

read **early**, read **often**, read **forever**™

A Reading Program for Pre-Born to Preschool



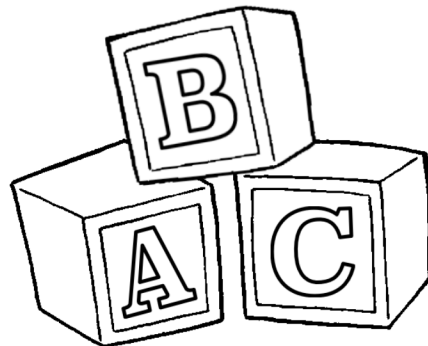
This free program is for use by moms, dads, parents, parents to-be, grandparents, and anyone else who wants to give the youngest children a big head-start on reading before they go to school!

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A Reading Program for Pre-Born to Preschool

This program is divided into sections:

The Unborn
The Newborn
Crawling Toward Reading
Toddling Toward Reading
Pre-preschoolers
Preschool and beyond...



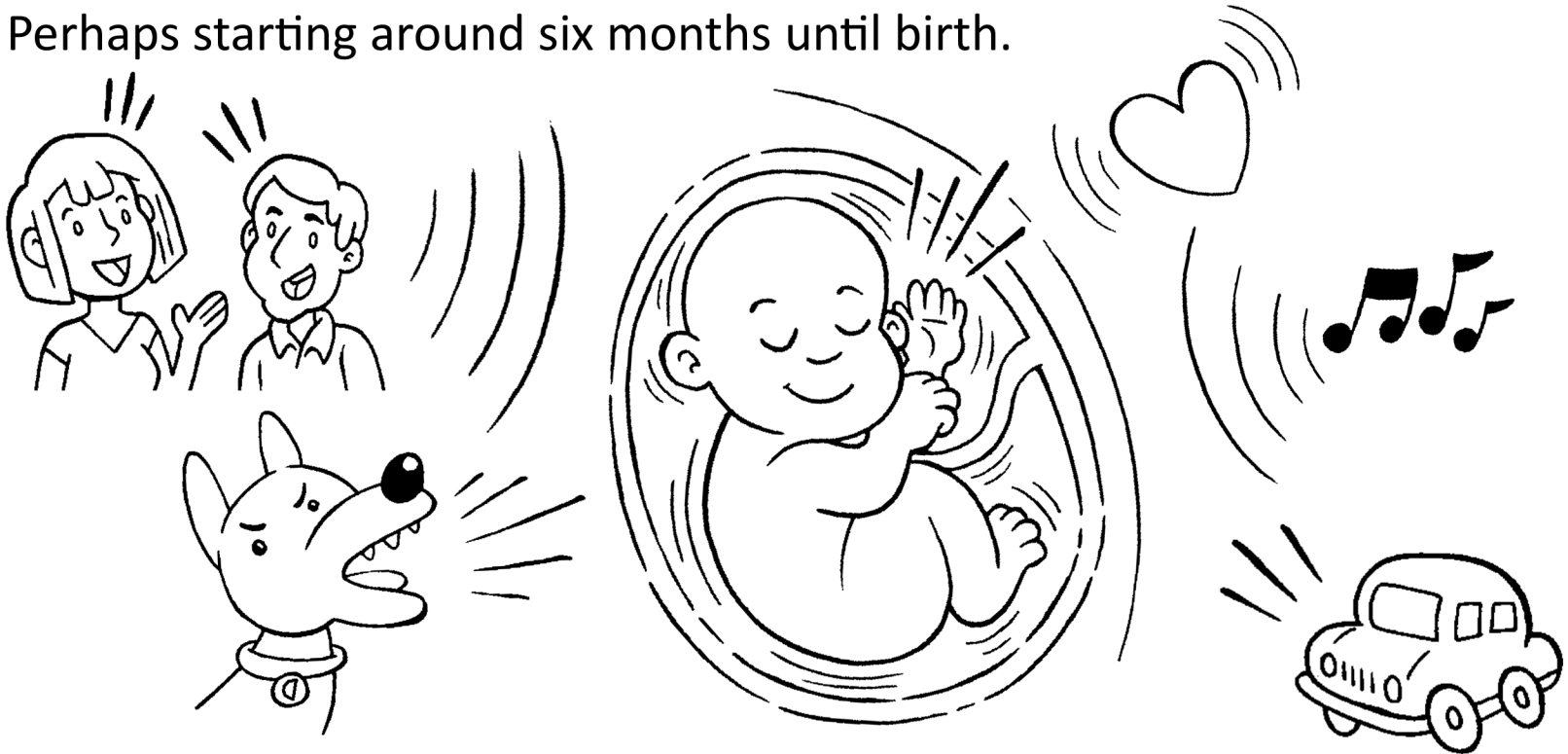
There are NO rules!
Keep it simple.
Trust the process.
Take your time.
“Time outs” are ok.
Keep it short.
Make it organic.
Enjoy yourself.
There is no right or wrong!

The Unborn

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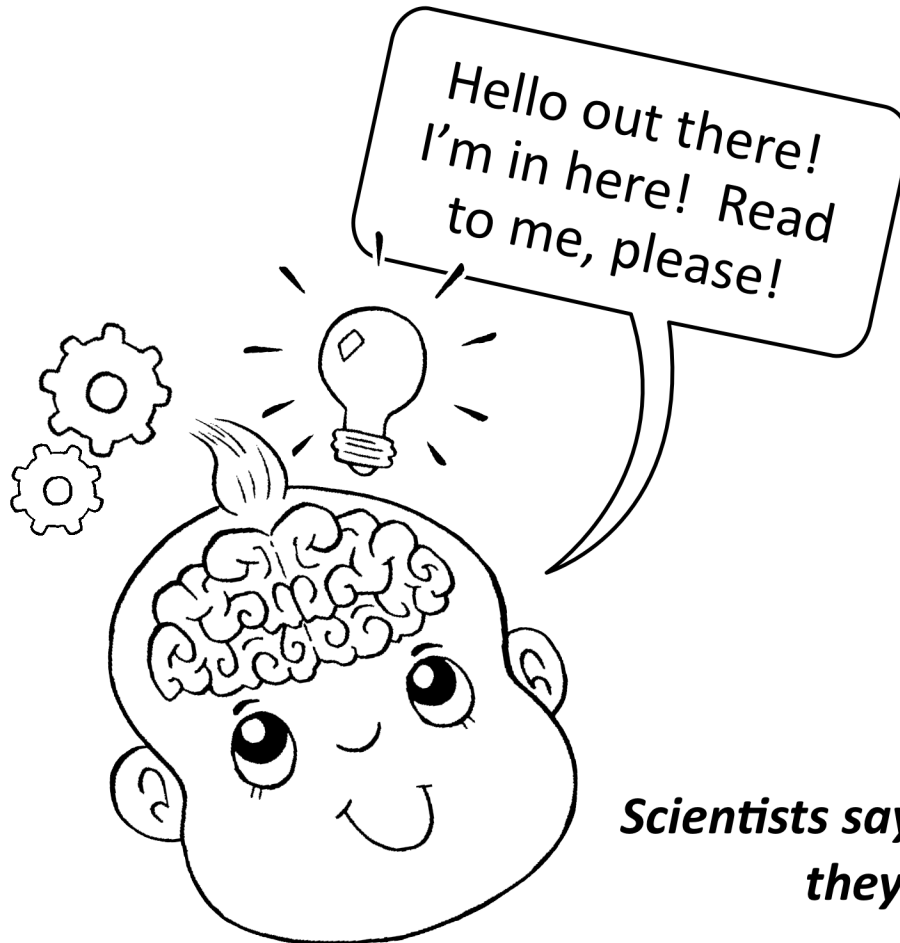
This is the simplest part of the program. Read to your unborn baby!
Perhaps starting around six months until birth.



*Think about it: Your baby is curled up in the dark.
At some point, baby can hear sounds: a heartbeat, a muffled dog bark, music, voices.*

*While baby has no idea what any of these sounds are or mean...
the brain is growing...growing to learn— not later, but now!*

Besides, maybe baby is bored?
But baby's brain is busy. So let's put it to work!



We talk to our unborn baby,
right?

So why not read to it?!
It can't hurt and it
just might help!

***Scientists say some words baby hears in the womb,
they recognize after they are born!***

What do you read to an unborn baby?

ANYTHING!
EVERYTHING!

I wrote this book to read
to the unborn baby.

This book is filled with poems:

Lullaby to the Unborn

Before I Was...

(star dust, seashell crumbs)

Rainbow Butter (about colors)

Babybet

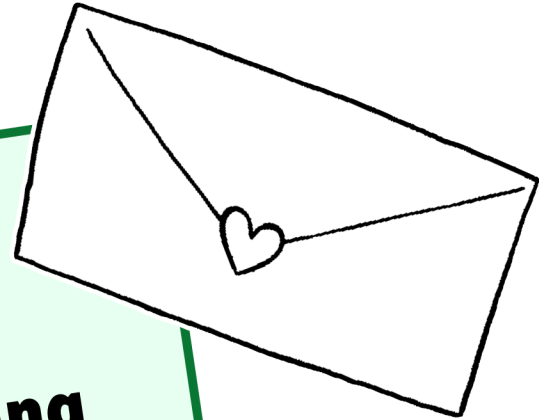
(an A-to-Z of baby things)

...and many more



But you don't need anything special
to read to your unborn baby...

- **Read the Bible**
- **Your text messages**
- **The recipe you're making**
- **A letter**
- **The electric bill**
- **A picture book**



Baby won't care what you read!
But baby will love the sound of your voice
reading words aloud.

Here's an example of how to not even read to your baby,
but just make things up as you go about your day!

*Hello in there!
How are you today, dear baby?
I just got a Target catalog in the mail!
Let me read to you some of the things
you will need one day...
A crib. Canned corn. A red bicycle.
A onesie. A lot of onesies!
Maybe even twosies, threesies, foursies, fivesies!
Isn't mom silly?*

*Oops! Here's a text from grandma.
Let me read it what it says.
I'm sure it's all about you, anyway!*



Dad can do the same thing.

*Well, baby.
I'm trying to put this stroller together.
It should be easy but it's not!
Let me read you the directions.
You will see what I mean.
Listen carefully! Open the box...
Take out all the gazillion parts...
Uh, oh, baby! Daddy's in trouble now!*

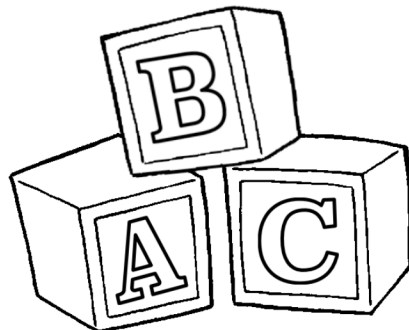
***Believe-it-or-not,
Dad's stimulating baby's senses and improving
brain development as he reads aloud!
Nerve cells are making new connections—
and that's called learning!***

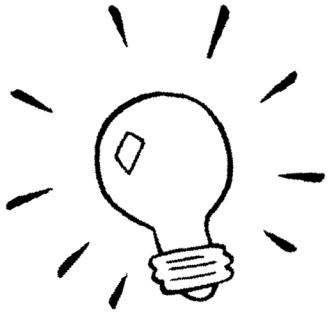


Brothers and sisters can read their own books or homework to baby!

*See, I had to do all this math in school today.
You are lucky you do not have to do math yet!
Listen to this crazy word problem:*

*A boy was walking to the store.
A girl was walking from the store.
He walked fast. She walked slow.
Who got there first?
...Huh?*





No matter what you read to baby,
try to do it in a quiet place so it can hear the words.
Read sweetly; baby will like that. Even if that's the electric bill!

Oh, listen baby!

At the start of January, we had a meter reading of 679,843.

At the end of January, we had a meter reading of 976,234.

That must be a lot of lights on because our bill is two-hundred dollars!

Wow! I wonder how we will pay that, baby?

*I just wonder how many meters a meter reader reads
when the meter reader reads meters. Don't you!*

*Do I have
to pay bills? What
is a meter?*



The important thing is to read to baby **EARLY!**
You can start anytime. It's a good habit.
No matter how early, how often,
or what you read to baby...
at some point it will be *listening*.

I'm so glad to
listen to anything
besides Mommy's
tummy rumbling!



Will it understand the words? **No.**

Will it love your voice? **Yes.**

Will it pick up the idea of the sound of reading? ***I believe so!***

The sounds of letters and words and sentences.

The rise and fall of a voice reading a story (or an electric bill!)

Something will be happening.

That growing baby brain will be turned on to words!



The reasons you want to start reading to your baby early are:

- To build the habit.
- To not be embarrassed to read to your unborn baby in front of others.
- To understand that you need no special books or other reading tools.
- That you can read things **you** like to read.
- To practice reading slowly and clearly and with **positive energy** and **emotion!**

Oh, here is how you make popcorn!
In just a minute you will hear the funny
POP POP POP
of the popcorn popping!

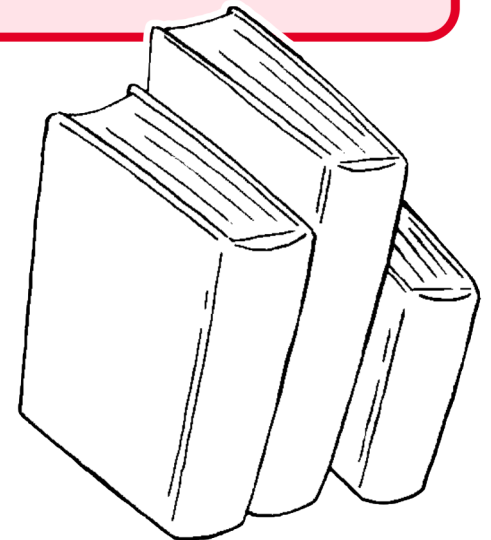
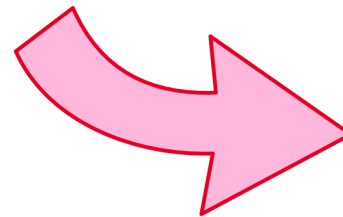


Who can be your Reading to the Unborn Baby helpers?

- Anyone in the family!
- Anyone who visits.
- Anyone who brings you sweet things to read to your unborn baby.
- The local librarian who can help you find easy books for babies that you can also read to them after they are born.



Keep a little bookshelf and/or basket of things to read to baby.



Don't feel you have to find a special time to read to your unborn baby. Anytime is fine! If baby is sleeping, that's ok too!

Read a ***lot...***

Read a ***little...***

Read ***short bits...***

Read ***part of a story...***

Read ***all of a poem...***

Read the back of the ***soup can...***



Read early, read often, read *forever!*

If you want to, keep a ***journal*** or ***notebook*** of some of the things you read to your unborn baby.

One day they will treasure that keepsake,
and that you loved them enough to start
their reading journey
even before they were born!



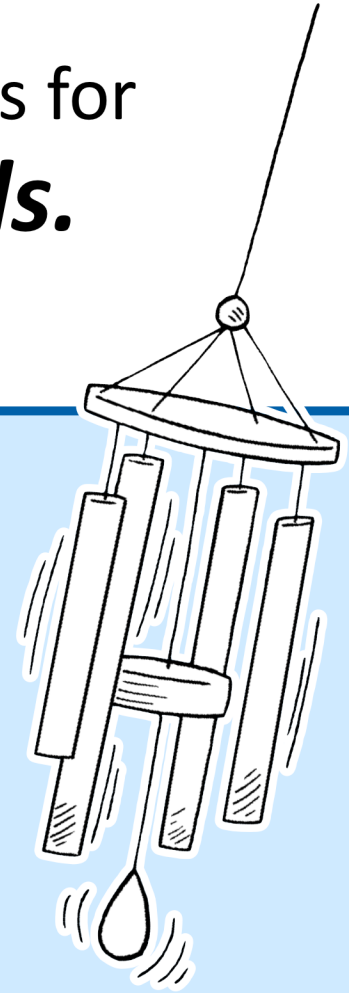
**Science suggests
that reading to baby:**

- Promotes bonding between reader and baby.
- Reduces baby's stress; Mom's too!
- Improves sleep quality; Dad's too...zzzzzz
- Links to higher IQ later.

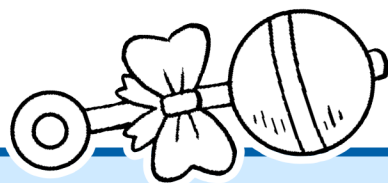


And don't forget that the whole point is for your unborn baby ***to HEAR words.***

- That can be poems or stories.
- But also pleasant music.
- Nice sounds: a wind chime, for example.
- The sound of children talking.
- Words from relatives and friends—
anyone can lean over and say something to baby...
or even give you a break and read to them— while ***you*** sleep!



LAST TIPS:



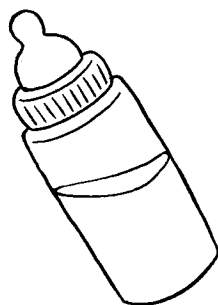
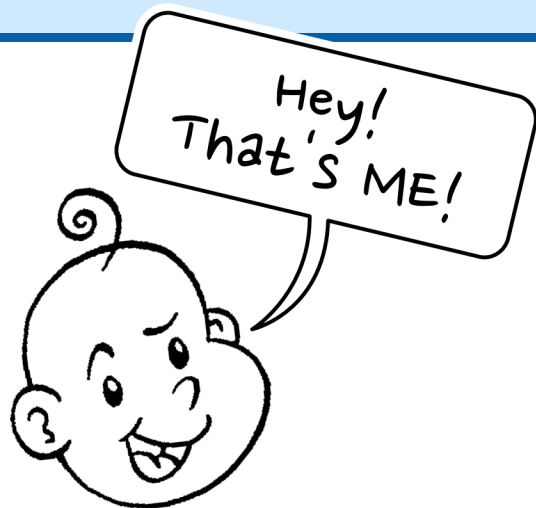
Life is noisy! Yes, baby will hear sounds, but that is not the same as hearing **READING SOUNDS**.

The sound of letters or words being read aloud.

The repetition of sounds: **PA RUM PA PUM PUM** *went the drum.*

Remember, you are getting baby ready to listen to more words once it's born. And you are getting practice in reading intentionally to baby, so pronounce each word and syllable clearly. Read with emotion!

Add your own sound effects! Sing the words! Baby is listening!



*Once upon a time, there was an unborn baby.
Name: _____!
And guess what? Mom and Dad and others
read aloud to you... Before you were even born!*

Did you listen? Did you enjoy that?

If so, smile!

More Info...

Around **18 weeks of pregnancy** your baby can hear sounds. Soon they will recognize voices.

What does baby like to listen to from ***inside the womb?***

- Pleasant words or music.
- Stress-free, friendly talking.
- Lulling words and rhymes.
- Laughter and giggles?

When you read to your unborn baby, you bond with them. And you start them on their reading forever journey!

How does reading to baby help baby?

Scientists say it stimulates the development of baby's brain. It can also speed up learning words after birth.

Reading to baby builds memories for you and them ***before they are even born!***

Recommended Books to Read to the Unborn Baby

Nine Months in My Mommy: Autobiography of an Unborn Baby
By Carole Marsh

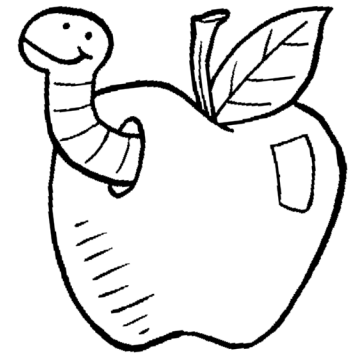
Hello in There!: Poetry to Read to the Unborn Baby

Tiny T. Rex and the Very Dark Dark

Can't Wait to Show You

When God Made You

Ma! There's Nothing To Do in Here!



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Reading to the Newborn Baby!



Yesterday, your baby was “in there.”
Today, your baby is “out here.”

In your arms. In the world. Do you think your baby remembers
you reading to it all these months? I do!

Oh, my goodness... Sounds must sound much **LOUDER** to the newborn baby.

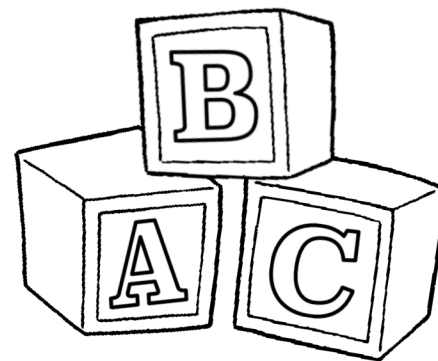
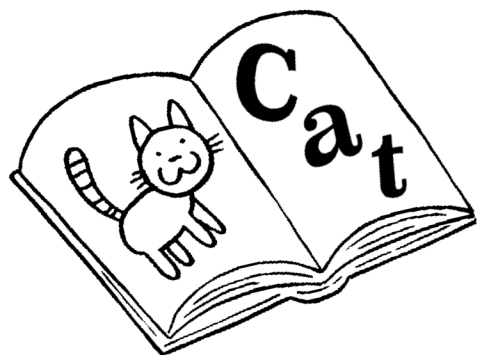
No wonder they cry! Listening to slam, bang, wow sounds might take a bit of getting used to.

If you need a break from reading to baby, that's ok! Let's not overwhelm you or baby!



Clearly, YOU are busier than ever with baby part of your life.
And your newborn is already learning what life is like in the real world.

These first few months after birth, take time to rest and read to baby, as you bond, then nap! Keep it simple and easy for you!



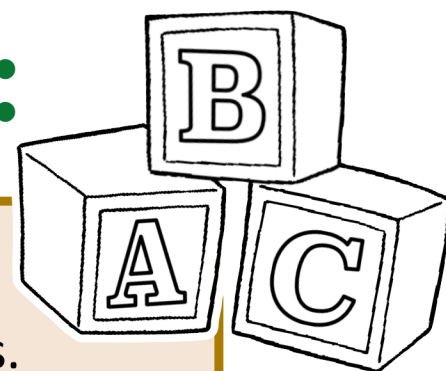
- You can sing Happy Birthday! Baby will love this, especially one day when baby learns there might be presents or cake!
- You can read any of the books you've already read. Literacy is born from hearing repetition of word patterns and sounds.
- And if you are tired, music or an audio book work just fine.

Things to think about:

- Baby is learning to recognize voices.
- Baby is learning to separate sounds—talking from music; the chatter of brothers and sisters; irritating sounds such as a door slamming or a loud dog barking.
- To continue baby's hearing of words, continue to read. Baby has been listening to such things before it was born and so may now recognize—and welcome—familiar voices reading in that sweet, slow, lilting sound that they have heard before.



Some good things to do:

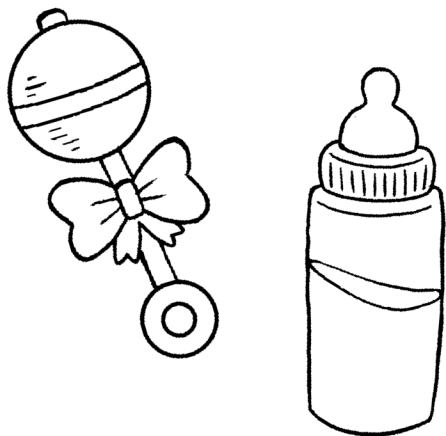


Read simple books made for babies.

These have few words, short words, and repeat words.

They are like reading “blocks”—they will get more and more familiar with the same sounds.

And, now that baby can hear more clearly, words will sound more specific.



*It's ok to keep on reading to baby anything you wish,
or that is handy.*

*Hey, baby, listen to all the things on this
shopping list I made: diapers, bottles, rattles, toys,
baby food, blankets, all for you!*

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Your baby is bonding with you and your voice.

And with the voices of others who talk or read aloud to them:
dad, grammy, auntie, sister.

AND, as baby can see better and better, he or she enjoys not just your voice, but your face, lips, eyes, eyebrows, as you sweetly read in a lilting voice.

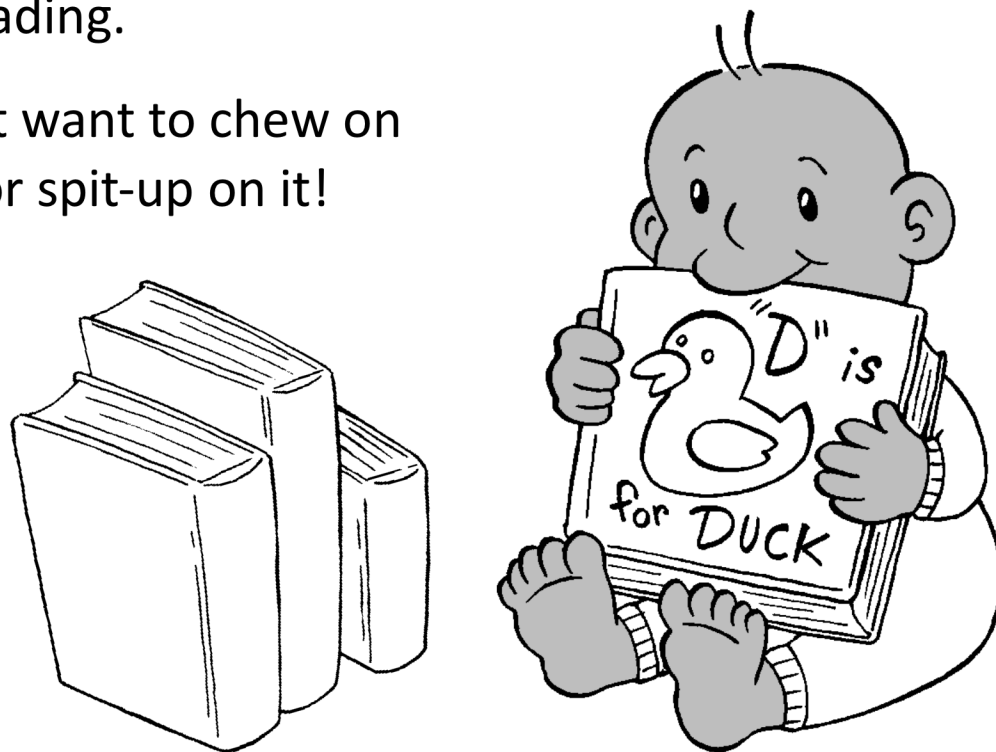
To keep baby from being confused, allow plenty of time for quiet and one-on-one reading or talking. It's ok to have a radio or television on, or, for your house to be filled with happy chatter.

But to help baby continue on the learn to read journey, allow several short times, day or night, to just hear the sounds of words, a story, a poem, a lullaby.



When baby can sit up and look around better, you can show them the book you are reading.

Note: They may just want to chew on this book, sit on it, or spit-up on it!



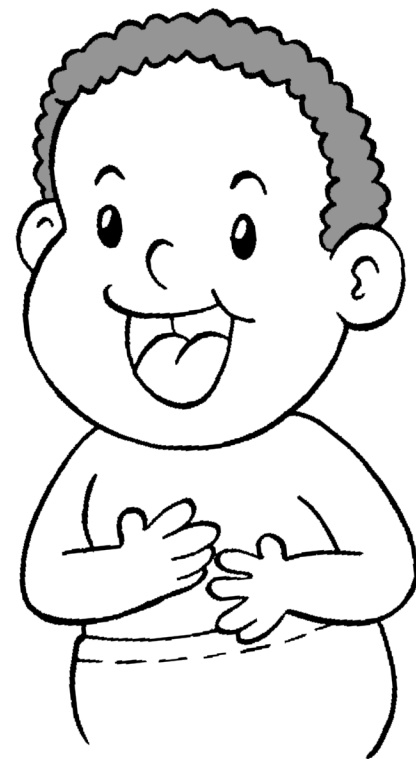
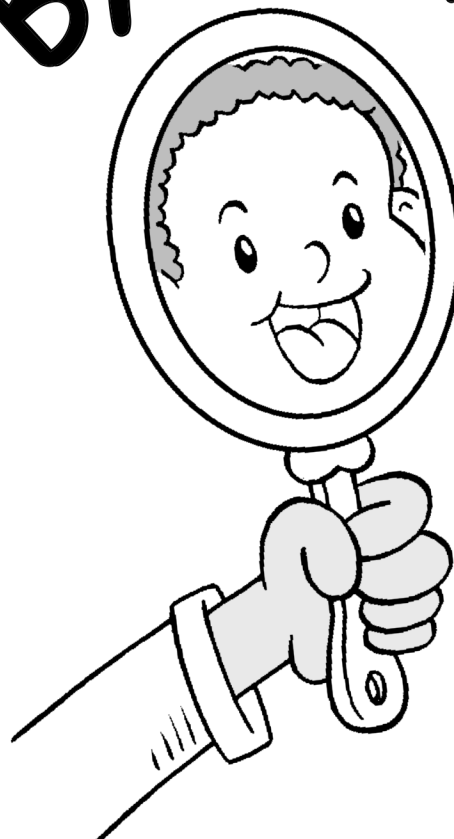
Picture books with simple pictures or books with just black and white sketches are fun for baby to look at. You can point to the picture and say what it is. It's not that baby is learning to read...but it's learning to associate the sound of words and reading with a book AND the naming of specific items/pictures you point to as something that means something—even if it does not understand that yet.

Soon your baby will like to hold a book.
To feel a book that has textures such as fur or fuzz or another funny feel.
Baby might like to look at other babies, especially baby faces in a book.
You can hold baby up to a mirror and say...

Again, you are just sharing
sounds and words and...
That this is fun and social!



BABY!



Baby is learning to listen, and to realize that listening is something it can do.

Baby is learning to focus on certain sounds and words it likes.

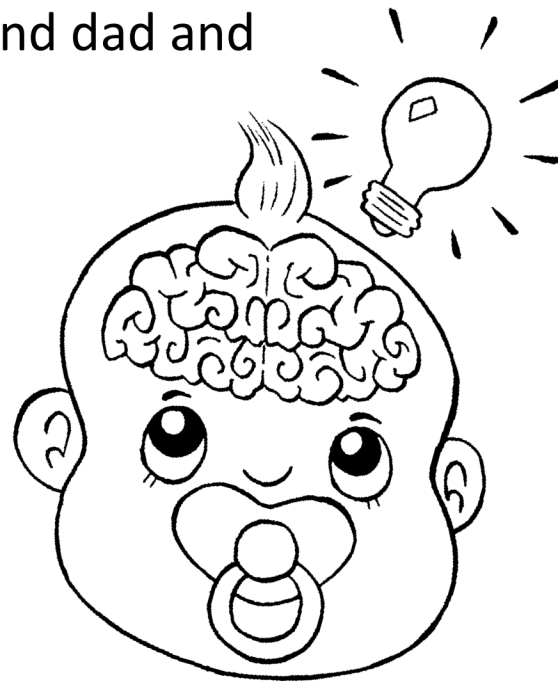
That's why soon it will "read" to you, meaning goos and gurgles and other sounds.

You may not understand what baby says any more than baby understands what you say.

The important thing is that baby is learning that **words** are fun, that **sounds** are fun to make, and that they can make mom and dad and everyone else smile, and laugh, and giggle.

What a great motivation that is! Reading is rumbling around in that growing baby brain!

*Science shows baby is developing
early language learning, word recognition,
and early language development.*



As you continue to **READ EARLY** and **READ OFTEN**, you may notice that baby wants to hold the book and babble. Hmm...is that reading? It's a start!

Baby may listen intently to some words and sounds; perhaps they are growing familiar (like new friends) to baby?

And baby will soon try to say what you say.

We know how that works: Mom and Dad are delighted, clap their hands, and make a big to-do.

And that just tickles baby and makes him or her want to "say" more things!

Welcome all the words!

Make it fun!

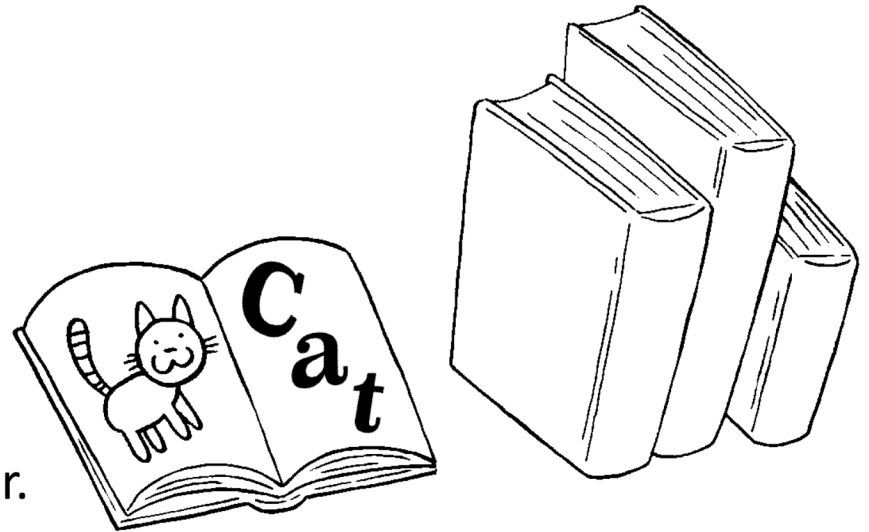


Other Tips:

- **Think of what baby is learning:**

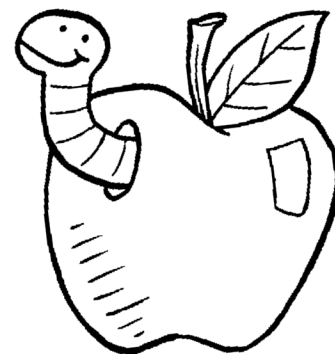
- That a book is a “thing.”
- That it opens and closes.
- That it has a front and back cover.
- That there are pages.
- That there are letters and words and pictures on these pages.
- That these letters and words must mean something important because mom or dad look at them all the time and say stuff to baby.
- This stuff starts to get familiar. (Why has daddy just said the CAT sound 45 times?)
- What the brain sucks in... The brain can spit back out! (Hey, dad, CAT to you too, buddy!)

- Remember to keep it simple and fun, not something to do when baby is tired or fretting.



Books for the newborn to six months can be:

- The same things you read pre-birth.
- New simple books for babies.
- Small books that small hands can hold.
- Books that make the day more fun, less boring.
- Books that have fuzzy or shiny covers—
just be sure they are safe for baby to put in their mouth,
because so far, they may think the main purpose of this book
thing is to teethe on it!



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A Reading Program for Pre-Born to Preschool

Crawling Toward Reading

Think about how much progress you and baby have made so far!

Your unborn baby heard so many words and stories!

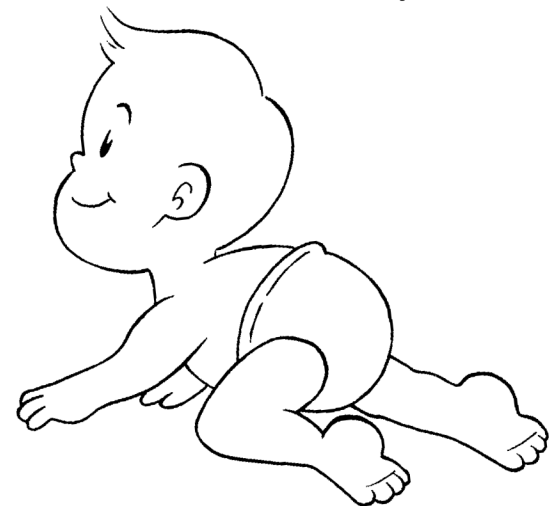
Your newborn baby has heard the same stories with new hearing clarity.
Baby has seen mom and dad reading in real life. It's all new and exciting!

read **early**, read **often**, read **forever** is well underway!

Baby loves it!

You are more comfortable with reading to baby,
Perhaps other family members are on board with
reading to baby!

And now there's more fun and success ahead!



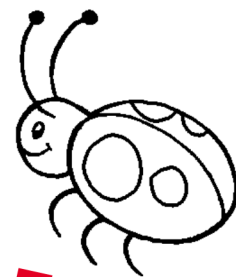
When my first daughter started crawling,
I got down and crawled with her!
I wanted to see the world from her point of view.
It was amazing to watch her eyes grow big when
she encountered new things!

— Carole Marsh



Now that baby is on the move, there are many more words to add.
All of these words are things your crawler can see and maybe touch!

Get down on the ground or floor and say them to baby!
Show them to baby! Sniff them with baby!



grass

DIRT

ladybug

DAISY

Dandylion

Stick

ACORN

Squirrel

Hopefully you and baby have been practicing the nose, fingers, toes words?

Outdoors on the ground is a fine time to add:

- Does the grass tickle your nose?
- Put your finger on the daisy!
- Wiggle your toes in the dirt!

This repetition of words they have often heard, and may already understand what they mean, is a big head start toward reading readiness.



Now is a great time to read picture books with baby that show large images of many of the words they have learned or are learning.

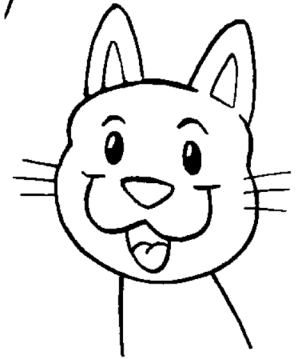
DIRT Toy Cat
Fingers
BABY
DOG
TOES grass Nose

Now is also a great time to add colors!

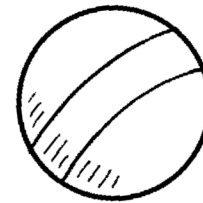
Can you feel the green grass?



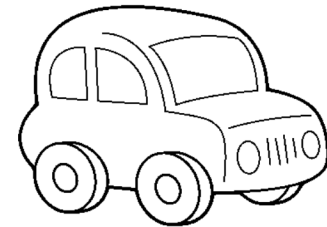
Let's pat the gray cat!



Here comes the blue ball...



Pick up the red toy.



Again, this is all pre-reading, but it's helping baby's brain grow and develop a comfort and familiarity and understanding of language!

When you read to your crawler, baby may want to sit by you on the floor.

A book spread open before it is easier to see.

You can point at words and objects.

Baby may point too. It does NOT matter what they point to.

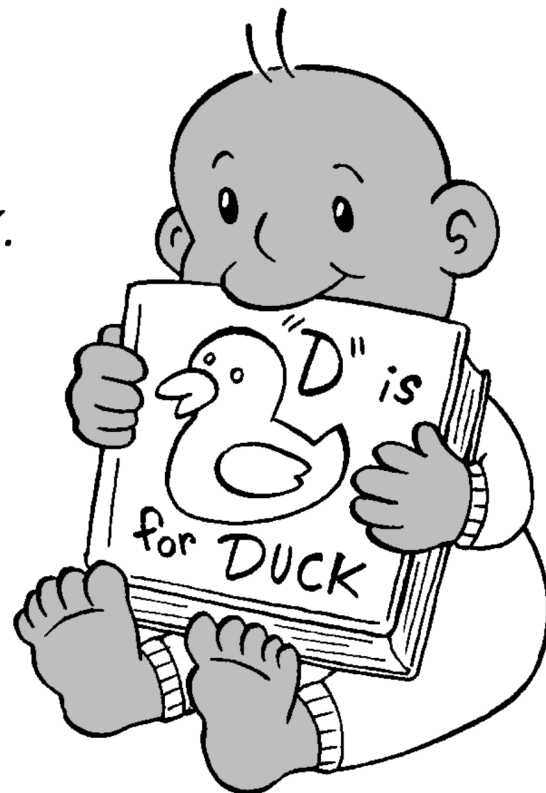
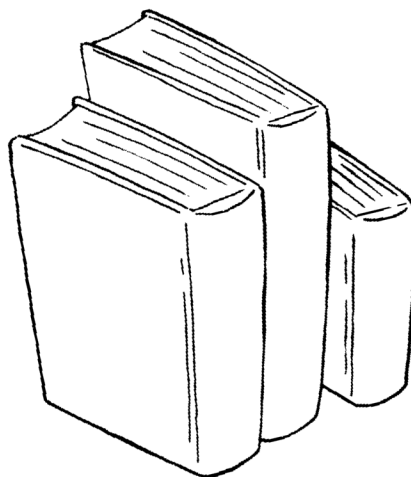
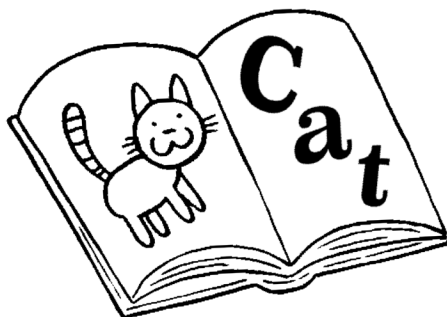
But they are catching on to the idea that this clump of letters means this and that batch of letters means that.

It helps if you get more animated and exaggerated.

“Look at the BOOK. Here is your BOOK.

You can hold the BOOK. You can open the BOOK.

Let’s read the BOOK. Let’s hug the BOOK!”



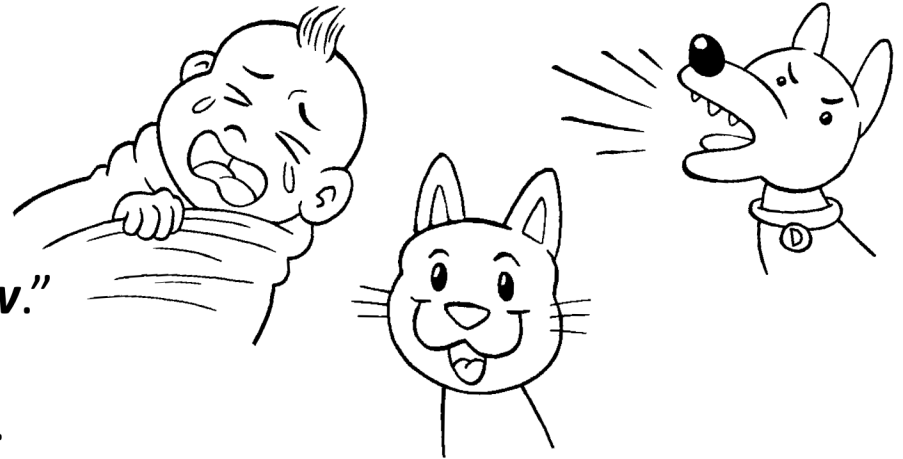
Pick books for baby that are sing-songy and read them with **verve!**

Add sound effects:

“The baby goes **wah, wah, wah!**”

The dog says **wuff, wuff, wuff!**”

The kitty goes **meow, meow, meow.**”



As the months go by...

Your baby is not only crawling, but thinking about walking.

Your baby is not only babbling, it is thinking about talking.



And what is talking?

WORDS!

Think of all the words baby has heard so far.
It has a head start on this word thing!

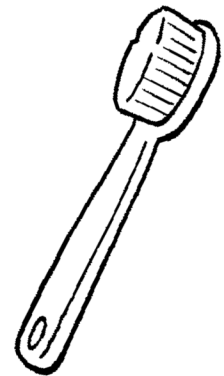
TIPS:

- Your baby is learning to listen.
Look in its face and talk to it with warmth and expression!
- Your baby is learning to communicate. When it coos or babbles back, give baby expressive attention, nod your head, smile!
- All the typical baby things such as peek-a-boo are good interactive ways to communicate with baby. Pattycake, hide-and-seek, peep-eye, and other “call and response” type of games are very similar to learning and saying words.
- Let your daily routines help you:

Mommy is washing her face. Let's wash your face.

Daddy is brushing his teeth. Let's brush your teeth.
(No teeth? No problem! Just gently rub those gums!)

Grammy needs a pot. Let's sit in the floor and look
in the cabinet for a pot!



Good Books for the Crawling Baby

Make Way for Ducklings

The Cat in the Hat

The Poky Little Puppy

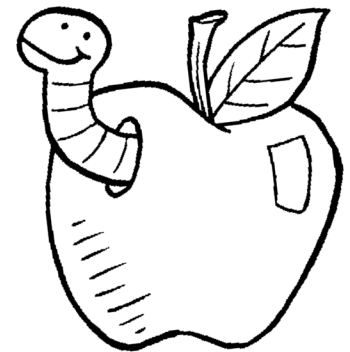
Goodnight Moon

The Little House

The Runaway Bunny

Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel

The Story of Babar



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Toddling Toward Reading

It does not matter if your baby is still crawling, has started to try to walk, or is toddling left and right. This is not about the legs—it's about the brain!

It does not matter if your baby can say no words, a few words, or maybe is even chattering a bit in its own secret language.

This is about the brain beginning to wrap its head around language, letters, words, and heading toward learning its first letters and words.

You and your baby are on track to...

read **early**, read **often**, read **forever!**

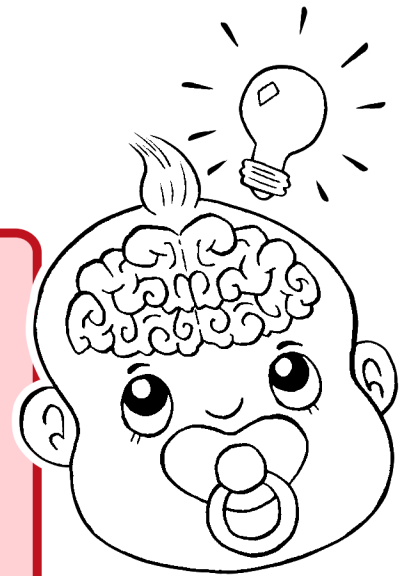


WHAT ELSE

is your baby learning and practicing as you continue to read to and with him or her?

- Communicating
- Emotional aspects of reading, talking, listening and responding
- Concepts such as letters, numbers, colors, shapes, names, words and more
- Listening skills, memory, vocabulary
- Learning how to learn!

By the time a baby reaches its first birthday it will have learned all the sounds needed to speak in its native language! The more you read to your baby, the more words baby will hear and the better they will be able to talk, and to read.



Bring Reading ON!



Now is the time to add:

- Learning letters
- Learning to copy sounds
- Learning to look and focus
- Learning to listen and respond
- Learning to recognize pictures
- Learning words

...SO FAR, SO FUN?

When my grandson was a tiny toddler, he toddled into my living room one cold winter day, looked up at me, and said, "It's cold outside!"

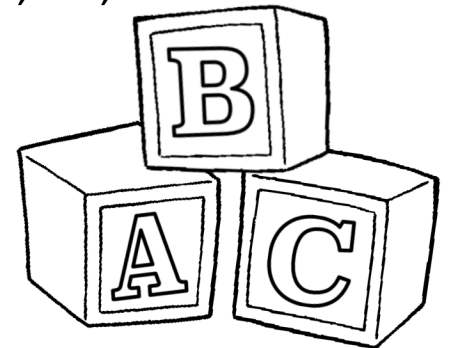
I was shocked. Except for mama and dada, etc., I had not heard him say any other words, much less a sentence. So trust that your baby is listening and learning and will "spit it out" when he or she is ready!

— Carole Marsh

LETTERS, LETTERS, EVERYWHERE:

Now is a great time to add **LETTERS** to your baby's daily world. Your toddler does not have to learn the ABCs in order. It does not have to learn upper and lower case letters. Start with those convenient sturdy plastic letters in bright colors.

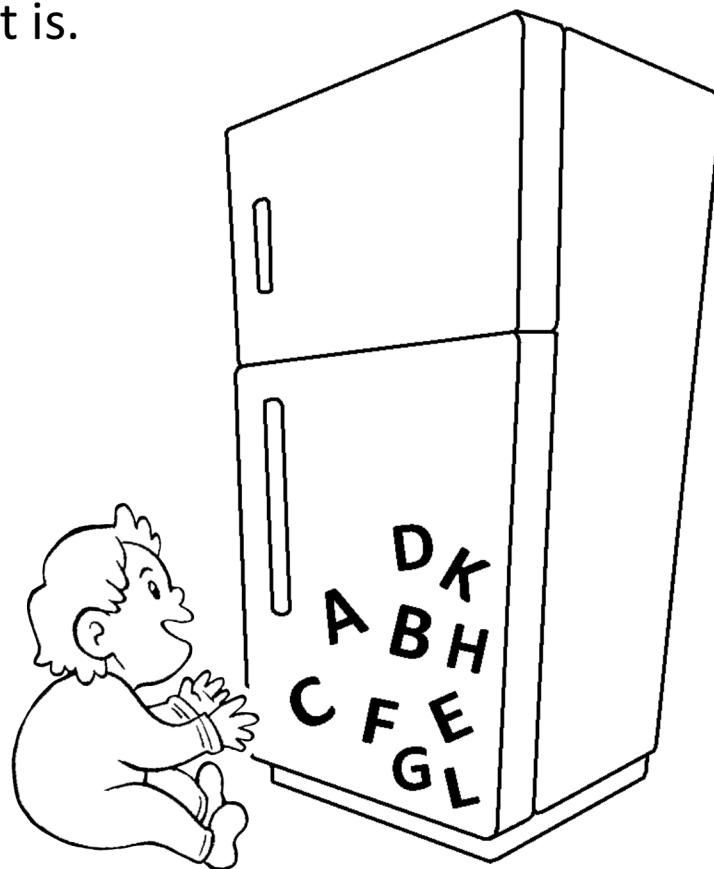
- Magnetic letters on the fridge (down low where toddler can see them)
- A whiteboard in the bedroom. Write your toddler's name on it each morning in big, clear letters, or use more magnetic letters. Add the month. Add the day of the week. Add the number of the day.
- Sing or play the "ABC song" frequently (you know: A, B, C, D, E, F, G...) whether you are looking at letters or not.
- If you can find Sesame Street or other shows that stress the A, B, C's, that is good too.
- Read alphabet books to baby while pointing at the letters.
- Eat (and play) with "alphabet soup" pasta letters.
- Make cookie letters with cookie cutters.



As your toddler learns letters, you can also do these things:

- Let them learn to manage the letters...to put them on the fridge (upside down and backwards is ok too!)
- Work on a few letters at a time—4 or 5 basic letters. Put them in a bowl. Pull one out at a time and tell your toddler what it is. Let toddler pull a letter out and tell what it is. If it gets it right, brag mightily! If it gets it wrong, that's ok — just show it the letter that is right.

**There is no rush.
Repetition works;
frustration does not!**



Instead of rushing on to learn all the letters, chose a few to focus on that will end up in common words that you read to your toddler. These might end up being the first words they learn to read:



...That kind of thing. But don't let it get boring.

Focus on those letters and simple words and find books to read that include those words. As you read aloud to toddler, point to those words.

Soon (whether they know them or not) they will quickly learn to beat you to the punch by calling out the CAT word that is beside the picture of the cat.

Go ahead and learn some numbers!

Use the same method: colorful plastic numbers on the fridge, in a bowl, read in a book. Soon you will be reading 1 CAT.



Also introduce lowercase letters in the words you have focused on: Cat. Dog. Hat.

Keep singing the ABC song, pointing out Big A...beside a little a. Toddler may be confused but think this is fun and they will catch on.

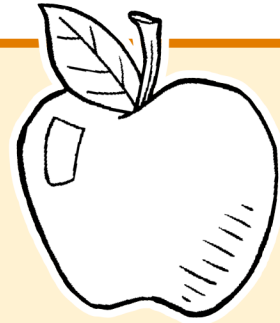
Over time, toddler will learn more letters and numbers.

Make it FUN, not school.

Never point out what is wrong, just show what is right.

A fun thing to do is let the letters follow the toddler and the toddler follow the letters! For example:

If you give toddler an apple, put it on the table with the A in front of it. This way you can introduce the letter sound.
“Hey, here is an Apple, Ah-ple.”

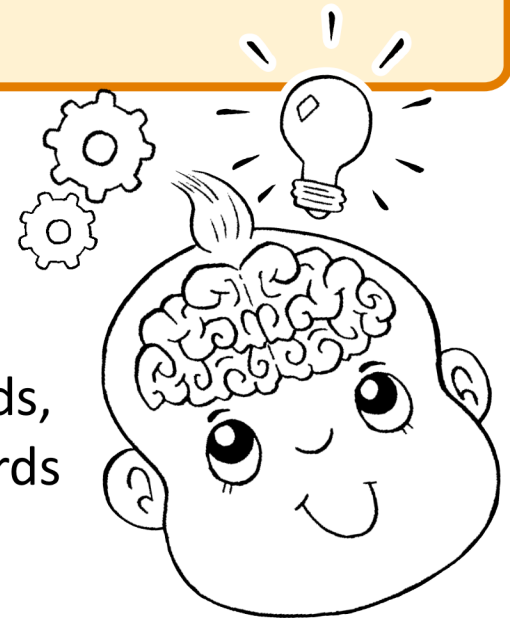


Do the same with a ball and a B and a Ba sound. Don't make it hard, just fun.

Put a T by the toothpaste...an F by the firetruck toy...a D at the base of the door: “Oops, the door opened; the D fell out!”

It's all just games, but toddler's brain is slowly connecting the sound dots to the shapes.

The more you read, emphasize certain letters and words, the sooner sounds and letters and then letters and words will “click” with your child.



FREE LETTERS AND NUMBERS!

Don't feel that you have to spend money to **read early**, read **often**, read *forever* to help your toddler be successful.

Free letters and numbers are everywhere: on the mailbox, on book covers, on shopping bags, on tee shirts. Toddler does not mind what you read or what they point at and read!

Don't feel everything has to be new. Toddler enjoys hearing the same book read over and over (and often, over and over and over!)

You can share books with other parents, swap them. The library is a great free resource of books and advice of which books might be most helpful.



MAKE UP THINGS!

Take some blank cards or cut up squares of paper. Write a big A on each one.

Are you trying to read your own book or watch a football game?

Entertain your toddler by spreading the A cards all around the room.

“Find me an A!” As they run to find a card and bring it back to you, give praise.

Once they find the A cards (a few or all), switch to “Stack up the As!”

Or, “Line up the As!” Or, “Here’s my ballcap. Can you toss the As into my hat?”

Play! Use some reverse psychology?

“I wish I had an A [sad face]. You have an A but daddy does not have an A — boo hoo hoo.”

Toddler may be happy to find all the As and keep them.

Or to be proud to give daddy an A, or all the As.

If you act bored, toddler will be bored.

If you make it sound like fun, toddler will enjoy any variation:

“I lost my A [in plain sight]. WHERE is my A? Oh, no, I need my A.”

See what happens next!

G
B

D A E

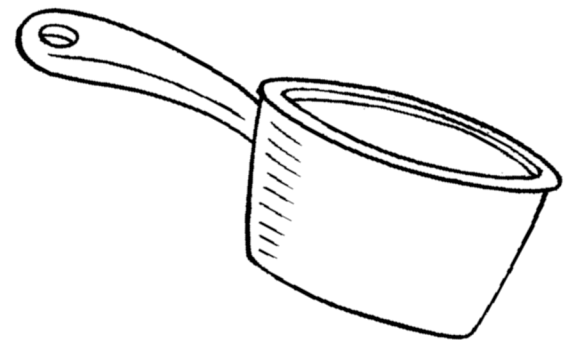


As a young mom and writer, I was always trying to teach my kids or entertain them so I could get some work done. It sometimes backfired!

One day I asked my toddler, "Can you put a pot on your head?" [We had been learning those words.] He happily ran off to do so. Only I did not see where he went. The house got quiet. I was working at the kitchen table and suddenly panicked when I realized that I had not seen my child in a long time. I looked high and low, in every room. I called his name over and over. Silence. I figured he was playing hide and seek? Or had fallen asleep somewhere? Finally, in desperation, I started opening all the kitchen cabinets. I opened and closed the bottom doors as fast as I could. Suddenly, I opened one and there stood my toddler, pot on his head, smiling.

He had one finger over his mouth like "Shhhh"
and another proudly pointed to the pot on his head.

— Carole Marsh



Good Books for Toddlers

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Brown Bear, Brown Bear

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom

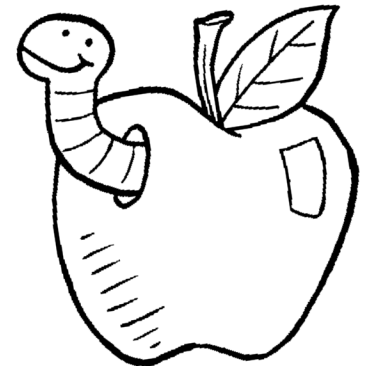
Corduroy

A Little Potty Never Hurt Nobody

Love You Forever

Yummy Yucky

Are You My Mother?



Pre- Preschool

read **early**, read **often**, read **forever**™

A Reading Program for Pre-Born to Preschool

You've read early, you're reading often, and now you are reading with more and more purpose to your pre-preschooler!

Toddling has passed and walking and talking are rampant. Your pre-preschooler is already smart as whip in so many ways. It's not only the reading to them that has helped, it's all that time that you've spent with them so intentionally preparing them to begin to read.

Perhaps "real reading" will not actually start until "real school" — first or second grade. But look what a head start your child will have! And, there's still much to do!



Remember this is a process, not an event.

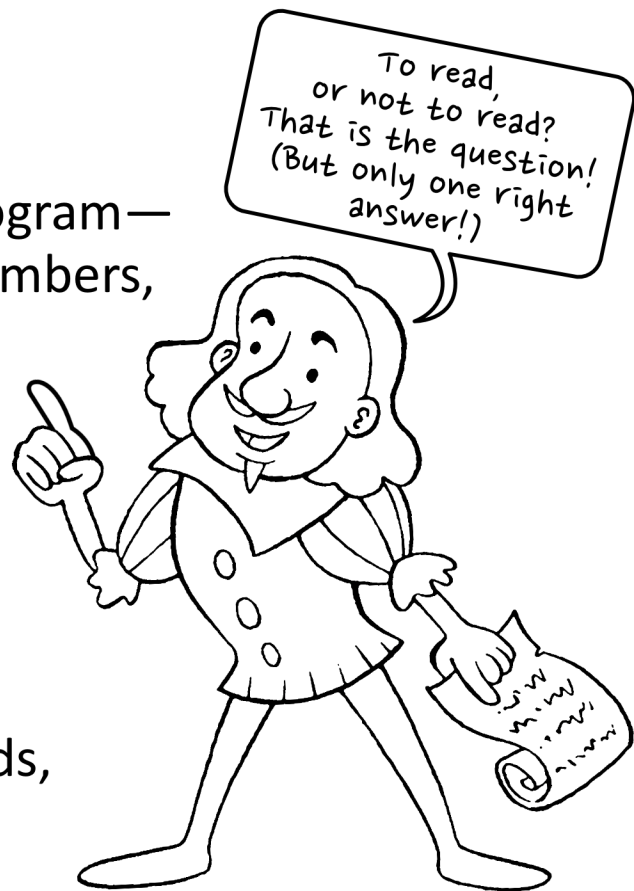
It's likely that you have had enthusiasm for the program so far. After all, it's fun to read to the unborn, and to any child any time.

Well, mostly. But sometimes you may have found you had to take breaks: too busy at work, a family crisis, your child was sick with the flu—there is no need to feel guilty or bad about this.

Nothing has been lost; much has been gained. And now, you're getting to the good part of the program—when your child will learn to read all letters and numbers, and many words.

Reading is reading. Your child does not need to read Shakespeare to be making great progress.

You've put a lot into that little brain and now it is ready to learn more, faster, and spit some words, sentences, and no telling what else out!



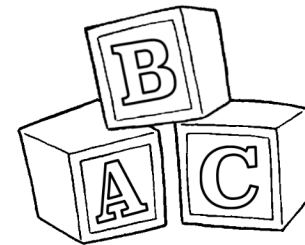
A Good Idea...

If you take your pre-preschooler to the library and they can get their own library card, please do so. If they can't, then be sure they see yours and let them choose their own books and “check them out.”

If there is a “free little library” in your neighborhood, check it for books. Visit the bookstore. Even if you do not buy anything, you can sit in the floor and read a book.

Your pre-preschooler may love story hour.
And maybe they can even buy a book?

Hopefully birthdays include gifts of books, books are “rewards” for certain things, and your house is filled with books. While we often complain about “devices,” now is a good time to read to your child on an iPad or listen to audio books at night before bed.



“Literacy” is everywhere: at the grocery store, on your laptop, at church, at the library, on the kitchen table, anywhere and everywhere!

One time, I took my pre-preschooler to ride with me to pick up her dad. While we waited in the parking lot, I distracted her by saying,
“What are those letters?”

There was a bright neon sign out the back window of the car. As I watched for her father, I heard my pre-preschooler mumbling.

The next day at church, a lady asked,
“Can you say your letters yet, little girl?”
My adorable daughter responded with a sweet face and loud voice: “L. I. Q. U. O. R.”

— Carole Marsh

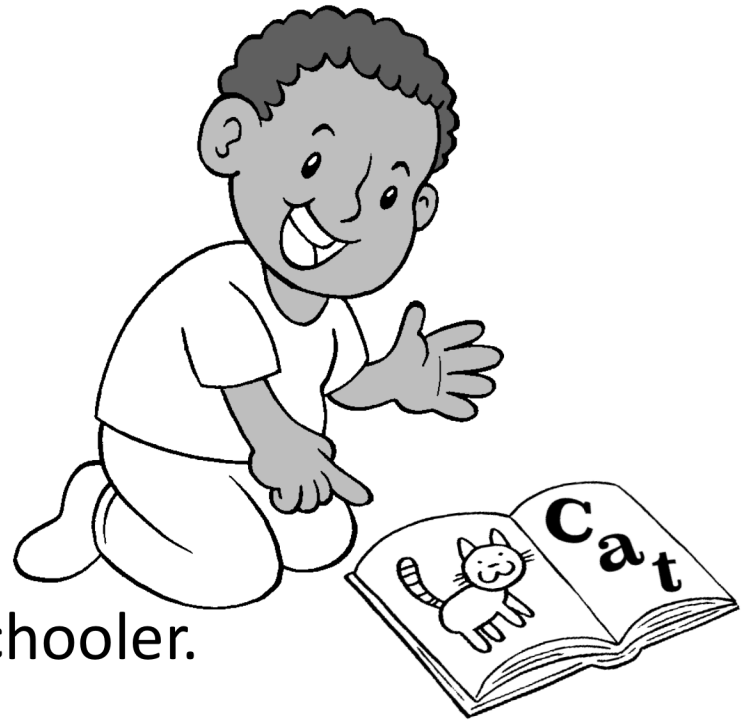
Reading To...



You may find your pre-preschooler prefers to be read to when they are tired and need comfort, when they may be bored and tired of playing with the same old toys, or some other time, so focus on that.

After all, they are growing up and have many more choices of things to do.

Reading With...

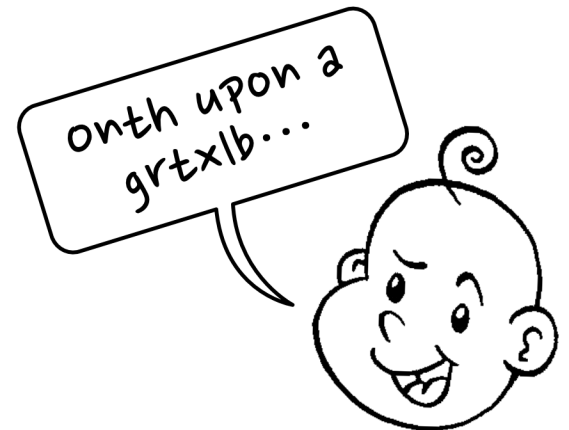


Read together with your pre-preschooler.

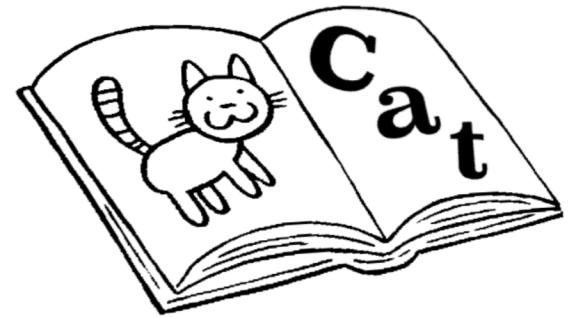
You can read a page, then they can read a page to you.

Oh, they can't read? Just listen: As they scan their finger over the words, they may say almost anything, but it will sound like reading.

Why? Because they know what reading sounds like even if they do not yet know how to read words.

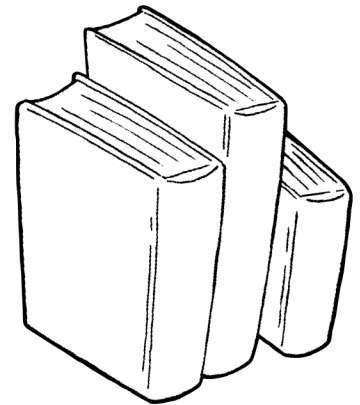


Reading With Purpose...



Continue to read stories just for fun.

But also choose books with words your pre-preschooler may already be able to read, or can learn to read.



There's nothing like success to lead to more success. As soon as they figure out that C A T is the word cat, they can find it and they can read it. One word leads to more.

Don't expect perfection or logic! If they can read "cat" and want to overdose on that one word, that's ok. If they want to "play" with the word cat and say "cat, hat, bat, sat, cookie," that's ok too.

One of the best things I ever did was to make letter cards (ABC) and word cards (CHAIR, TABLE, RUG) and put them around the house on those items.

My kids thought it was great fun to “collect” all the letters (sort of like hunting Easter eggs)... or for me to say “Go find the CHAIR word,” etc.

Over time, they got more and more words right. The fun was in the hunt and the praise.

1 2 3

—Carole Marsh.

A B C

Make Reading Relevant!

If your pre-preschooler is dog crazy, they may be eager to learn to read the word dog, read anything about dogs, listen to dog books, read dog picture books aloud to you. Even if they only know the word dog, that's the beginning of reading.

Get out your index cards and write words that are relevant to them: bookbag...shoes...doll...ball...cookie...phone. Seriously, like adults, kids care more about what they care about and that can be an aid to reading readiness. If the BOOKBAG goes where that card is, they will make the reading connection. If the balls go in the basket marked BALLS, ok. And if the jar says COOKIE...cookies it is!

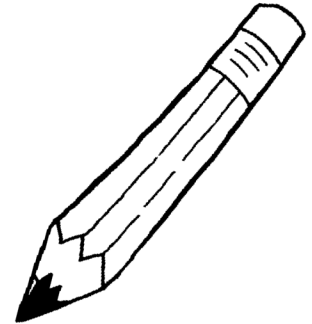
Put their name on things: tees, toybox, pencils, bookbag. The repetition of words said, heard, seen equals a special kind of reinforcement.

Once they say, "Cookie daddy" they will be ready to match the sound to the word to the person to the reward. It's funny: sometimes a kid will be ornery and switch words, or insist that cat says firetruck. This playing around with words is only them reinforcing that they know the difference.

As always, no rules, no wrong.



Writing to READ



Offer paper and pencils, markers, crayons and the opportunity for your pre-preschooler to copy letters and numbers, write words (correct spelling does not count), or “scribble” a note to grandma.

Let your pre-preschoolers trace over other letters.

Let them practice writing cat or dog or other words as they learn them.

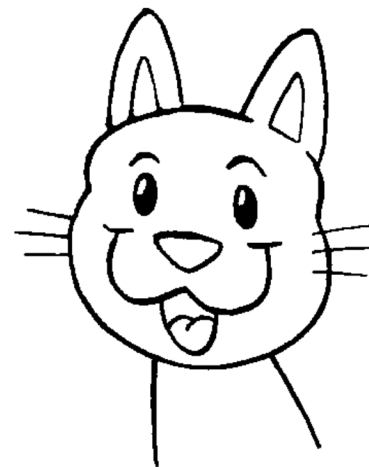
Help them “collect” words in a basket or box or on a bulletin board.

They can cut them out of magazines, advertisements, etc.

and re-read them as they wish. It is helpful for them to recognize "cat" in different size and types of fonts.

CAT *Cat* **CAT**

If you think your pre-preschoolers aren't learning, just start to mix things up a bit: "Look at this word. It says HELICOPTER!" They would look at me funny and say, "NO! CAT!" (And it was CAT!).



Another thing I learned is that hard words can be easy IF they are unique. It's just as easy to read REFRIGERATOR if it is stuck on the refrigerator as it is to read cat on a cat. (And it's ok if they pronounce it FREERIGHRATOR; like spelling and grammar and punctuation, there's plenty of time later to learn all that.

Also, tightly-correlated items with unique names are easily learned. In colors that might be CHARTREUSE or TURQUOISE. The colors are so distinctive, kids pick up the words fast.

—Carole Marsh

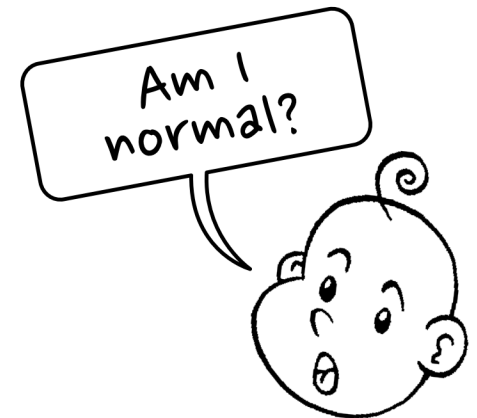
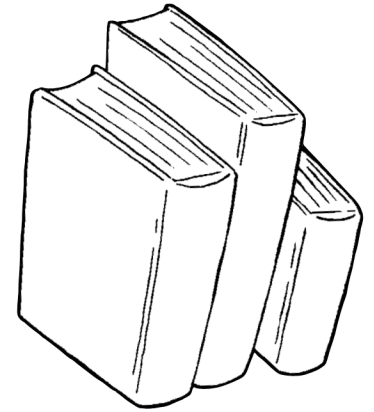
What if your pre-preschooler does not seem to catch on to reading?

No worries; they are young.

All you do is a help and is percolating in their growing, thinking brain. Perhaps they are too busy, too distracted, or would rather play. Take a break, days, a week, and see if they choose on their own to bring you a book to read to them.

What if your pre-preschooler astounds you at how fast they catch on to letters, numbers, reading, even writing? This is NOT a problem!

Let them race right on ahead in reading readiness! Just keep it fun and praise them. Even more importantly, act like this is normal!



How do you know if you are handling the read early, read often, read forever program well?

If your child enjoys it, if there is no pressure, if you relax and enjoy it, if you take breaks as needed, if it's fun... all is well.

However, if your child balks, try some new tactics.

Perhaps they only enjoy reading before bed?

Or reading about trucks?

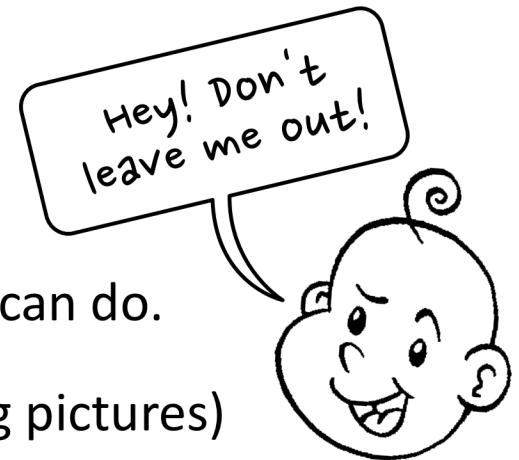
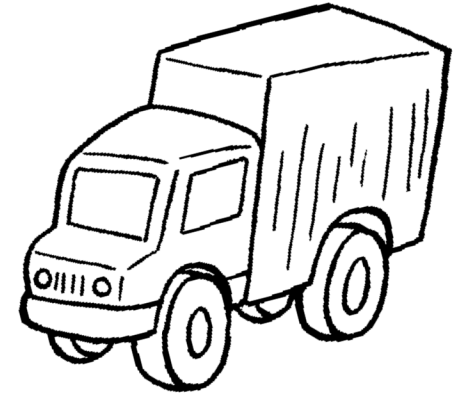
Then read before bed. Read about trucks!

There are no rules. It will all work out.

To see a parent reading is probably the best thing you can do.

So...maybe read a book on trucks (a kid's book with big pictures) to yourself out loud.

When your pre-preschooler sees Mom or Dad enjoying a book that much—they may join in on the action in spite of themselves!



CHILDREN LEARN IN DIFFERENT WAYS:

- If your child loves books and words, provide lots of books and words.
- If your child likes to draw more than anything, use drawing as a start.
Write the names of what they have drawn beneath the pictures.
- Be creative: draw words in sand, fingerpaint, on the foggy bathroom mirror!
Make letter shapes with your bodies: An A, L, S; join hands to make an H; all fun!
Make letters with play dough or Jello, or, cookie dough?
- Go to a children's museum or zoo and read the signs: whale, monkey, etc.
- Read letters and words wherever you go!
At the grocery: COOKIES, ice cream, milk, etc.
In the car: STOP; red; green; 55, GMC.
- Lay on your backs and look for cloud letters in the sky!
- Take your pre-preschooler to a school and let them peek in classrooms
and see the "big kids" reading, writing...
The bulletin boards full of words and pictures...
The library filled with books...
Help them see this IS what BIG kids do, what BIG kids think is fun!
What little kid does not want to be a big kid and do what big kids do?



A Word About Writing:

As a writer, I cringe when anyone criticizes a child's writing! (Yes, later there is time for that, but not when they are learning to read and write.) Writing is just saying what you hear in your head and heart on paper.

The important thing is to write it down. It does not matter if it makes sense, is a few words, a lot of scribbles, spelled wrong, or anything else.

If you read it or your child reads it to you, and you respond positively, your child will learn that they are a good writer from the start! (They will clean up their writing act later — spelling, grammar, punctuation marks.) If what they say or write is what they feel, how can it be wrong?

No-nos include: "You spelled that wrong." "This could be better." "I would have said..." "I don't understand." All imply that what they have done is bad or wrong, and what child will love that or continue doing something that just seems to get them fussed at? Let them tell you a story in their own words and love it! When they can write a story down, love it too!

— Carole Marsh

TIPS:

- It is perfectly fine for your young reader to read books upside down and backwards, to want to start at the end of the book, to skip pages, to read the same book over and over. Let them enjoy a book the way they want to! Reading is very personal. If it suits them, it's fine. They will self-correct when they are ready.
- It's always a good idea to watch for any eyesight, hearing or other physical problems that might affect your child's ability to read and learn. Ask your pediatrician for guidance and help.
- Never criticize a child for reading something you think is too "babyish" for them. Even as adults, don't we read cartoons? Never second-guess a child for choosing what you think is over their reading level. You WANT them to progress. If they want to read big brother's physics textbook, that's great. Perhaps what appeals to them is the color or the exciting illustrations. Let kids enjoy exploring books big, tall, heavy, small, easy, hard. We never want them to suspect there's any wrong way to read a book! Because there isn't!



Good Books for Pre-Preschoolers

Press Here

Harold and the Purple Crayon

Brown

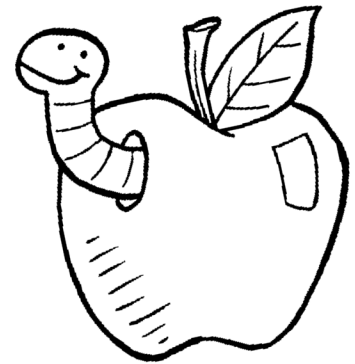
The Day the Crayons Quit

The Stinky Cheese Man

Where the Sidewalk Ends

The Snowy Day

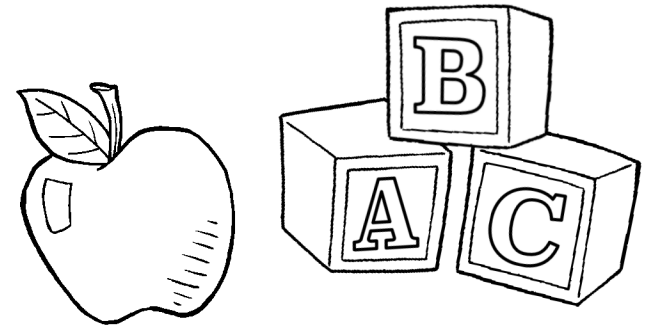
Where the Wild Things Are



In Conclusion...

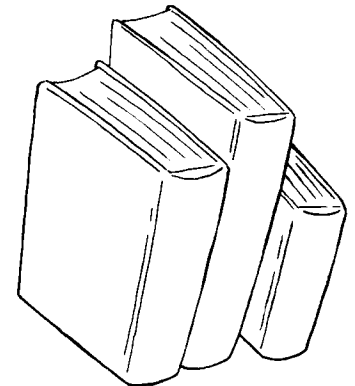
GOOD FOR YOU!

You've read to your child EARLY and OFTEN.
So how does this FOREVER thing work?



Oh, that's easy. We read all our lives... ***IF*** we are introduced to the ***JOY*** of words and rhymes, songs and sounds, letters and words and stories and books...at a young age.

While this has all been fun (and now teachers get the harder part!) it has been serious business. Reading readiness leads to eventual literacy.



The Real Goals:

1. A child learns to love to read. That can be NASCAR or SHAKESPEARE.
2. A child learns to read at a good pace.
Not fast, but with the cadence beyond one struggled out word after the other.
3. A child learns that reading is easy. Building a good vocabulary and reading more and more produces this result, and reading what they want, not just what they have to.
4. A child can read at grade level or above.
The goal is to move on as fast and far as they are able.
5. To read really well by fourth grade. After that, all reading is reading.
They will increase their vocabulary, comprehension, and other skills:
They will be a real reader!
6. A reader that can read a textbook, a newspaper or magazine, any book, any manual, any work-related forms, a technical school or college catalog, a doctor's report, a bank statement, and all the many, many things that are just plain essential as they grow up.



Reading early and often has its rewards!

From preborn to preschool.

In preschool.

In real school.

During free time.

All summer.

Forever.



Trust me, kids will know when they are a good reader.

IF, along the way, you see them struggle, step in to help.

Ask their teacher, librarian, or a reading specialist for guidance.

But above all, continue to read to your child
and with your child and let them read to you.
The rewards are not over yet!

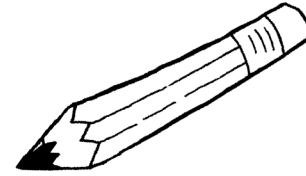
One of the greatest rewards that came from me reading to my children when they were young was that we began to focus on subjects we all loved!

Pirates and dinosaurs... fantasy worlds...
Egyptian history and mummies... and more.

As they grew up, we might read the same books, share books, recommend books. I would text the latest exciting shark news to them. They would email me an article on brownies. It kept us in touch; it kept us close. Reading FOREVER has rewards for everyone!

— Carole Marsh

OTHER IDEAS:



- Choose books (paperback, hardcover, e-books, audio) as birthday and holiday gifts.
- Build your own library of books you love; help your children do the same. Some people are so excited when they find their old kid books later that mom and dad have saved!
- Go to book sales! It's fun to do with kids of all ages. You never know what you might find! Some may be first editions, old children's books you wish you'd saved, special favorite subjects, or new interests—all at a great price and usually to help a good cause.
- Read books about books! I love my collection. They involve murder, mystery, mayhem, people who steal books for a living, people who sell books around the world, types of books from tiny miniatures to humongous books, and so much more.
- Visit bookstores! Each has its own unique personality. Some are famous and have been around forever; others are new. A bookstore and lunch is a great field trip!
- Watch movies made from books. Let your child decide which they liked best!
- Give books as gifts. When your child sees Dad's smile or big brother's if his sis gives him a book, they will understand the joy a book can bring before you've even read it.
- When your child asks, "How did you know that?" always answer, "I learned it in a book!"

MY FAVORITE OF MY OWN BOOKS THAT I HAVE WRITTEN

For Unborn to Third Graders:

Hello in There: Poetry to Read to the Unborn Baby

Nine Months in My Mommy: Autobiography of an Unborn Baby

A Little Potty Never Hurt Nobody (includes a song and stickers)

Criss-Cross Applesauce: 3 early readers for girls

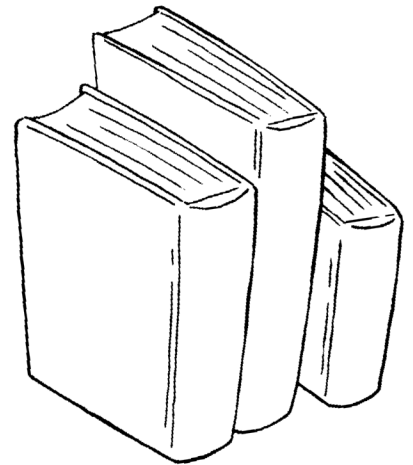
Three Amigos: 3 early readers for boys

James Bone: 8 all color 24-page graphic novels on a dinosaur hunter and his friends

My Life As a...: Third Grade Werewolf, Third Grade Zombie, Third Grade Vampire

Tell Me the Story Again About How you RESCUED ME! (lots of funny dog photos)

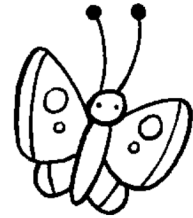
The Day the Books Cried (a book about books)



Available from gallopade.com or on amazon.com

My Favorite Books I HAVE READ

(well, a few of them!):



The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

First published in 1911; good to read to children; several movies have been made of this book.

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle

My first science fiction/fantasy book; loved the characters and the story; made into a movie.

Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson

First published 1883; a tale of buccaneers and buried gold; numerous movies made from this book.

Hailstones and Halibut Bones by Mary O'Neill

Poetry about colors, beautiful illustrations and language.

The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick

Imaginative tale that seems real and fairy tale at the same time; the first movie in 3-D I ever saw and the snow falling in my face was magical!

AND LASTLY, let your young' reader make their own books!

1. Write the book.
2. Add the illustrations or photographs.
3. Paste it all up on 8.5x11 paper; one side.
4. Copy the paste-up and "white out" all the paste-up lines.
5. Now you can copy the pages and make one or more copies for the number of books you want.
6. Collate them (put the pages in order.)
7. Bind them with a colorful tape on the end, or with a hole punch and ribbon ties, or with a spiral binder.
8. Be sure and make a front and back cover.
9. Be sure and to a title page with the title of the book AND the author's name.



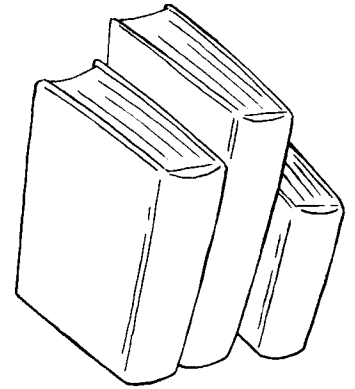
When my son was in elementary school he would always get an A on his reports. Why? Because he would turn them into a book and autograph it for his teacher!

— Carole Marsh

read **early**, read **often**, read **forever**™

A Reading Program for Pre-Born to Preschool

The End



Carole Marsh
author and creator

Lee Barrow
design and illustrations

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