

TIPS TO



READ AND DISCUSS STORIES

With Your Infant (0-12 months)

Read regularly. Your baby won't understand for a while, but that's fine. They will hear your voice, see the pictures, and develop good feelings about books.

Baby books. Board books with hard covers and thick pages are made especially for babies. Choose books that are short and have simple, bright pictures.

Snuggle up. Hold your baby in your lap so they feel cozy and can see the pictures.

Involve them. They might want to hold the book, turn the pages, or pat the pictures. They might even chew on the book. It's all learning!

Describe the pictures. It's not important to read all—or any—of the words. Point to and talk about the pictures. Name the things your child shows interest in.

Follow their lead. When they start to lose interest, try another book, or stop. Short periods of reading will work best.

With Your Toddler (12-36 months)

Warm up. Before opening the book, check out the cover. Read the title. Look at the picture. What does your child think the story about?

Change your voice. Try different voices for different characters.

Name that. Name and talk about the things your child points to. See if they can point to objects you name. "Can you find the elephant?"

Ask questions. "What is in the box?" or "Why is the girl happy?" Respond to your child's comments and questions. Show your interest in their ideas.

Don't be too serious. Your child may want to turn the page before you finish reading it. If they can't sit still for the whole book, that's ok.

Re-read. Toddlers learn through repetition, so it is normal when they want to read a favorite book over and over. Notice how proud they feel when they master the story. But try for variety too, because new books offer new things to see and learn.

With Your Preschooler (36-60 months)

Ask questions that don't have "yes" or "no" answers. "What do you think will happen next?" "Why is he sad?" After asking, give your child time to think and respond.

Pause for new words. Pause to talk about words your child doesn't know. "That's a 'beetle.' It's a type of bug."

Talk about feelings. When you read a story together, point to a person in the book and ask, "How is he feeling?" When your child responds, ask if they have a guess about why. They can look for clues in the pictures.

Look for letters. Out in public? Find items with labels, like a TRASH CAN, and encourage your child to identify the letters they know and sound out the word.

Switch roles. Pick a book that you and your child have read several times. This time, have them "read" the story to you. They can describe what is happening in the pictures.

Make it Routine

Try to read together every day. Before bed is a great time to read, but choose a time of day that works for your family.