



A better start for babies

Sensory

Motor

Attention / Regulation

Relationships

Together

Ei SMART - promoting and enhancing your child's development

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READING TO BABIES

Books and story telling play an important role in supporting and advancing your baby's development.



Reading or sharing books with your baby and young child promotes:

- Bonding and interaction.
- Language, attention and concentration.
- Learning

Reading is fun and interesting for your baby – babies love interesting things to do and look at!

✨ Even 5 minutes a day of one to one uninterrupted time together has huge benefits for your baby. ✨

Did you know you can start reading to your baby in the Neonatal Unit?



You can read to your baby during skin to skin, whilst holding baby or even when your baby is in the cot or incubator if they are awake. Researchers have shown that reading to premature infants in neonatal units has positive effects on:

- Bonding and attachment
- Language and cognitive development
- Medical stability

Well-being of babies and caregivers

Talk to the nurses and other staff members about the best times to read to your baby and how they can support you doing this.

Your baby will not be ready to look at pictures yet -they will just like to hear your voice.

Reading at home - It's never too soon or too late to start!



- Find a comfortable position with your baby
- Try and have a quiet distraction free 5 minutes.
- Hold the book about 30 cms (12ins) from your baby's face - this is where they see best.
- Don't worry about finishing a book or reading through pages in order - stay at your baby's pace.
- If you speak any languages other than English, talk about the pictures and stories in your own language(s).

As soon as they are able, older babies will want to hold and play with the book, maybe taking it to their mouth or turning it upside down - let them explore the feel, the pictures and the pages.

Remember you can also make up stories! You can even just look at and talk about the pictures in books.

Your local library is a great free resource where you will find a lovely child friendly environment, great books, relaxing reading spaces and other parents and carers. They also have weekly story times!





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Usually from about 6 months babies will begin to focus on pictures and want to touch them. **This is an important stage of Visual Development.**

- Soon after they might try to turn pages as they have watched you do it.
- As soon as they are able older babies will start to use their index finger for poking at pictures - usually around 9 months.
- As soon as you feel your baby is ready try 'lift the flap books'. They love the interaction and excitement of seeing what is under the flap.
- Babies also love pressing buttons on musical or sound books - at first they will need your help until they can do it themselves.
- At this age babies will still want to turn the pages quickly but will enjoy you telling them the story and pointing to the pictures



Usually anytime from 12 months onwards young children will begin to point to familiar pictures when you ask 'where's the cat?' etc.

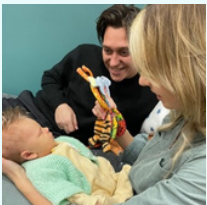
Between 12 and 24 months young children will begin to point to and name the pictures and say simple words such as 'duck'.

Remember by reading to your baby and sharing books together in the first 2 years of life you are not only having important fun 1 to 1 time together you are also building their little brains through improving their:

- Attention and concentration and learning
- Language and communication skills
- Social emotional development – very important for school readiness

What to read at different stages of development.

There are lots of books to choose from – here are some ideas:

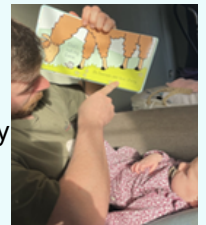


Newborns & first few months:

At this stage babies like listening to your voice and seeing your face which promotes attachment.

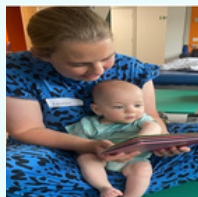
3- 9 months:

Your baby's brain is developing rapidly in this period and looking at books together supports your baby's development. Before long your baby will be able to show you they really enjoy book time with you. Try touchy feely books.



9 - 12 months:

Babies have short concentration spans so try: simple picture books, Lift the flap books, sensory & 'touchy feely' books, musical & press the button sound books.



12-24 months:

At this age your young child will enjoy many short periods of reading books together throughout the day. Sit together on the floor and let your child choose which book to look at together. Try lift the flap and sound books, rhyming & animal stories



Scan for Book Trust website and their Bookfinder tool



Avoid using screens with babies and young children as they have been shown in research to cause language delays and attention difficulties - babies need real life interactions to learn.

What if my child has sensory difficulties?

National Deaf Children's Society website offers in depth advice on all aspects of development and advice on phonics and literacy.

Royal Society for Blind children website also offers valuable support and advice. Your local library might have large print, braille and talking books. Or you can find information where those are available on gov.uk

