Read to Your Baby

Tips and Ideas for Sharing Books with Your Growing Child

From the Washington State Library, Division of the Secretary of State
"Every hug. Every lullaby. Every kiss. Every peek-a-boo. Every word. Every touch. Every warm blanket. Every giggle. Every smile. Everything you do in these first three years becomes a part of them."

- New York Times, April 22, 1997
Congratulations!

Your new and growing baby will bring joy to you and your family. Your little one is learning all the time! Because of new research, we now know that babies' brains grow and change very rapidly. Talking, singing, and cuddling with your baby will deepen your relationship, help with later learning, and provide fun for both of you!

The staff at the Libraries of Washington State want to help you and your baby get off to a good start. This booklet provides tips, suggested books, and simple language activities you can use with your baby and toddler, right from the start!

We hope that you and your little one will visit the library soon.
**Why Read to Babies?**

Because babies who are read to:

- Get to cuddle with their favorite person: YOU!
- Discover that books are fun
- Become good listeners
- Are likely to become good readers and succeed in school
- Understand their world better
- Experience beautiful art in picture books

It's never too early to begin reading to a child. Even though your baby doesn't understand words, her brain is making connections from what she hears you say.

Reading, rocking, and cuddling calms your child and helps her associate reading with love and contentment.

You can read anywhere! Tuck a few books in baby's diaper bag to read together at the clinic, doctor's office, or on the bus. Don't be surprised if nearby children want to listen, too!
Tips for Choosing Books

Babies enjoy books with:

- Clear, brightly colored pictures
- Simple words
- Pictures of familiar things, such as clothing, animals, and other babies
- Rhythm and rhyme

Choose board books. These are made of sturdy cardboard and make good first books for babies.

As your child grows, he will be able to understand and enjoy longer books with pictures and stories.

Your public library is a great place to borrow fun books for free! At the library, ask the Youth Services Librarian for help in choosing books to share with your growing child.

Attend storytime programs with your child. The librarian carefully chooses books to read to the age group in attendance, and will provide other good books for you to borrow.

Tips for Reading Aloud

- Expect your baby to pay attention for very short periods of time. Her attention span will increase as you read and she grows!
- Choose books that you enjoy
- Read and reread your baby's favorites (children learn from repeated activities)
- Turn off the radio and TV while you are reading
- Set aside time every day for reading together
- Help your baby participate in the story by making sounds and doing motions
- Keep reading to your child throughout childhood and into the teen years
- Share family stories with your child
- Keep a collection of children's books and magazines in a special place at home
- Be a reader yourself. Babies and children need good role models!
Nursery Rhymes and Mother Goose

Babies love the sound of the human voice and respond well to rhythms. Chanting rhymes can be a part of daily routines such as bathing, dressing, mealtime, and bedtime.

Books to Share:

Animal Crackers: A Delectable Collection of Pictures, Poems, Songs, and Lullabies by Jane Dyer

Hippety-Hop, Hippety-Hay: Growing with Rhymes from Birth to Age Three by Opal Dunn

Lucy Cousins Book of Nursery Rhymes by Lucy Cousins

My Very First Mother Goose edited by Iona Opie

The Neighborhood Mother Goose by Nina Crews

Pio Peep!: Traditional Spanish Nursery Rhymes

Sylvia Long's Mother Goose illustrated by Sylvia Long

Tomie de Paola's
Mother Goose
illustrated by
Tomie de Paola
Music and Songs

Babies are never too young to be introduced to music. Soothing lullabies and playful nursery songs broaden your baby's experiences with language and sounds.

Books to Share:

The Bear Went Over the Mountain
   by Rosemary Wells

Five Little Ducks
   by Raffi

Hush Little Baby
   by Sylvia Long

Little White Duck
   by Walt Whippo

Recordings to Share:

Baby Face (CD)
   by Georgiana Stewart

Diaper Gym: Fun Activities for Babies on the Move
   by Priscilla Hegner
      (Cassette or CD)

Little Songs for Little Me: Activity Songs for 0-5 Years.
   by Nancy Stewart (CD)

Mainly Mother Goose
   by Sharon, Lois, and Bram (Cassette or CD)

Singable Songs for the Very Young
   by Raffi (Cassette or CD)

Wee Sing for Baby
   by Pamela Conn Beall (Book with Cassette or CD)
Simple Stories

Reading to babies nurtures a love for books and creates a connection between you and your baby. Read your child's favorite books again and again and again!

Books to Share:

All Fall Down by Helen Oxenbury
Baby Faces by Margaret Miller
Baby! Talk! by Penny Gentieu
Black on White by Tana Hoban
Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown
I Kissed the Baby by Mary Murphy
Peek-a-Moo by Marie Torres Cimarusti
Peekaboo Morning by Rachael Isadora
Show Me! by Tom Tracy
Spots, Feathers, and Curly Tails by Nancy Tafuri
Where Does Maisy Live? by Lucy Cousins
Where is Baby's Belly Button? by Karen Katz
Where's Spot? by Eric Hill

Babybug (Magazine)
Help for Parents

You may wish to increase your knowledge about your baby's growth and development. The library has many books that can help.

Books to Try:

The Baby Book: Everything You Need to Know about Your Baby From Birth to Age Two by William Sears

First Time Parents: What Every New Parent Needs to Know by Miriam Stoppard

Heading Home with Your Newborn: From Birth to Reality by Laura A. Jana

Raise a Smarter Child by Kindergarten by David Perlmutter

Smart Wiring Your Baby's Brain: What You Can do to Stimulate Your Child During the Critical First Three Years by Winifred Conklin

What to Expect the First Year by Heidi Murkoff

The Wonder Years: Helping Your Baby and Young Child Successfully Negotiate the Major Developmental Milestones by the American Academy of Pediatrics

Your Baby and Child by Penelope Leach

Magazines:

Mothering (Magazine)

Parenting (Magazine)
Games and Activities

Babies and toddlers love playful interaction. Playing movement games with your baby helps with muscle coordination and physical skill. Play is children's work; it's how they discover the world! You can guide your baby to safe exploration of her environment by enjoying games together.

Books to Try:

125 Brain Games for Babies: Simple Games to Promote Early Brain Development by Jackie Silberg

Baby's Game Book by Isabel Wilner

Complete Resource Book for Infants: Over 700 Experiences for Children from Birth to 18 Months by Pam Schiller

Encyclopedia of Infant and toddler Activities for Children Birth to 3 by Gryphon House

Games Babies Play: From Birth to Twelve Months by Vicki Lansky

How to Talk to Your Baby: A Guide to Maximizing Your Child's Language and Learning Skills by Dorothy P. Dougherty

Learning Skills by Dorothy P. Dougherty

Learning Activities for Infants and Toddlers: An Easy Guild for Everyday Use by Betsy Squibb

Simple Steps: Developmental Activities for Infants, Toddlers, and Two-Year-Olds by Karen Miller
Knee Bouncers

For most of these activities, seat your child on your lap facing you, or rest your child with her back to you.

Mama and Papa and Uncle John  
Went to the market one by one.  
Mama fell off!  
Papa fell off!  
But Uncle John went on and on.  
(bounce child on knees)  
(tip child to the left)  
(tip child to the right)  
(continue bouncing)

This is the way the baby rides,  
The baby rides, the baby rides.  
This is the way the baby rides,  
So early in the morning.  
This is the way the farmer rides...  
This is the way the jockey rides...  
(bounce child on knees - with each new verse bounce child faster)

Trot, trot, trot to Boston  
Trot, trot, trot to Lynn  
Look out baby - don't fall in!  
(bounce child on knees - last line let child slip through knees)

Shoe the little horse  
Shoe the little mare  
But let the little colt  
Run free everywhere.  
(pat child’s left foot)  
(pat child’s right foot)  
(bicycle child’s feet around and around)

Giddy-up, giddy-up, giddy-up horsey  
Giddy-up, giddy-up, go, go, go.  
Giddy-up, giddy-up, giddy-up horsey  
Giddy-up, giddy-up, Whoa!  
(bounce child on knees - last line let child slip through knees)

I bounce you here, I bounce you there,  
I bounce you, bounce you, everywhere.  
I tickle you here, I tickle you there,  
I tickle you, tickle you, everywhere.  
I hug you here, I hug you there,  
I hug you, hug you, everywhere!  
(bounce child on knees)  
(tickle child)  
(hug child)
Bump downtown in my little red wagon,  
Bump downtown in my little red wagon,  
Bump downtown in my little red wagon,  
Won't you be my darling?

I'm bouncing, bouncing everywhere,  
I bounce and bounce into the air.  
I'm bouncing, bouncing like a ball,  
I bounce and bounce, then down I fall.

There was a little bird  
And his name was Jack.  
He flew into the barn.  
He flew into the crack!

Here we go up, up, up  
Here we go down, down, down  
Here we go backward and forward  
And here we go round and round.

(bounce child on knees)  
(bounce child on knees - last line  
let child slip through knees)  
(bounce child on knees - last line  
let child slip through knees.)  
(lift child's legs up)  
(lower child's legs down)  
(rock child backward and forward)  
(bicycle child's legs in air)
Ticklers

These little activities are wonderful for quiet times or tight spaces like waiting rooms and car rides - and often bring smiles and laughter.

- Round and round the garden
- Went the teddy bear
- One step, two steps
- Tickle you under there
  (make circle in child's hand)
  (fingers walk up child's arm)
  (tickle child under arm)

- These are baby's fingers,
- These are baby's toes,
- This is baby's belly button,
- Round and round it goes!
  (touch child's fingers)
  (touch child's toes)
  (touch child's tummy)
  (tickle child's tummy)

- Hickory Dickory Dock
- The mouse ran up the clock
- The clock struck one
- The mouse ran down
- Hickory Dickory Dock.
  (fingers run up child's arm)
  (give child loud kiss)
  (fingers run down arm)

- Hurry scurry little mouse
- Starts down at your toes.
- Hurry scurry little mouse
- Past your knees he goes.
- Hurry scurry little mouse
- Past where your tummy is.
- Hurry scurry little mouse
- Gives you a mousy kiss.
  (touch child's toes)
  (touch child's knees)
  (touch child's tummy)
  (give child loud kiss)

- Knock on the door,
- Peek in,
- Unlock the latch,
- Walk right in.
- How do you do Mr. Chin, Chin, Chin?
  (knock on child's forehead)
  (open child's eye wider)
  (push tip of child's nose up)
  (walk fingers into child's mouth)
  (tickle child under chin)
Let's go to the forest
What will we do there?
Find our mother.
What will we do with her?
Kiss her, kiss her, kiss her!
(point to mother - could be mother or father or grandmother, etc.)
(give child kisses)

This little piggy went to the market
This little piggy stayed home
This little piggy had roast beef
This little piggy had none
And this little piggy ran,
  wee, wee, wee, wee, wee
All the way home.

(wiggle each finger or toe per line, or you can wiggle child's whole arm and leg, one for each line ending with tickle on last line.)
Visit your local public library!

- It's a free source of books to share with your children.
- It offers story programs for families.
- Its staff can help you find library resources for the whole family.

This booklet was developed by the Youth Services Department of Pierce County Library System.

Visit us at www.piercecountylibrary.org

To find your local public library visit: www.libraries.wa.gov or call toll free 1-866-538-4996
Six skills your child needs to learn to read starting from birth!

- **Print Motivation**
  a child's interest in and enjoyment of books.

- **Vocabulary**
  knowing the names of things.

- **Phonological Awareness**
  the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words.

- **Narrative Skills**
  the ability to describe things and events and to tell stories.

- **Letter Knowledge**
  learning to name letters, knowing they have sounds, and recognizing them everywhere.

- **Print Awareness**
  noticing print, knowing how to handle a book, and how to follow the written word on a page.

What you do helps your child get ready to read.