



Tips for Parents and Other Readers

A child is never too young to be read to. The joy of sharing books is a gift you can give children from the time they are born. Repeating nursery rhymes, singing songs, and reading stories can comfort and entertain even the youngest child. And, listening to you talk lays the ground work for reading.

Helping your child to love reading

- * Begin when your child is an infant and spend time reading every day.
- * Repeat nursery rhymes over and over.
- * Visit the library. Find out when they have story times.
- * Choose books with colorful pictures and simple words – or no words at all.
- * Read with expression – or just tell the story in your own words.
- * Hold the book so your child can see the pictures clearly.
- * Let your baby play with the book.
- * Encourage your toddler to point out objects, repeat words, and talk about the story.
- * Reread your child's favorite books over and over again.
- * Read or tell stories in the language you are most comfortable with.
- * Help your child understand that words are made up of smaller sounds – by playing games with the sounds of words and repeating rhymes.
- * Tell stories about your family and your culture.
- * Encourage older children to read to their younger brothers and sisters.
- * Be an example to your children; let them see you read books too.

Reading Aloud

People in stories, poems and plays can influence children almost as much as the real people who read with them. They can teach children about strong character and good citizenship. In talking with children about the books you read, use questions such as the following to help them think about the values of stories:

Motivation

How did the people in the story act?
Did they have good or bad motives?
Who were the heroes? Why were they heroes?
Were there villains? Why were they villains?

Judgment

Did the people make good decisions? Why or why not?

Action

How did the people carry out their decisions? What kinds of steps did they take?
Were there obstacles? How did they respond to the obstacles?

Sensitivity

Did the people think about the welfare of others?
Did the story have a good or bad ending? For whom was it good? For whom was it bad?
How could the story have turned out better for everyone?

Sources: Adapted from *Helping Your Child Become a Responsible Citizen*, U.S. Department of Education, 2003, and *Born to Read: How to Raise a Reader*, Association for Library Service to Children. Copyright © 2003 American Library Association.