



Doorstep Library

Early years reading tips

Little and often: make reading part of your day together

Reading can be part of your waking up routine or an afternoon activity – you could even read a buggy book on the bus! Nursery rhymes are another way to have fun with words together all through the day.

Talk about the books you've read as you go about your day with questions like "are you stomping like the big giant from our story?" or "are we going to the market like the granny from our book?"

Don't worry if you don't finish the whole book or if your baby doesn't understand the words yet. Babies love to listen to the sound of your voice. Take a break whenever your child needs to – you can be led by them, if they're not having fun anymore, it's okay to stop!



Little and often: make reading part of your day together

Reading can be a calming activity any time of day – cushions and a blanket can help your child relax so have fun making a cosy reading nook before settling in with a book. Choose quieter, calmer stories especially before bedtime and use a soft tone of voice whilst you snuggle up together.

Reading together can also be playful and energetic! If your little one has lots of energy to spare find a book with movements for them to copy. If they're in the mood to make a lot of noise then grab a noisy book or sing a song!

Notice what your child is interested in. Do they have a favourite page? You don't need to stick with the story – pause and explore that page together. Let yourself be led by them.



Reading Together: bonding with storytime

Reading together is a great activity for the whole family. For baby and toddler books, invite everyone to read a little bit or character, or all make the noises or facial expressions together.

Pause reading to ask lots of questions. Begin with yes or no questions like “is the apple blue? Is it red?” or simple questions like “where is the crocodile?”. Ask older children open questions like “what would you do next if you were in the story?” Build on their answers and you might end up with a brand-new story!

Listening to you lays the foundation for babies’ language development so it’s great for them to hear you reading to them in the language you’re most confident in. Libraries will stock lots of dual language books which will have every line written in two languages (usually English and one other).

Babies love to see your facial expressions. Try having your child face you instead of the book and give really exaggerated facial expressions and movements!



Reading out **LOUD**: make reading fun!

Children love it when you do funny voices or sing to them – so don't worry about looking silly. You can even move about – reach up high like a giraffe or make your arm into an elephant's trunk!

Any book can be a noisy book when you make the noises yourself! Make sounds to go with the pictures of animals or transport and encourage your child to copy you.

If you're tired of the books you have try making up your own stories using objects from around your home or drawings as props.

Make a fuss of finishing a book or nursery rhyme. Finishing a book or song with a clap can make reading even more exciting for next time.

Above all, have fun! The most important thing is that you and your child are having fun together when reading.

