



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

CENTER ON THE FAMILY ♥ UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Reading with Your Young Child

According to the U.S. Department of Education's Commission on Reading, reading aloud to children is the single most important activity for building knowledge for their eventual success in reading. Reading books aloud to children promotes their imagination and expands their understanding of the world. It helps them develop language and listening skills and most of all, they learn that reading is fun!

Reading aloud can be done anywhere, anytime, and with almost any book. With tablets, smartphones, and electronic book apps becoming more accessible, some families are starting to use these devices to read with their child. The National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center offer some guidance on using technology and interactive media with children. While they recognize that using technology can promote effective learning, they emphasize that it should not replace traditional activities, such as reading books. They also support the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics that prohibits passive screen time for infants and toddlers and sets limits for children 2 years and older.



The following are a few things to get you started on reading aloud with your child:

- ♥ Make a commitment to read aloud at least once a day. It's important to establish a routine.
- ♥ Select a time and place to read aloud. Try to make reading time the same time every day in a place that you can read together comfortably.
- ♥ Enjoy reading together! Make this time a fun time that you spend together.

This newsletter will provide reading tips for you to use with your infant, toddler, or preschooler as well as suggest reading activities that you can do with your child at home.

In This Newsletter:

To support you in fostering your child's healthy development and school readiness, this newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information** and suggestions about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of your child's development as a result of doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Community Resources:** for more information, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

Enjoy reading to your newborn. Reading to your infant can start from when she is a newborn. Even if your baby won't understand the words that you are reading, hearing your voice will help stimulate her interest in sounds; which, provides a strong foundation for early reading skills. As she becomes a few months older, you may notice that as you read, she will stare at the pictures in the book, especially if they are simple illustrations. In fact, by 8 to 12 months, she may be able to listen attentively as you chant nursery rhymes that correspond to the pictures.

The following are some tips when reading to your infant:

- ♥ Choose books that have sturdy pages and have bright colorful pictures. Good books for infants have one or two words per page, or even no words at all!
- ♥ Make sure your child is comfortable and can see the book.
- ♥ When reading, pause to show your baby the pictures in the book and let her touch the book. You may find that she has a favorite page or even a favorite picture and wants to stay on that page longer than others.



Infants have a short attention span, so reading for only a few minutes at a time, or not finishing the whole story is fine. Don't be discouraged if your baby turns away from the book or is more interested in putting the book in her mouth. These behaviors are common at this age and with regular reading times; she will become more familiar with books and will start to show an increased interest in spending longer times reading through the books with you.

Activity for Infants: *Read, Read, Read*

Materials:

Cloth or board books with sturdy pages that have simple, colorful pictures.

What to Do:

1. Read lots of books with bright, colorful pictures.
2. Talk about and point to each picture. For example, "This dolphin is big. This myna bird is small."
3. As your child gets older, encourage her to participate. Let your baby touch the books and point to pictures.
4. Ask questions like "What does the dog say?" Then follow with a simple answer: "The dog says woof woof."
5. Remember that babies' attention spans differ greatly; young babies can pay attention for only a few seconds!



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

Toddlers

Reading with your toddler helps her to learn about letters and words, and the concept, that printed letters and words have meaning. At this age, your toddler is developing on her language quickly, so simple actions like pointing out and talking about the signs you see as you ride the bus, looking for letters or items while at the grocery store, or reading a rhyming book together, will help your child develop her language skills and interest in reading.

The following are some tips when reading to your toddler:

- ♥ Choose a variety of books. When you vary your read-aloud choices, you introduce your child to books containing information about many topics. Try reading nonfiction books about animals, ABC books, and rhyming books. However, if your toddler requests you to read the same book again and again, start with what she selects then add a new book afterwards.
- ♥ Read slowly with expression, stop often to comment, ask questions, and point out pictures. These reading tips will help your child

to understand what is going on in the book and start to think about the words, pictures, and story.

- ♥ Build your child's awareness of how books work. Encourage your child to help hold the book right side up and turn the pages one at a time.



Activity for Toddlers: *Signs and Advertisements*

Materials:

- Washable markers or jumbo crayons
- Paper

What to Do:

1. While on a walk with your child, point out and read aloud road signs and advertisements that you see.
2. Point out letters that are in your child's name. For example, "Look, there's a stop sign. The word 'stop' begins with the letter 's,' the same as your name, Sandy."
3. Once you are at home, spend time with your child and write two or three words from the signs that you saw. Read each of the words aloud, emphasizing the beginning sounds of the words. Have your child repeat the beginning sounds and words after you



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

Preschoolers

Many parents often ask how they know if their child is ready to start reading. The National Institute for Literacy has identified a number of areas that prepare children for reading. The key components of reading readiness include having opportunities to: build spoken language by talking and listening, be familiar with print and books, learn about the sounds of speech (called phonological awareness which means identifying the sounds that make up words, e.g., clapping out syllables in words), learn about letters of the alphabet, and listen to books read aloud.

The most important thing for you to remember is that “reading” is the result of many small skills that build one upon the other, and many of these skills are built through reading aloud to your child. The following are some tips when reading to your preschooler:

- ♥ Select books that have simple, fun plots or lively rhymes and repetition that children can repeat and remember.



- ♥ Build print awareness. Start to build your child’s awareness that the words on the page mean something by pointing to and talking about the title, author, and illustrator on the cover, moving your finger when reading each word in the story, or having your child point out letters that are familiar to her, e.g., the ones in her name.
- ♥ Be interactive; discuss what’s happening, point things out on the page, and answer her questions. Encourage her to make simple predictions and comments about the story being read.

Activities for Preschoolers: *Let’s Read*

Materials:

Children’s books

What to Do:

1. Let your child pick a book to read.
2. Have her sit close to you. Point out and read the title and the names of the author and the illustrator.
3. Read the book with her, changing the tone of your voice to match the mood of the story. For example, use a loud voice when there is a lot of action or a quiet voice when something sad or scary is happening.
4. Involve your child by having her turn the pages and by asking questions about the story. You might ask, “What do you think will happen next?” or “How do you think (fill in character’s name) feels?”
5. At the end of the book, ask questions about what happened, where the events took place, and what she liked or did not like about the story.
6. When she is familiar with the story, ask her to “read” it to you. Let her tell you the story in her own words as you go through the book together.



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

Physical Development

- ♥ Develop eye-hand coordination.
- ♥ Learn through her senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching.

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Learn to interact with others.
- ♥ Feel important and good about herself.

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Build verbal skills, vocabulary, and the use of descriptive language.
- ♥ Develop early reading skills and a love for reading.

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develop her creativity and imagination.
- ♥ Develop her thinking and problem-solving skills.



Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons. As you do this recipe with your child, show her how to safely handle the items and allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking skills. Make sure to wash your hands and your child's hands before preparing any food.

Burger Soup

Adapted from: http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/Recipes/Heart-Healthy-Recipes_UCM_465114_RecipeLanding.jsp

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. extra-lean, ground sirloin
- 1 chopped onion (about 1 cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced OR 1 tsp. garlic, minced, from jar
- 1 15 oz. canned, no-salt added or low-sodium tomato sauce
- 1 14½ oz. canned, chopped, no-salt added or low-sodium tomatoes
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 16 oz. package frozen mixed vegetables
- ⅓ cup brown rice, uncooked

Instructions:

1. In a large pot, cook the meat, onion, and garlic over medium heat until the meat is done. Drain excess liquid and remove from heat; transfer meat mixture into a bowl.
2. Have your child add the tomato sauce, tomatoes, broth, mixed vegetables, and rice to the meat mixture. Talk about the different colors and taste of each ingredient. Have your child make a prediction as to how the soup will taste.
3. Pour the mixture back into the pot and heat on stove, covering the pot to allow the mixture to come to a boil.
4. When it boils, reduce heat and cook for 35 minutes or until rice is done.



Community Resources

U.S. Department of Education

<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/reader/part5.html>

Language-building activities for parents and care providers that you can do with your child to help her build the skills she needs to become a reader. Each activity is given an age span that suggests when children should try them.

Read to Me International

<http://www.readtomeintl.org/resources/>
Recommended children's reading list, activities, videos, related links and suggested readings that will enhance your understanding and enjoyment of reading aloud.



Suggested Books

Recommended by Hawaii State Public Library www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

That's Not My Bunny: It's Tail is Too Fluffy by Fiona Watt

Part of the Usborne "touchy-feely books" series, these books let children explore different textures to develop sensory and language awareness.

This Little Piggy: Lap Songs, Finger Plays, Clapping Games, and Pantomime Rhymes by Jane Yolen

A collection of nursery rhymes, songs, and finger plays presented with simple instructions for parents to play with their babies and toddlers. An accompanying CD includes 13 songs from the text.

Preschoolers

I Read Signs by Tana Hoban

Thirty photographs introduce the different signs and symbols frequently seen along the street.

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr.

Alphabet letters race their way to the top of a coconut tree, only to tumble down in a chaotic heap.



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