



Let's Read!

Do you remember a favorite story read to you when you were a child? Books have a magical way of coming back to us all throughout our lives. When you share picture books, stories, and nursery rhymes you love, you help children associate reading with pleasant memories. Whether or not you enjoy reading aloud, you can tell stories and share books with babies and toddlers in ways that are fun for all of you.

- **Create comfortable places in your setting for reading.** Stock a cozy book nook with an attractive display of board books and comfortable seating for a few toddlers and an adult.
- **Choose books whose words and pictures you love.** Show children what makes the pictures so special to you. Read your favorite passages with expression.
- **Tell your own story!** You don't need to read all the words in a book—or even any of them. Follow children's leads. Notice what interests them and talk about it together.
- **Try different ways to engage an active baby who can't sit still for a whole story**—and don't worry! Give her many opportunities to participate in the reading. If she wanders away but still seems interested, make eye contact and include her in the conversation.
- **Pay attention to how interested a baby may be in a certain picture in a book.** A baby may be more interested in turning pages or just staring at one page. Give him time to take in all that is going on in the picture and talk about what he sees.
- **Display meaningful print in all children's home languages throughout your space.** During the day, point to and read labels and messages to toddlers. You can read names on cubbies, labels on favorite foods packages, the Exit sign, and so on.
- **Reread stories so toddlers can learn from the repetition.** As you reread, some toddlers may insist on word-for-word readings and exact repetitions, but others will get more out of a book when you add information as you read and find new ways for them to participate.
- **Engage children's emerging sense of humor with books that make you both smile and laugh.** Children may enjoy repeating silly-sounding words and phrases. They may also enjoy acting out (and exaggerating) funny, noisy, or ridiculous story events.
- **Be aware of when toddlers can follow a storyline.** You can use their cues to talk about how the characters feel and how they solve problems. Refer to their favorite storybooks and characters as you talk with them about their own activities, feelings, and conflicts.
- **Create a take-home library for families.** Include books from children's home languages and encourage families to help select or make books to share. When a family member returns a book, ask him or her to write or dictate a sentence or two to tell other families what they liked about the book. Keep the reviews in a binder in the take-home library.