



Reading with young children

Why should I read with my young child?

- Reading is vital for your child's development.
- Sharing books with your young child helps them to start to develop the sort of skills that they will need when they start school.
- Reading together is not trying to teach your little one to read before they are ready, it is helping your child to develop a love of books.
- Reading together from an early age helps your child to understand how a book works and to learn how much fun they can be.
- Sharing books together is a special time. The pictures and words in the book give you lots of things to have fun with, talk and laugh about, all while you bond with your child.



When should I start reading with my young child?

- Reading together is a chance to hold your baby in your arms, for your baby to listen to your voice, and for you to share the pictures in the book. Babies love all these things, so why not start as early as possible.
- There is no specific age to begin sharing books together. Some say that reading with young children can begin soon after birth. Other parents like to start around 4 to 6 months because your baby will have some head control then and can sit up in your lap. You should start whenever you're ready.

How often should I read with my young children?

- There is no magic number for how long or how often you should read together. Young children generally like routines so you could try to make reading a part of your everyday routine. Bedtime is a time that lots of families like for sharing stories. Anywhere, anytime is great. Your child might choose books for you to share at any time of the day, just because they like it!

How do I get my young child involved?

- Try to find a quiet space to share books (turn off the TV and radio) so your child can hear your voice. A quiet space will let you both enjoy the experience.
- Get comfy together, and sit so that you can both clearly see and touch the book. Encourage your toddler to point to things in the book and turn the pages.
- Let your child choose the books.
- Your child might like to have the same book read over and over. Imagine how good your child will feel about themselves when he or she tells you the word that finishes the sentence or describes what is going to happen next.
- Your child's interests will change as they grow. When they choose the book you are supporting your child to share their interests with you.
- Play games and have fun. Books can help you get started on lots of different activities. Your infant will like being moved to the rhythm of the book and actions that match the book. There are many stories that are actually songs. You can sing them together!
- Ask questions and point to familiar things in the book. Help your child to explore what they see in the book and relate it to their real world. Ask about things they like, things they have seen before, the colours they see, and to count things on the page.
- Join the library, it's free. Your child will have fun selecting the books and have lots to choose from. You may also be able to go to "read aloud" sessions at the library. You and your child will see many people who love reading and have lots of fun.



The Australian Government is working in partnership with the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and The Smith Family to deliver Let's Read.

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