

Everyone agrees that it's important to read to young children for about 20 minutes each day. Reading with children at a young age helps to build their vocabulary and sets them up for a bright educational future.

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How can busy parents help their little ones get the most out of story time? Here are some tips that will help get your children started.

Reading with Babies



Books offer a great way to bond with your baby, while introducing the building blocks of language and reading. Keep books on hand wherever you go—in the diaper bag, car or stroller. And keep the following tips in mind:

- Choose sturdy books made with different textures and materials.
- Allow your baby to explore books—grabbing, holding and even chewing on them.
- Point out pictures and name objects. (“Look at the butterfly.”) You might also cover the picture and play peek-a-boo. (“Where is the butterfly? Peek-a-boo butterfly!”)
- Take time to ask questions and pause as you read. (“What does the cat say? The cat says: ‘Meow!’”)

Reading with Toddlers



Toddlers are naturally curious and eager to learn new words and ideas. They enjoy silly, nonsense words and rhymes, and acting out stories.

- When you read together, cuddle up with your child on your lap. Remember to look at each other, as well as the book.
- Let your child lead the way. It's OK to skip pages or reread the same story again and again.
- Ask your child to point out things in the pictures. (“Where is the balloon? Can you find the balloon?”)
- Ask your child to name things in the pictures and talk about them. (Point to the train and ask, “What is this?” Then ask, “What sound does a train make?”)
- Use pictures to teach new words. (“See the trumpet? A trumpet is a loud instrument that makes music.” Then pretend to play the trumpet.)
- Ask questions about the story, and give your child the opportunity to answer. Leave room for imagination.