



## Raising a Reader

During your child's first years of life you can help build the foundation he needs to become a reader. Encourage a love of reading in early childhood, and you will raise a lifelong learner. How do you encourage that love? *Read, read, read, read, read!*

- Make reading fun and pleasurable. Cuddle with your child and read books that make you both smile. Take favorite books along on outings. Read when you or your child needs a break.
- Never let reading become a chore. If your child loses interest, move on to another activity and bring the books out later.
- Create a rich reading environment for your child with plenty of books and other reading materials. Try to have a place for books in every room. Try to have some comfortable, quiet places to read.
- Bring books into your child's life by checking them out from the library or shopping at bookstores, discount stores, yard sales, or online—and by making your own!
- Read aloud to your child as often as you can on a daily basis. When reading to your toddler, be enthusiastic about reading the same book many, many times (if he requests it) until he lets you know he's ready to move on to a different title.
- Don't just read books—talk about them! Give your child lots of chances to participate by turning pages, pointing to items, making noises, and repeating words. Engage your older baby and toddler in talking about the pictures, remembering details, predicting what will happen, and making connections with her own experiences.

- Set a good example and show your child that you are a reader. Make time to do some of your own reading where your child can see you. (If you read books or newspapers online, your child may not recognize this as “reading.” Be sure to explain what you are doing.)
- Read good books! As you develop a reading routine and come to learn what kinds of books engage your child, you’ll be able to keep your child excited about reading by choosing books he likes about things that interest him. Ask your librarian or childcare educator to recommend well-written books with beautiful illustrations.
- Read books in the language you know best and feel most comfortable using.
- Go beyond the book. Tell new stories about your child’s favorite characters. Let him replay a story with toys or puppets. Talk about how the characters feel. When your toddler has a problem, remind him how his favorite story character handled a similar situation.
- Visit the library regularly. Take your child to library story time programs. Explore the books on the library shelves. Check out lots of books to take home to read.
- When you can, give your child a choice of which book to read: *Do you want to read a story about trucks or a story about the bears?* Or let her pick out books at the library (that you preview before checking out).
- Experts recommend that children under age two not spend time watching television or videos. When you do introduce media, don’t let it replace your reading time together.