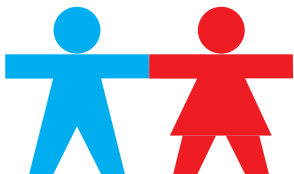


Raising a Reader...

Babies' brains grow rapidly. The latest research shows that parents can contribute significantly to the development of their baby's brain. Reading to babies stimulates their minds, develops language skills and lays a foundation for later reading success. When babies experience the warmth and pleasure of cuddling with parents and listening to nursery rhymes, songs and stories, they grow into children who love to read. Reading early and often to babies helps develop skills that lead to a lifetime of reading enjoyment. Here are some suggestions for sharing books with babies:

- Cuddle with your baby as you read, or if your baby crawls, continue reading—your baby is still listening and learning.
- Choose books with clear, bright, simple illustrations.
- Read books with lots of rhythm, rhyme, repetition and short text.
- Point out illustrations and talk about them.
- Vary your voice. Read with animation. Have fun!
- Let your baby play with the book and when able, turn pages. Allow baby to practice on magazines and catalogs.
- Attend a Story Time for babies at your local library. Your children's librarian can help find books just right for your baby.
- Share a book with your baby every day. Just a few minutes will make a difference in how soon he learns language.
- Be a role model for your baby. Let her see you enjoying books.



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 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

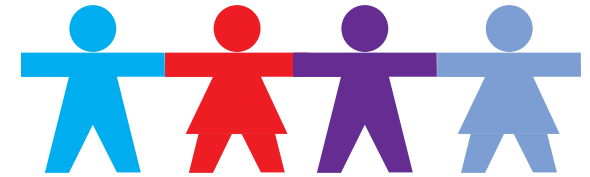
- Make book sharing a fun experience that your baby wants to repeat.
- Choose quiet times to read aloud when your baby is most likely to sit still.
- Don't force your baby to listen.
- Read a little bit every day.

Print Awareness—Noticing print: how to handle a book and understand how to follow the words on a page

- Point to some of the words as you read them.
- Help your baby recognize that words are everywhere by pointing out print found in everyday life such as food labels, diaper packaging, street signs, etc.

Vocabulary—Knowing the names of things

- Build your baby's vocabulary by talking about what is going on around you.
- Don't hesitate to use "big words."
- A typical children's book has nine times more "rare" words than regular speech.



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

- When sharing a story, ask your baby questions, such as "Where's the Bunny?" and then answer for him.

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

- Read alphabet books.
- Point out and name letters when reading books.
- Sing the alphabet song.

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

- Share poetry, nursery rhymes and songs.
- Make up your own silly rhymes.



Fun Activities for You and Baby

- Talk to your baby. Address her by name, ask questions and talk about what you are doing. Immerse your baby in rich, varied language. Respond to what she “says” to you.
- Sing lullabies and simple, familiar children’s songs. Learn from and sing along with CDs and cassettes. Play instrumental music, too. Your baby will enjoy listening to a variety of music.
- Read or recite nursery rhymes throughout your baby’s day—while changing diapers or riding in the car. Babies love poems with a “sing-song” cadence. Use lots of facial and vocal expression.
- Dance with your baby, moving his arms and legs to songs and rhymes. Holding, rocking and cuddling your baby stimulates the brain to release hormones that actually promote growth.
- Play peek-a-boo, so-big and tickling games. Do finger plays and action rhymes.
- Babies enjoy looking at human faces. There are lots of board books with photos of baby faces.
- Babies also enjoy books with animal sounds. Combine books about animals with songs like “Old MacDonald” and “B-I-N-G-O.”
- Choose interactive lift-the-flap books such as **Where is Spot?**



Resources

For booklists, parenting resources and more, log on to the King County Library System Web site at www.kcls.org and select Pages for...Kids.

- Acredolo, Linda. **Baby Minds: Brain-building Games Your Baby Will Love.** 649.122 ACR
- 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
- Dunn, Opal. **Hippety-Hop, Hippety-Hay.** E418.00832 DUN
- Herr, Judy and Terri Swim. **Creative Resources for Infants and Toddlers.** 305.232 HER
- McGuinness, Diane. **Growing a Reader from Birth: Your Child’s Path from Language to Literacy.** 305.232 HER
- Odean, Kathleen. **Great Books for Babies and Toddlers: More Than 500 Recommended Books for Your Child’s First Three Years.** 028.162 ODE
- Ramey, Craig. **Right from Birth: Building Your Child’s Foundation for Life: Birth to 18 Months.** 649.122 RAM
- Silberg, Jackie. **Games to Play with Babies.** 790.1922 SIL 2001

Web Sites

www.beginningwithbooks.org/list.html
“Best Books for Babies” awarded by Beginning with Books Center for Early Literacy.

www.rif.org
Reading is Fundamental—the oldest and largest children’s and family nonprofit literacy organization.

www.zerotothree.org
Resources on the first years of life.

Rev. 5/07

Raising Readers

Babies



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



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