

About Us

Everything we learn about child development is made possible by the participation of families like yours.

The Infant and Child Studies Consortium is a research group at the University of Maryland's flagship campus studying child development in the areas of hearing and speech science, human development, linguistics, and psychology. Our research relies on the generous participation of local families. Sign up with us today on our website or by phone or email!

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References

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Reading Better Together

**How to support
your child's development**



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INFANT AND CHILD STUDIES

*Reading time with your child is crucial! Studies have shown children exposed to reading **before the preschool years** improve speech and fluency in their language, develop logical thinking skills, and are more academically successful. The researchers at the University of Maryland Infant and Child Studies Consortium have compiled ways you can make the most of reading time to best support your child's development.*

Engage with Your Child

Follow your child's lead. Let your child choose the book, and try to talk about what interests your child most! A lot of energy could be spent trying to focus your child on items in the story that you think are important; however, children are more likely to learn the names of items that they pay attention to on their own.

Use gestures. Point to the pictures in the story as you name them and follow your finger along with the words as you read.

Have your child "help" you read. Pause and let them fill in familiar words.

Ask questions! This helps children focus on the important parts of the story as well as **1) practice vocabulary, 2) reinforce concepts** and **3) make inferences**. Ask questions like:

1. "What is this animal called?"
2. "Can you count his spots?"
3. "Why do you think she's sad?"



Repeat, repeat, repeat!

Highlight and repeat new words. Label new words and give a simple definition, then repeat or emphasize the word each time it reappears. Repetition helps children learn new vocabulary,⁴ and the context of the story helps too.^{1,3}

Read it again! Rereading the same book several times allows children to become familiar with the story, enabling them to better learn new vocabulary words and concepts as well as engage in conversation. So keep bringing out your favorites!

Some suggestions for your bookshelf:

Goodnight, Moon by Margaret Wise Brown (0+)
Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes by Annie Kubler (0+)
Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak (2+)
Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson (3+)
The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein (4+)
Green Eggs and Ham by Dr. Seuss (4+)
(from Scholastic and Common Sense Media.org)

Go Beyond the Book

Expand on what's written. Provide more information, or add different vocabulary. Elaborating helps children learn the meanings of new words.⁵

Point out the sounds letters make. For example, "Ssssnake and sandwich have the hissy sssss sound, see?" Awareness of sounds is important for children getting ready to read on their own.²

Make connections between the book and real life. Comment on similarities and differences between the book and things your child is familiar with. ("She has green shoes just like yours!") After reading, use some of the same vocabulary and concepts in daily life.

