

Reading with Your Baby

Reading with babies is a valuable way to spend precious time together. New babies will not understand the words you read in the beginning but a familiar voice and cuddling are exactly what babies need. Books should be shared with babies as soon as it is safe to hold the baby and the book at the same time. It is one of the most significant experiences to help children learn language.

- Make sure that time is set aside every day to sit together and share books.
- Let your baby explore soft cloth, vinyl or board books. Babies learn by exploring with their mouth – sometimes early reading looks like chewing!
- Point to objects in the book, talk about the pictures and name them.
- Change your voice as you read aloud and make the sounds of the animals your baby sees.
- Ask your baby questions about what's happening on the page, such as, 'Where is the duck?' Pause, point and answer for baby, 'Oh, look, there's the duck!' Name something and ask the baby to find it in the pictures.
- Respond to your baby's interest. Imitate their responses.
- Improvise! You don't need to read the words as they appear in the book. You can just talk about the pictures.
- Relax and have fun. Babies may crawl or move away, they will still hear and benefit from your voice.
- Stories are not just found in books. Tell short, simple stories you know.
- Make up a story using your baby's favourite toys.
- Make your own picture books with pictures of your baby's favourite things cut from old magazines.

What Babies like in Books

- Board books with photos of babies.
- Books with bold, real, clear pictures of familiar items in the baby's world.
- Books with rhythm and repetition.
- Books with textures or touch-and-feel books.

