



Tips on Reading Books with Your Child:

Book-reading offers many opportunities for conversations with children. Books open the door to developing attention, concentration, turn-taking, shared attention, vocabulary, sentences, and story-telling. Studies have also shown that children who are read to frequently at home are better prepared for literacy in school than those who have not been exposed to books. Here are some tips to help you choose and use books for your child:

If your child is:

1. **Just beginning to be interested in pictures:** Sharing books with a child who isn't ready for stories yet can still be rewarding and build important communication and social skills. Choose **interactive books** – books you can do something with – such as flap books, pop-ups, books that make noises, feelie or smelly books, or books that have things to turn, pull, push etc. These will grab the child's interest and get them looking at the pages...the first step in enjoying books. Or, make your own book using a photo album and pictures of your child's favourite people, pets, foods, toys & activities (take photos, cut them out of catalogues & flyers, draw or construct them yourself...!)

When sharing the book with your child:

- ♦ **Let your child lead.** It's OK if they flip the pages, start in the middle, or do something "un-booklike." Go with the flow and have fun; play peek-a-boo, use it as a fan, etc. If your child rips pages, try board books; if your child drools or chews, try fabric or plastic books.
 - ♦ **Don't worry about the words.** Use simple language, name the pictures and talk about what your child's looking at or doing.
 - ♦ **Take turns.**
2. **Interested in pictures but can't sit for a story yet:** Interactive books and homemade books are still a hit for this crowd. Choose books that have **clear, simple pictures of familiar objects and activities**, and:
 - ♦ **Let your child lead.** Talk about what they're interested in.
 - ♦ **Don't worry about the words.** Use simple language, name the pictures and talk about what your child's looking at or doing.
 - ♦ **Take turns.**
 - ♦ **Use props.** Relate the pictures to real objects, and to your child's own experiences.
 3. **Starting to be interested in stories:** Stick to books that have clear picture scenes, no more than one to a page, and simple storylines. Books that repeat a language pattern and/or relate to children's own experiences help build vocabulary and language skills. When sharing these books:
 - ♦ **Don't be afraid to repeat the story over and over.** Children need repetition to build language skills.
 - ♦ **Use your voice to create interest and add information.** An animated tone of voice, that mirrors the action and helps bring life to the characters, helps your child stay interested and builds social and communication skills.

- ♦ Once the story's familiar, **pause to let your child fill in a word.**
 - ♦ **Use props** to act out the story.
 - ♦ **Guess what's going to happen next.**
 - ♦ **Change details of the story to keep it interesting.**
4. **Beyond simple stories:** The sky's the limit. Books which encourage imagination or help children make discoveries about the world will help to stretch your child's thinking skills. You can make up your own stories as well. Children at this stage love to act things out, so pretending with the book or using a story as a theme for dramatic play should be a hit as well.

Have fun and happy reading!