

# Reading Books with Kids

**Babies** will chew on books they like. This is part of their learning experience. It's our job to give them books that are safe to bite! Make book time cuddle time. The part of the baby's brain that deals with emotions, trust, and relationships is growing and developing. Daily reading may be very short and happen for a minute or two many times a day. Babies learn best through repetition and routine. Read in a sing-song way so that baby can hear the rhythm and sound of your voice. Talk to babies about what you are doing, and what is happening around them. Repeat back to babies the sounds they make. This makes a circle of communication and starting to learn about taking turns. Ask all family members and caregivers to support your babies growing love of words by using these ideas also.

## Choosing Books for Your Baby

Babies use all of their senses to learn. Choose books that:

- Show familiar objects
- Have simple, colorful pictures,
- Have few words per page
- Are plastic, cloth, or cardboard
- Use words that rhyme
- Have things to touch or smell

**Toddlers** are learning that words can inform, entertain, comfort and amuse us. When reading ordinary items such as menus and signs, explain to toddlers what you find out from reading. During everyday routines, make time to talk and listen to your toddler. The more you listen and talk with your toddler, the easier they will learn to read and write in school.

Play labeling games, for example "Where is your nose?" Label things verbally as your child connects with objects, for example, "Kelly is on the swing." Play these labeling games with pictures in books. Make labels for things that are important to your toddler, using their name. For example, "Sam's

Room, or Mary's Treasure Box." To make it fun, have the toddler help decorate the sign.

Pick books that connect to a toddler's life and ask questions. For example, you might ask after seeing a picture of eggs, "What color eggs do you eat?" "Shall we look for some purple eggs in the store?" Make up silly names for things by substituting one sound for another. (bubblegum, bubblebum, gugglebum, bumbleyum.)

Stick to activities your toddler enjoys and can succeed at. Try not to push them beyond what they are ready to learn.

## Choosing books for Toddlers

Toddlers are starting to use language to learn about the world. Choose books that:

- Name or label objects,
- Have numbers, shapes, colors, or alphabet letters
- Repeat words or phrases
- Use rhymes
- Tell simple stories about children their age.
- Have colorful pictures that match the words

**Preschoolers** love books with words or actions that appear over and over again help them to predict or tell what happens next. Children love to figure out how a story may turn out. Ask "What do you think will happen next?"

Pick a story that has repeated phrases or a poem you and your child like. Together, take on the voices of the characters. For example your preschooler takes the big bad wolf "Little pig, little pig, let me come in," and you read the little pig lines "not by the hair of my chinny chin chin."

Read books your preschooler enjoys as often as they like, until your child learns familiar phrases and repeats them. "Pretend reading" gives a child

a sense of power and courage to keep trying. Make a special place for books of their own - it boosts the chance that your child will want to read even more.

When making a shopping list or leaving a note on the table, explain what it says to your child. Have writing materials handy for your child to scribble pretend lists and letters.

Help preschoolers to learn their name by printing it in signs and on their artwork. Play a game of finding the initial of their name in a picture book.

Take your child to the library often to discover different kinds of books. Library story times are a treat!

Ask your preschooler to tell you about a fun experience, and write it down as he or she tells you. Read the story back to them. Encourage your preschooler to write their own story. Tell them, "It doesn't have to be like grown-up writing, use your own kid-writing." Be ready to listen if they would like to read it back to you. Help your child make their own books using magazine pictures, family pictures, or drawings.

**Preschool children are curious, imaginative, and need reassurance about their world. Choose books that:**

- Repeat words or follow a pattern
- Will make them laugh
- Have stories that are reassuring
- Have easy to understand, predictable plots
- Illustrate songs



**AEYC**

Assoc. for the Education of Young Children-SE Alaska  
3100 Channel Dr., Suite 215  
Juneau, AK 99801  
Phone: 907.789.1235  
Toll Free: 1.888.785.1235  
[www.aeyc-sea.org](http://www.aeyc-sea.org)