- Fosters vocabulary growth
- Develops personal interests
- Introduces new concepts
- Builds your relationship with your child
- Encourages a love of reading

Preparing your child for future reading success is less about giant leaps and more about the simple things you can do every day – such as taking time out to read with your child. One of the easiest ways parents can help their children become better readers is to read with them every day. Reading together will help build important literacy skills and create fun experiences for you and your child. You will be teaching your child without really trying!



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