

Reading with Baby

Learning to read starts from birth. Babies and toddlers learn how to read signals all around them by listening to voices, watching faces and reading body language. Babies and toddlers need to hear and use sounds, sound patterns and spoken language. This helps prepare them to eventually learn to read printed words.



Choosing books for baby and toddler:

If a baby is to become a reader, then they need a book in their hands as soon as possible. Board books are the best way to introduce babies to reading:

- Board books are made to withstand all of baby's chomping, tossing, tearing, and more
- A board book fits perfectly in baby's little hands, can be easily held, turned, stacked, and tossed
- The unique design of a board book is the perfect introduction to reading. They support babies to explore the text and pictures with each of their senses safely

Baby and Toddler Board Books

- **Bark** George Jules Feiffer
- **Everywhere Babies** Susan Meyers
- **First 100 Words** Roger Priddy
- **Aussie Animals** Rod Campbell
- **Farm 123** Rod Campbell
- **Global Babies** Global Fund for Children
- **Black on White** Tana Hoban
- **Baby Faces** Margaret Miller
- **Where is Baby?** Sally Rippin
- **W is for Wombat** Bronwyn Bancroft
- **Hello Baby** Mem Fox
- **Where is the Green Sheep** Mem Fox
- **I Went Walking** Sue Machin Julie Vivas
- **Peek-A Who?** Nina Laden
- **Dear Zoo** Rod Campbell
- **Peepo** Janet and Allan Ahlberg
- **Peepo Baby** Sebastien Braun
- **Bear Counts** Karma Wilson
- **Bear Feels Scared** Karma Wilson
- **Bear Snores On** Karma Wilson
- **Count My Kisses Little One** Ruthie May and Tamsin Ainslie
- **Tickle, Tickle** Helen Oxenbury

Books to Sing

- **Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes** Annie Kubler
- **The Wheels on the Bus** Annie Kubler
- **If You're Happy and You Know It** Annie Kubler
- **Row, Row, Row Your Boat** Annie Kubler
- **Old MacDonald Had a Farm** Mandy Foot

Board Books with Rhythm and Rhyme

- **Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes** Mem Fox
- **Baby Bedtime** Mem Fox and Emma Quay

Rhythm, rhyme and repetition in nursery rhymes, songs and quality picture books encourage early reading. The patterns here emphasise words so that they can be clearly heard, understood and predicted. Books about songs are wonderful because toddlers can make connections with the words they know and the pictures they can see. Songs with actions bring the words to life.

Learning about **language** and **reading** starts before birth and not when a child starts school. To learn how to **talk** and then how to read, babies and toddlers need lots of opportunity for 2 way chat– back and forth **interactive** conversations and experiences with favourite stories. Books about songs are wonderful because babies and toddlers can make **connections** with the words they know and the pictures they can see. Songs with actions bring the **words** to life.

Tips for Reading with Baby (birth to 12 months)

- **Think of reading time as cuddle time.** Hold baby on your lap and read. Baby will associate reading with warm and cozy feelings.
- **Look for books that have just a few pages and large, inviting illustrations or photos.** This keeps baby engaged. Babies like looking at faces of people, familiar objects like balls or bottles, and especially photos of other babies.
- **Consider the reading voice.** Emphasise the word patterns and rhyme. Use expression and make noises for the animals. Have fun with the pictures rather than strictly following the story.
- **Choose books with rhymes and repetition.** Babies love the way words sound.
- **Point to (and label) pictures**—a kitty, a pup, a ball, a flower. Teach baby that objects have names.
- **Encourage exploration.** Babies learn by tasting and touching. Provide board book collections available for baby to reach and explore independently.

Tips for Reading with Toddler (1-2 years)

- **Point to words while reading.** Demonstrate the process– moving hand from left to right.
- **Make the story exciting.** Help stories come alive by creating voices for all the characters.
- **Make it personal.** Chat about toddler's family, pets, or friends throughout, making personal connections to the story wherever possible.
- **Build toddler vocabulary.** Ask questions about the pictures, and encourage toddler to ask questions, too.
- **Say yes to movement.** A toddler may wiggle, dance and move during reading. Carry on– a toddler is a mover and chances are they are listening while moving. Incorporate movement into the story for even more fun and engagement.



Babies and toddlers love books. They love the brightness of the pictures, the rhythm of the words and the presence and attention of a caring adult who reads and sings.

0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 School

Baby

Becoming A Reader