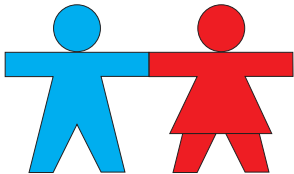


## Raising a Reader...

Current research shows that a child's brain grows at an incredible rate during the first three years of life. Parents and caregivers can encourage the development of brain connections by providing age-appropriate, stimulating experiences. Language development is one essential part of early learning. It's never too early to begin reading with your child and developing skills crucial to reading readiness. Just remember to keep it simple, short and fun. Here are some practical tips you can use to develop your child's love of reading and pre-reading skills:

- Read to your child daily. Include cloth books or board books so your child can hold and manipulate the book.
- Surround your child with books. Provide an assortment of titles in your child's play area, bed, the car—not just on the bookshelf.
- Meet your local librarian and learn about great books, both old and new.
- Use chants, songs and rhymes to accompany everyday activities. Add actions as you chant or sing.
- Play "let's pretend," "I spy," or other games that encourage use of language.
- Be a role model for your toddler. Let your child see you enjoying books.
- Talk to your child about what you are doing throughout the day. Encourage your child to make conversation while you listen carefully and patiently.



## Early Literacy

Early Literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read or write. Children develop skills important to reading several years before they start school. Parents can help children become successful learners and readers by developing the following Early Literacy skills, starting at birth:

### **Print Motivation—Interest and enjoyment in books**

- Make book-sharing a fun experience that your toddler will want to repeat. Never withhold reading time as a form of punishment.
- Read a little bit every day. A bedtime story is a comforting routine to end even the most challenging day.

### **Print Awareness—Noticing print, handling a book and understanding how to follow words on a page**

- Help your toddler recognize that words are everywhere by pointing out printed words wherever you go.
- At the grocery store, let your child pick out a favorite food by "reading" the print on the box.
- Point to some of the words on the page as you read to your child.

### **Vocabulary—Knowing the names of things**

- Talk with your child about what is going on around you to build your child's vocabulary.
- Your toddler's vocabulary will triple by age five. Help it grow by using a wide variety of words in your everyday speech. Think of synonyms and specific details to describe things. Don't be afraid to use "big words" with your child.

### **Narrative Skill—Being able to describe things and events and tell stories**

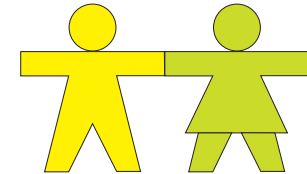
- After becoming familiar with a book, have your child tell the story to you.
- When sharing a story, ask your child open-ended questions, such as "What do you think happens next?" or "Why do you think she did that?"
- Connect stories to your own life by asking questions such as "How would you feel if that happened to you?" or "Remember the time we went to Grandpa's house?"

### **Letter Knowledge—Knowing the names, shapes and sounds of letters**

- Read alphabet books.
- Sing the alphabet song.
- Play alphabet games, like making letters from Play-Doh.
- Use your child's first name as a starting point for letter recognition. Write the name and sound it out.

### **Phonological Awareness—The ability to hear and play with smaller sounds in words, such as identifying rhymes**

- Share poetry, nursery rhymes and songs. Many nursery rhymes can be set to music.
- Make up your own silly rhymes.
- Clap out the syllables of words.



## Fun Reading Activities for You and Your Toddler

- Play guessing games. Make a familiar sound for your child (train whistle, cow's moo, etc.). Have her guess what it is. Then let her make a sound for you to guess.
- Take a walk and name things that you see. Have your child repeat these words back to you.
- Share books with repetitive refrains, such as **Is Your Mama a Llama?** and **Panda Bear, Panda Bear, What Do You See?** Emphasize rhyming words and encourage your child to join in the refrain as you read the story.
- Play interactive music CDs, singing and dancing along with your toddler. Make instrument shakers by filling film canisters with rice or beans to accompany the music. Act out movement songs and finger plays.
- With your toddler, make up stories and act them out using puppets, costumes or toys. You can make simple puppets from socks or cardboard tubes.
- Encourage your toddler to "write" his own stories or letters. His scribbles are the beginning expressions of his thoughts and ideas. Ask him to tell you about what he's written.
- Attend the toddler Story Time at your local library, even if your child may not be able to sit through the entire program yet.
- Cut out felt letters and shapes. Let your child play with the pieces on a feltboard. You can make a simple feltboard by gluing a square of felt onto a piece of cardboard.



## Resources

**The Complete Book of Rhymes, Songs, Poems, Fingerplays, and Chants.** 811.008928

Dell'Antonia, K. J. and Susan Straub. **Reading with Babies, Toddlers, and Twos: A Guide to Choosing, Reading, and Loving Books Together.** 372.4 DEL

Fox, Mem. **Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Lives Forever.** 649.58

Dunn, Opal. **Hippety-Hop, Hippety-Hay.** E418.00832

McGuinness, Diane. **Growing a Reader from Birth: Your Child's Path from Language to Literacy.** 372.4

Odean, Kathleen. **Great Books for Babies and Toddlers: More Than 500 Recommended Books for Your Child's First Three Years.** 028.162

Raines, Shirley. **Story Stretchers for Infants, Toddlers and Twos: Experiences, Activities and Games for Popular Children's Books.** 372.4

Silberg, Jackie. **125 Brain Games for Toddlers and Twos: Simple Games to Promote Early Brain Development.** 649.5

## Web Sites

**[www.earlywords.net](http://www.earlywords.net)**  
Promoting language and literacy development.

**[www.growupreading.org](http://www.growupreading.org)**  
Grow up reading!

**[www.rif.org](http://www.rif.org)**  
Reading is Fundamental—the oldest and largest nonprofit literacy organization.

**[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)**  
Resources on the first years of life.

# Raising Readers Toddlers



Fun and easy ideas  
to develop the love of  
reading in your child.



kcls.org